

UMBC UGC Change in Existing Course: THTR 241: Theatre Ensemble I

Date Submitted: UPDATED 9/24/18

Proposed Effective Date: Spring 2019

	Name	Email	Phone	Dept
Dept Chair or UPD	Colette Searls	csearls@umbc.edu	5-2917	THTR
Other Contact	Susan McCully	mccully@umbc.edu	5-2134	THTR

COURSE INFORMATION: (please provide all information in the "current" column, and only the information changing in the "proposed" column)

change		current	proposed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Course Number(s)	241	305
<input type="checkbox"/>	Formal Title	Theatre Ensemble I	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transcript Title (≤30c)	Theatre Ensemble I	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recommended Course Preparation	none	
	Prerequisite NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a "D" or better.	THTR 110 or 220	THTR 110 or 220. Courses must be passed with a grade of C or better.
<input type="checkbox"/>	# of Credits Must adhere to the UMBC Credit Hour Policy	3	
	Repeatable?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Max. Total Credits	3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grading Method(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail	<input type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

CURRENT CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Students will participate in a collaborative and creative process to devise short theater pieces inspired by a chosen theme or topic. Sources can include literature, visual art, music, current or historical events, or student biographies. Using research assignments, in-class exercise, and improvisation, students will transform source material into original performances.

PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION**RATIONALE FOR CHANGE:**

This change represents a correction to the classification of the course, rather than a change in the content. This course requires 100 or 200 level preparation and high levels of analysis, synthesis, collaboration and artistic interpretation. Rightfully, it should be credited as an upper-level course.

THTR 305 Ensemble I

Professor Eve

Muson Office:

PAHB 328

Tues/Thurs 1:00-2:50 p.m. PAHB TRS

ebmuson@umbc.edu

Office Hours Wednesdays 5:00-6:30 PM & Fridays 1:30-3:00 PM, or by always by appointment

Syllabus

The goal of this course in collaborative play-making is to create short, original theatre pieces whose conception, authorship, direction, design, and performance is shared by all members of the ensemble. The

collaboratively-made play finds its inspiration from an infinite number of possibilities: an idea, image, concept, object, poem, personal experience, historical or current event, piece of music, or painting. Research might include readings and learning technical or performance skills related to the topic or form of the piece. Exercises in improvisation, movement, and theatrical image enable the group to be physically and practically creative right away. Finally, the group must select, edit, refine and shape its work for presentation; the course will conclude with a presentation of works-in-progress.

Whatever you have is exactly what you need to produce your best work.

The ensemble must discover and invent ways of working that supports intuition and spontaneity. Students will explore ways of working with shared or fluid leadership. Students will be challenged to step out of their compartmentalized role of “designer,” “actor,” “technician,” and be invited to think of themselves and each other as collaborative theatre-makers. Throughout the course, students will reflect on their work in discussion and writing assignments. Although the process is challenging, students emerge more thoughtful, enlivened and independent thinkers and theatre artists.

Drawing on collaborative-theatre methods developed by practitioners such as Anne Bogart, Peter Brook, Frantic Assembly, and Theatre de Complicite, we will investigate the principles of making theatrical “compositions.” Composition is a means of training, but also a means of conducting research—of investigating and exploiting otherwise hidden possibilities within a text or within a theme. Viewpoints and Laban exercises in use of time, space, action, gesture, etc., will provide building blocks & common vocabulary for the creation of theatrical compositions that might incorporate text, music, light, architecture, video, etc.

Assignments

Rehearsal assignments: To meet these goals, we will work on solo, duo and group improvisations using specific methods and inspired by many different kinds of source material. Almost every week, you will be required to do a 90-minute rehearsal outside of class either with your partner, your group or alone. The rehearsal homework is usually an extension or continuation of things we have worked on in class.

The Blog: Yes, there is the Blog. You do it EVERY DAY. Every day? Yup. Instructions follow.

Self-Reflection: After every major project, you will submit a well-written reflection on how you did and submit it on Blackboard. Instructions follow. At semester’s end, you will reflect on your work in an End-of-Semester Process Paper.

Other writing assignments might involve peer assessments, creative writing, short research essays or posting/commenting to class wikis or blogs.

Readings: We often have reading assignments. I don't always make a big point of talking about them during class, but sometimes there are nifty little quizzes when you least expect them. I'd like you to keep track of things that interest, confuse, or inspire or infuriate you in the readings and discuss them in your Self-Reflections. Unless otherwise noted, readings will be posted on BlackBoard.

The Basics

I spell out all of the Course Policies in great detail in a document that you can find on Blackboard, under the Syllabus tab. You are responsible for understanding the fine print. Read it.

