

Devised Theatre

Instructors: Wende Ballew
Reforming Arts, Inc.

Fridays 2nd and 3rd Track

Winter Quarter 2014

Class: V 204

COURSE DISCRIPTION:

This course is an introduction to devised theatre, a form of theatre that uses the life experiences of participants to create plays about specific issues. Students will gain a theoretical and practical understanding of the basic principles: self-awareness, relaxation, concentration, use of voice, body movement, sense memory, spontaneity, self-awareness, privacy in public, imagination, visualization, truthful actions, objectives, tactics, endowments, sense of urgency and living the reality of the given circumstances. Students will explore these concepts through physical and vocal warm ups, improvisations, theatre exercises, object exercises, scene work, class discussions, self-evaluations, text exploration and written analysis. In addition to in-class exercises and play building we will read about the foundations of devised theatre and read examples of play styles.

Course Readings:

Blank, J. (n.d.). *The Exonerated*.

Boal, A. (2000). *Theatre of the Oppressed. Igarss 2014*. London: Pluto Books.

<http://doi.org/10.1007/s13398-014-0173-7.2>

Hansberry, L. (n.d.). *A Raisin in the Sun*.

Shakespeare, W. (2002). The Winter 's Tale. *Shakespeare*, 1–116.

Smith, A. D. (n.d.). *Fires in the mirror Crown Heights, Brooklyn and other identities*.

Sophocles. (n.d.). *Antigone*.

REFORMING ARTS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Philosophy on Education and Learning: Each Facilitator and participant is respected as both teacher and a learner. The women participating in this class are seen as experts of their own lives who will develop their own solutions to problems as they define them, not as passive participants needing to be “saved” by the facilitator.

Anti-Racism/Sexism/Classism/Ageism/Heteronormism/Ableism: Reforming Arts does not support oppression. Therefore, this curriculum is infused with ideology that recognizes the inherent dignity and equality of every person. No one is considered superior or inferior to others because of race, sex, economic class, age, religious beliefs, sexuality, physical or mental characteristics, education level, or criminal justice classification. Therefore, participants are

encouraged to enter into discussions with an open mind and to listen to each other. An important part of maintaining such an environment is the commitment to protect the health and safety of every member of the class. Belligerent, abusive, profane, threatening and/or inappropriate behavior on the part of students is a violation of this compact. Students who are found guilty of such misconduct may be subject to immediate dismissal from the class.

Lock Down

If a student misses a class because she was in lockdown, she will be required to provide a two page explanation of how her actions contributed to being locked up before returning to class. A student who receives a DR because of violence will be removed from the roster and required to reapply to the program.

CLASS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance

- You are expected to come to every class. More than two unexcused or three excused absences will result in a participation rather than completion certificate for the class.
- If you miss class, it is **YOUR** responsibility to find out what you missed. I suggest you trade name and contact information with a class member to provide you with information on what you missed, but it is not their responsibility to get the information to you.
- **Please let me know—as soon as possible—if you will miss class.**

Missed Assignments

- Missed in-class quizzes, insights, in-class assignments and activities **may not** be made up.
- Missed homework\written assignments due to an absence will not be made up without prior arrangements with the instructor or an excused absence (medical condition or court appearance, for example). Homework is due on the assigned date whether or not you are in class.
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class unless stated otherwise.
- Scenes **may not** be made up without documentation of an extreme medical emergency.
- The instructor may choose to create new assignments and tests for students eligible for makeup work.
- All assignments must be completed and submitted in order to receive a completion certificate.

Disability issues

If you have any form of disability or impairment and need any special assistance, please let me know at the beginning of the semester. I cannot help you if you do not talk to me. I assure you that anything you tell me in confidence will remain in confidence.

- Arrive **on time** and stay until dismissal.
- Bring your **textbook** and notebook to every class.
- Come to class **prepared** to take notes, participate, and complete activities/assignments.
- No **sleeping** or heads on the desk.
- **Engage!** Be an active learner.

- **Be respectful of your instructor and classmates and remain open to diverse perspectives. We are all different and we are all learning!**
- Be a courteous listener and present your ideas in a way that shows respect for your colleagues.
- Read the assigned material and be prepared to participate.
- **Keep copies of all your written work.**

Class Participation

- Learning the craft of acting requires collaboration, communication and a trusting ensemble. You are expected to conduct yourself in a mature and professional manner; focus, consideration and support of others in the group are paramount.
- Since expanding your sense of self is part of the acting process, a positive attitude and a willingness to expand one's comfort zone are expected and are part of completion of this class.
- An element of risk taking, initiative and willingness to fail are also expected.
- Some of the work in class will necessitate human contact. You will be allowed to step out of any exercise that raises significant discomfort. If you have problems with touch or with individuals in the class, please communicate this to the instructor outside of class.

COURSE COMPONENTS

Journal

Journals should comment on the following:

- the format and objective of the exercises done in class
- a self-evaluation of your involvement in the exercises
- a description of your observations, discoveries, preconceptions, difficulties, conclusions or questions regarding the concepts covered
- reflections on the class handouts and how they relate to class work
- comments on scene rehearsal and how discoveries made relate to the readings

Journals will be graded on a "check", "check plus" or "check minus" basis. An exemplary journal entry is one that is completely thorough, detailed, and that displays a deep understanding of the material that is being discussed.

A Note About Writing Assignments:

Writing skills are essential and will be practiced in many of your classes. Writing is a developed skill and each student will be expected to improve their skills in each class.

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated based on the quality and effort demonstrated in the journal writings, homework, oral presentations, in-class assignments, and class discussions. Each student is encouraged to put serious and consistent effort into the class by reading slowly and often. A certificate of completion will be given to each student at the end of the quarter that has demonstrated an understanding of the materials, has turned in all assignments, and meets the attendance requirement. Certificates of completion count for 3 hours of credit within Reforming Arts' internal tally. A certificate of participation will be given to students who do not meet all

requirements but shows effort. Certificates of participation do not carry any credit hours and students will be expected to repeat the course.

Course Calendar

This calendar is tentative and may be amended. You will be notified of any changes. Unless otherwise noted, the readings are from *Course Packet* and *Justice*.

Date	Main Topic	Readings*	Assignments Due
01/08	Introductions – Theatre Exercises	Syllabus	
01/15	Theatre Exercises – Trust, Community Building		Journal
01/22	Theatre Exercises – Trust, Community Building		Journal
01/29	Theatre Exercises – Trust, Community Building		Journal
02/05	Theatre Exercises – Scene development	Boal – Ch 1 & 2	Journal
02/12	Scene development	Boal – Chapter 3 & 4	Journal
02/19	Scene development	Antigone	Journal
02/26	Putting it together	Boal Chapter 5	Journal
03/04	Putting it together	Blank – The Exonerated	Journal
03/11	Putting it together	Smith – Fires in the mirror	Journal
03/18	Final Presentations		Final Scenes

*All assigned readings are expected to be completed before class on the day we will be discussing them. Pop quizzes may be given on due dates of assigned readings before the material is covered in class. Be prepared to discuss the readings when you come to class. This schedule is tentative and subject to change.