New Course for Field of Study
Proposed Field of Study: Visual and Performing Arts

Course number: THTR 215

Full course title: PHYSICAL THEATRE: ACTOR AS CREATOR

Catalog description:
This course is designed to introduce students to the contemporary approaches to theatre-making which focus on the body. Through a series of workshops and creative projects, students will learn techniques for generating original material, developing their spontaneity and creativity, and creating theatre that is personally meaningful and collectively engaging.

Prerequisites: None

Units of credit: 1 unit

Estimate of student enrollment: 16

By whom and when the course will be offered:
The course will be taught annually by Dorothy Holland or other appropriate theatre faculty and/or guest artists.

Staffing implications: No additional staffing will be necessary.

Adequacy of library, technology, and other resources:
Library and technology resources are adequate. Our library is adequately staffed with books, periodicals, videos, and databases to support this class. There may be a few additional print and video resources needed at some point; we will work with Linda Fairtile and Paul Porterfield to review available materials.

Relation to existing courses and curricula in other departments, programs, and schools:
The course is designed for any liberal arts students with an interest in the performing arts and/or an interest in utilizing the arts as a vehicle through which to explore other areas of interest in the humanities, sciences, social sciences, and education.

Indication of approval by department or program: Approved on April 6, 2009.

Purpose and rationale for the course (including evidence of student interest and how the course relates to the department or program curriculum):
Students have repeatedly expressed an interest in following: more advanced and intensive acting classes, a desire to generate their own original work, the possibilities for exploring performing in non-traditional performance spaces. This course addresses all of these. In addition, the final unit on the "Business of Making Art," also addresses students' persistent post-graduation concerns: How to continue creating work? How to form and sustain an ensemble? How to utilize theatre practices in other fields? In short, how to keep their creative spirit alive and pay their bills at the same time. Lastly, the course aligns with our department’s commitment to interdisciplinary work that incorporates theatre and dance with music, visual arts, and other academic disciplines throughout the university.

FSVP Credit:
Students will study representative works and artists engaged a physical approach to theatre arts. Students will be introduced to the methods and processes for the creation of original works through a series of creative and technical exercises. Students will engage in a series of creative projects (creating short performance pieces) throughout the semester. They will collaborate to create and perform an original theatre piece at the end of the semester.
Description:
This course will introduce students to physical approaches to theatre in the training of actors, the formation of companies, and the generation of new work. The emphasis is on the actor-as-creator rather than the actor as interpreter. Training in physical theatre is a process of self-discovery as well as an opportunity to develop new skills, new knowledge, and new ways of seeing and creating. Performance is mode of inquiry, with research and gathering of source material from potentially any field of student interest (gender, politics, current events, science & math, fairytales, poetry, literature, painting and sculpture, media, popular culture (to name only a few). Students will develop increased awareness and appreciation of the formal elements of theatre, and explore different structuring patterns and principles that influence the use of time, space and energy in performance.

Course Methodology:
Readings, videos, class discussions, exercises, incremental creative projects, composition assignments, presentations, final projects, reflective journal, and final paper.

Brief outline of the course (detailing the topics to be covered):

Required Texts:

On Reserve:

Optional Texts for Individual Student Presentations:

WEEK 1
History/Overview of Physical Theatre theories and practices:
- Commedia dell’arte, Jacques Copeau, Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Etienne Descroux, Jacques Lecoq, Peter Brook, Eugenio Barba, Tadashi Suzuki, and Anne Bogart.

WEEKS 2 & 3
Workshops:
- Physical Awareness & Energy
- Spontaneity & Sense of Play

WEEK 4
Workshops & Group Creative Projects:
- Neutral Mask & Character Mask
- Lecoq levels of energy

WEEK 5
Presentations on contemporary companies / artists (e.g.,): Ariane Mnouchkine & Theatre du Soleil (Paris); Simon McBurney & Theatre de Complicite (London); Theatre de la Jeune Lune (Minneapolis); UMO
Ensemble (Seattle); Robert Lepage (Canada); De La Guarda (Argentina); DV8 (London); Lois Weaver and Peggy Shaw, Split Britches (New York); Pig Iron Theatre (Philadelphia); Steven Berkoff (London); Mabou Mines (New York); The Wooster Group (New York); Barrabas (Ireland); Wlodzimierz Staniewski & Gardzienice Theatre (Poland); Tadashi Suzuki Company of Toga (Japan); Anne Bogart & The SITI Company (New York).

WEEKS 6 - 9
Workshops & Group Creative Projects:
Viewpoints
Language and Physical Theatre - dealing with text

WEEKS 10- 12
Devising & Composition
Non-traditional performance spaces & performances

WEEK 13 & 14
Rehearse/Refine Final Performance Projects
Public Performance - Final Projects

Final Week -- The Business of Making Art:
501c3 designation, grant-writing, contracts, securing rights for source material, fundraising and promotion. Auditions. Agents. Fringe Festivals and International festivals.

Graded Components:
Participation & Collaboration
Student Presentations --Theatre Company / Artist
Weekly Creative Projects
Final Composition Project
Ongoing Process Journal
Final Reflective Paper

Sign-offs :
Staffing (Dona Hickey) Sign-off date: __   
Library Resources (Linda Fairtile) Sign-off date: __4/7/09__
Classroom Technology (Kevin Creamer) Sign-off date: __4/8/09__
Classrooms (Susan Howson) Sign-off date: __4/7/09__