The main ideas are these:

All students should be prepared to work on their feet for every class meeting and outside rehearsal, and every effort will be made to have all students work during each class. "Prepared" means you arrive on time, wearing proper rehearsal clothes, bearing all of your materials, sporting a reasonably upbeat mood with clear eyes and warm heart (and full tummy,) and having done any preparatory homework.

Attendance & Tardiness: Since the work in this class is experiential and the ensemble depends upon your presence, attendance is mandatory. I cannot stress this enough—your presence (or absence) not only affects YOU, but also the work of your fellow artists. It is challenging to organize rehearsals at mutually convenient times—you must honor all commitments to your group.

You must have a familiarity with Blackboard and check it frequently.

You must have a datebook or some other device on which you keep your calendar. Keep it with you at all times.

Students unable to make or keep commitments will be asked to withdraw from the class at any point in the semester.

Course Materials

We do a lot of writing, doodling and list-making in this class. For next time, please obtain these materials:

- **A one-subject, 8 ½ x 11 spiral-bound notebook, labelled with your name. It needs to have those perforations so you can tear pages out without all the gross, curly stuff. College-ruled is good.**
- **At least 100, 4x6, white index cards, lined on one side and blank on the other. They can start in one of those little spiral books if you like, but it doesn't matter. Do you really need 100 of them? Yup.**
- **A folder for any loose papers and index cards. This could be a pocket in the notebook as long as all of your stuff doesn't fall out when you fold the notebook in half.**
- **Some rubber bands to keep your index cards tidy**
- **Any kind of pens you like**

- **Any kind of pencils you like**

You will find these items on Blackboard: Course schedule, due dates, outlines of rehearsal methods, and instructions for homework, readings, and more. In some cases you will be expected to print out and bring in materials.

To bring to class

Any texts we are working with that day—your binder, scripts, readings, worksheets—and sometimes your computer and phone. You should always have whatever you think I'll ask you to have, which might be anything. Your grade will be affected if you consistently forget your stuff. The same goes for an inability to take your stuff with you after class.

Grades

This is a course in creativity and becoming an independent artist. This is hard to measure, but I try very hard to lay out expectations for every exercise. You don't need to be very good at everything (or anything,) but you must dive in the spirit of generous exploration, and to try things. However, since you're probably thinking about grading, you will be assessed (very generally speaking,) in the following areas:

25% of grade for the Blog, Self-Reflections, and other writing.

25% of grade in creative & critical thinking and working "outside of the box": You will be assessed as to your achievement and growth in critical and creative thinking. To what degree do you 1) build a deep personal connection to pieces? 2) Seek to stretch the conception of the assignment? 3) Extend aspects of the project(s) into novel concepts/techniques/symbols? 4) Use the tools and techniques of the course to achieve theatricality and meaning? 5) Seek nuance and depth? 6) Take the feedback and notes and help to improve or deepen your project?

20% of grade for achievement in collaboration: You will be assessed as to your ability to work effectively in the group. I will be evaluating your growth and ability to articulate your ideas, grapple with complex problems within the group, set criteria by which decisions are made, negotiate conflicts and compromise, take and yield leadership, etc.

25% of grade for achievement of individual work within the group: Your ability to deliver on your individual contributions, such as level of success in performing tasks in the role of director, writer, performer, etc. I will be evaluating your willingness to engage with unfamiliar tasks (such as designers working as actors, actors working as directors, followers working as leaders, etc.) To what degree have you grown as a performer, designer, author, etc.?

25% of grade for overall attitude, including: respecting time and effort of others, giving and taking feedback when observing others' work, making rehearsal a priority, preparedness, etc.

This is how I define the work & achievement necessary to earn the letter grade:

A Consistently exceptional work. Student meets requirements of assignments, understands concepts and applies them to the work-at-hand; makes constant demands on him/herself to risk the unknown. Takes responsibility for his/her process. Rehearses/performs with spontaneity, nuance, ease and joy. Faces obstacles and transcends them. Easily takes & yields leadership in the ensemble; pays conscientious and generous attention to other members of the company; gives detailed & involved feedback to others. Papers are very well-written--articulate, specific, honest, rigorous. Demonstrates supportive attitude, maintains focus and scrupulous professional behavior at all times.

B Superior work. Student meets requirements of assignments, understands concepts and applies them to the work-at-hand. Rehearses/performs with some spontaneity and joy. Faces obstacles and has occasional breakthroughs. Pays conscientious and generous attention to the ensemble; gives detailed feedback. Papers are well-written--articulate, specific, honest. Demonstrates supportive attitude, maintains focus and scrupulous professional behavior at all times.

C Satisfactory work. Student meets requirements assignments, understands concepts and applies them to the work-at-hand. Responds to coaching and gives feedback. Demonstrates supportive attitude, professional behavior. Papers are articulate & honest.

D Less-than-satisfactory work. Student fails to meet the standards of a "C" grade in one or more aspects. Requires frequent outside help, extra coaching, or disciplinary action.

F Consistent failure to meet requirements of rehearsal tasks, performance or assignment, and/or consistently fails to meet any of the standards of a "C" grade.

** This syllabus is subject to change based on the progress of the class. If so you will receive a revised syllabus via e-mail or blackboard.*

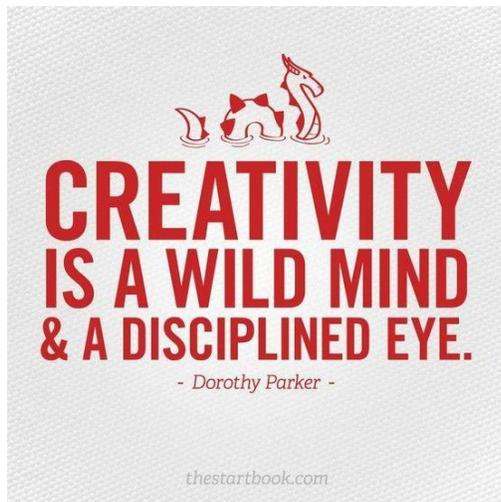
Additional Course and Student Information

Special Needs – Students who experience stress or other difficulties during exams may arrange to have special examinations through the office of Student Support Services at Sherman Hall (Academic IV Building: B• Wing), Room 345 or online at www.umbc.edu/sss. Students utilizing Students Support services are responsible to inform the faculty member at least one week in advance of each test so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

Students who experience stress or other difficulties and find themselves in need of talking with someone regarding personal issues, trouble adjusting to the challenges of college life, anxiety, depression, or concerns about course work, social life, or the everyday pressures of being a college student are encouraged to contact University Counseling Services located in the Student Development & Success Center or online at www.umbc.edu/counseling.

UMBC Honor Code statement

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include suspension or dismissal. To read the full policy on academic integrity, consult the UMBC Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, or the UMBC Policies section of the UMBC directory.



Studio Course Policies & Resources

Eve Muson

ebmuson@umb.edu

PAHB Room 328

Blackboard

Blackboard is the vehicle by which I share information, course materials, assignments, rubrics, readings, emails, etc. I update it frequently, so you must check it often. If I've posted something, I assume you have read it. If you are unfamiliar with Blackboard, or need a refresher on a specific function, go to the "Blackboard and Resources" tab. Go to the "Course Schedule" tab to find your weekly tasks: readings, writing assignments, rehearsal instructions, and other materials.

Attendance Policy

Since the work in this class is experiential and your scene partner & ensemble depend on your presence, attendance is critical. If absolutely

necessary, you may miss two class periods before your course grade is affected. This includes injury, illness or family emergency. Each additional absence will result in your final grade being dropped one full letter grade. Extended sickness, disability or family crises will be accommodated on an individual basis; students in such situations must speak to me as soon as possible to discuss options. Four absences mean automatic failure. You may not miss class on a day when a presentation is scheduled. If you do you will receive an F. If you need to be excused for a university-related activity or religious observance, I need to know within the first week of the semester and then given a reminder two weeks before so I can schedule the class around the absence.

Lateness is not permitted. You must be **in** the room and ready to work when class begins. After two late arrivals, each additional one will be considered an absence. Leaving early is also considered an absence.

If, in the unlikely event you must be absent or are running late, you must email both me and your scene partner (if applicable) **BEFORE** class begins to let us know. Please do not ask someone else to be your messenger. You are responsible for your own communication.

Class Attire

See the department's Clothing for Class & Productions on BlackBoard. In addition to the departmental guidelines, in my class, you must wear **CLEAN SNEAKERS** that fit well. I do not allow you to work in your socks, flip-flops, boots.

Professional Decorum

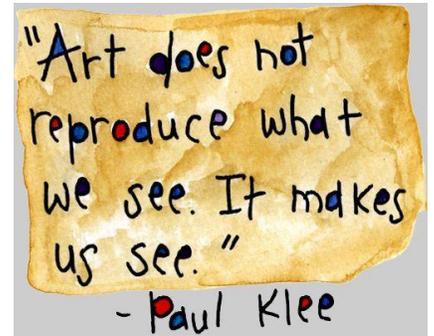
As an art, acting is a living expression of the human condition. It is a sharing of experience, beliefs, ideas, and dreams expressed through voice, body, and mind. We will be doing activities that may ask you to take emotional and physical risks. Improvisation, rehearsal, and performance often require you to do things you might find goofy, embarrassing, or even scary in another setting. A sense of humor and a spirit of adventure and curiosity will take you far in this class. Active, open-minded, and bold experimentation is the only way forward.

In order for this class to be successful and for your time spent here to be worthwhile, you must help create an environment in which risk is encouraged, undertaken safely, and rewarded. I expect that you will respect and support one another fully, as I will respect and support you. This includes being aware of your own and each other's physical and emotional boundaries, and honoring each other's differences. At the same time, the work will also ask you to challenge yourself and each other in new directions.

The nature of the work in this course sometimes requires physical contact among students, and between instructor and students. If you are uncomfortable with such contact for any reason, please discuss this with me immediately. Plays can also involve the use of expletives. If this is of concern to you, see me immediately.

The obvious

- You may not eat in class. You can have water in a closed container.
- Do not lie down in class when watching others doing their work. It's rude.
- EVERYONE is mutually responsible for setting up and striking the room at the start and end of each class.
- Pick up all of your belongings and materials at the end of the class.
- If you need to use the bathroom, exit and return discreetly without making a disturbance. As always, discussion is meant to be friendly and informal, but it's nice if you raise your hand. Verbal abuse (and all abuse, frankly) will not be tolerated.



Technology & Devices

See the department's policies regarding the use of computers, phones, and other devices in the classroom. We often use computers and phones for our compositions, and so you can use them as directed. Other than that, all electronic devices will be turned off & stored away. Outside of the classroom, you must have access to a working word processor and printer, an email address that you check frequently, a telephone number that works and for which you check messages frequently, and web access.

Submitting Written Assignments

You will almost always submit your written assignments via attachments to Blackboard. Do not email me the assignment. Unless otherwise instructed, please use the following format:

- Microsoft Word ONLY. Do not use any other word processing software.
- Times New Roman, 12-point type, 1.5 spaced, 1" margins.
- Save your document as [Your Last Name][Assignment Name.] Attach the document to the assignment page in Blackboard.

If submitted late – or in incorrect format -- an assignment grade will be dropped by 20% for every day after the due date. It is often to your benefit to turn in an assignment late rather than get no credit at all. After five days you will get an F.

Writing Counts!

Even though the writing in this course is fairly informal, you are still expected to do it well and at a college level. Your writing must be clear, concise, and well organized with excellent sentence/paragraph construction, and free of spelling, grammar, or syntax errors. If you have a lot of trouble with your writing, I will ask you to do visit a writing tutor at the Learning Resources Center.

Room Use

To book a studio for outside of class rehearsal, go to the <http://theatre.umbc.edu/current-students/rehearsalrooms/> and follow the instructions.

You will have swipe access to the acting studios. Please keep the doors closed and locked at all times. Do not prop the doors open. Bring your i.d. card with you when you leave a studio and do not give your i.d. card to anyone else. You must restore the room to its original condition at the end of rehearsal.

Student Resources

Go to the Bb Student Resources Folder to find information on the wide range of academic, wellness, and administrative support services provided by UMBC to help students succeed.

Schedule is subject to change. All future adjustments will be on Blackboard.

WEEK 2

Tues, Sep 4

In class: Viewpoints of Space & Time

Blog: Did you start your daily 7-Minute Blog?

Readings: (under "Readings" tab): "Oddey. Beginnings" & "Oddey.Intro"

Thurs, Sep 6

In class: Viewpoints of Space & Time

Writing Submitted by 1:00 p.m.: Your Creative Autobiography (under "Assignments" tab)

WEEK 3

Tues, Sep 11

In-Class: Viewpoints of Space & Time, Tableaux Exercises

Read: "12 Thoughts on Devising" & "Creativity & Dell'Arte"

Thurs, Sep 13

In-Class: continue Tableaux Exercises, Group-Generated Story

WEEK 4

Tues, Sep 18

In-class: Assign groups for Still Life project, continue Week 3 work

Read: "Towards a Process of Critical Response"

Thurs, Sep 20

In-class: Show Still Life Project Round 1; prep for weekend rehearsal assignment

Read: "Potholes in the Road," "Resolving Disputes"

WEEK 5

Tues, Sep 25

In-class: Show Still Life Round 1; begin Gesture exercises

Rehearsal Assignment due: Still Life Project Round 1 (instructions in Still Life tab)

Read: Anne Bogart, "Viewpoints & Composition"

Thurs, Sep 27

In-class: Show Still Life Project Round 1; prepare for Still Life Round 2

WEEK 6

Tues, Oct 2

In-class: Show Still Life Round 2; continue Gesture exercises

Rehearsal Assignment due: Still Life Project Round 2 (instructions in Still Life tab)

Read: Anne Bogart, "Viewpoints & Composition"

Blog Update: Starting today, increase your Blog activity to 10 minutes per day. Choose a classmate or two and spend 3 minutes commenting on their blogs. Your comment(s) must start with the phrase, "This makes me think about..." Do I hafta do this every day? Yup.

Thurs, Oct 4

In-class: Show Still Life Project Round 2; prepare for 10 Meter Tower Project

Writing due: Submit Self-Reflection for Still Life Project by 1:00 p.m. (under Writing Assignments tab) and

for each of your Still Life project group mates, print, complete & return the collaboration rubric (under Writing Assignments)

WEEK 7

Tues, Oct 9

In-class: Show 10 Meter Tower Project Round 1

Rehearsal Assignment due: 10 Meter Tower Round 1 (instructions in 10 Meter Tower tab – duh)

Thurs, Oct 11

In-class: continue 10 Meter Tower Round 1
[She Like Girls tech week]

WEEK 8

Tues, Oct 16

In-class exercises

Read: TBA

Thurs, Oct 18

In-class exercises; prepare for 10 Meter Tower Round 2
[She Like Girls Performance Week 1]

Week 9

Tues, Oct 23

In-class: Show 10 Meter Tower Project Round 2

Rehearsal Assignment: 10 Meter Tower Project Round 2

Thurs, Oct 25

In-class: Continue 10 Meter Project Round 2; prepare for Sound & Silence Project

Writing due: Submit Self-Reflection for 10 Meter Tower Project by 1:00 p.m. (under Writing Assignments tab) and

for each of your 10 Meter Tower group mates, print, complete & return the collaboration rubric (under Writing Assignments)

[She Like Girls Performance Week 2]

WEEK 10

Tues, Oct 31

In-class: Show Sound & Silence Project Round 1

Rehearsal Assignment: Sound & Silence Round 1 Project

Read: Anne Bogart, "Vocal Viewpoints" (in Readings folder)

Thurs, Nov 2

In-class: Show Sound & Silence Round 1; prep for Sound & Silence Round 2

WEEK 11

Tues, Nov 7

In-class: Show Sound & Silence Project Round 2

Watch: "Creating Chorus" and "SpyMonkey" videos (in Sound & Silence Project)

Thurs, Nov 9

In-class: Continue Sound & Silence Round 2

Writing due:

Self-Reflection for Sound & Silence Project

and

for each of your S&S group mates, print, complete and hand-in a collaboration rubric

[DCMP tech week]

Week 12

Tues, Nov 13

In-class: The Moebius Project

Thurs, Nov 15

In-class: The Moebius Project

Memorize: Your assigned portion of The Moebius

Reading due: TBA

Writing due: TBA

[DCMP Performance Week]

Week 13

Tues, Nov 20

In-class: Discussion of Moebius Project; prepare for final project

Writing due: Moebius Project Reflection (instructions in Writing Assignments tab)

Reading due: Improv Everywhere Website (links in Moebius tab)

Listen: This American Life, "The Spy Who Loved Everyone"

NOTE: Do the readings and listening before you write your paper.

Thurs, Nov 22 – NO CLASS--THANKSGIVING

Week 14

Tues, December 4

In-class: Show Final Project Round 1; Exercises for Final Project

Thurs, Dec 6

In-class: Show Final Project Round 2; prep for weekend assignment

Watch: Chair Piece and Round-by-Through videos (in Final Project Tab)

Week 15

Tues, December 4

In-class: Show Final Project Round 1; Exercises for Final Project

Reading due: Frantic Assembly Packet, Viewpoints Confined Conflict, Pinter Pause Handout (in Readings tab)

Thurs, Dec 5

In-class: Show Final Project Round 2; prep for weekend assignment

Watch: Frantic Assembly videos, Pinter pause video (in Final Project tab)

[Semester II productions audition week]

Week 16

Tues, December 11

In-class: Continue work on Final Project

Evening – put Study Day program together – ATTENDANCE MANDATORY!!!

Week 17

Tues, December 18, 1-3 PM "Final Exam Day" – ATTENDANCE MANDATORY!!

In-class – end-of-semester debrief

Writing Assignment Due: End-of-Semester Reflection; Portfolio of Blog Posts (in Writing Assignments)