

University of West Georgia
Fall 2019 Syllabus
Playwriting I: Devising

Instructor: Christine Fuchs
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Course #: THEA 3415-01
Course Meets: Tues/Thurs 2-3:15pm, Old Auditorium

Texts: *Strategies for Playbuilding: Helping Groups Translate Issues into Theatre* by Will Weigler
Your Handy Companion to Devising and Physical Theatre by Pilar Orti

Required Performances:

Townsend Center for the Performing Arts. For ticket information, please call (678) 839-4722.

The Gospel At Colonus @ Townsend Center Mainstage Theater
October 9 -12 @ 7:30pm
October 13 @ 2:30pm

Abigail/1702 @ Townsend Center Dangle Theater
November 13-16 @ 7:30pm
November 17 @ 2:30pm
November 19-22 @ 7:30pm

Course Description

Devised Theatre is an alternative approach to playwriting that emphasizes collaborative ensemble-building and a focus on movement based play-making. Devised theatre may also encompass community research and outreach, and social and political awareness. Utilizing improvisational techniques to create performance-based research, students will explore and make plays based on their communities, interests, and concerns.

Degree Learning Outcomes addressed in this course

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of selected plays, theatrical conventions, and theatrical movements important in the formation of the modern theatre.
- Students will demonstrate skills in analyzing plays, using theatre technology, and conducting research.
- Students will express through performance, writing, speaking and other modes of communication the results of research and critical judgment, indicated by a demonstrable ability to reach an audience effectively through at least one of the components of theatrical art.
- Students will illustrate awareness of the complex human condition acquired through aesthetic and intellectual perceptions as evidenced in various modes of theatrical production.
- Students will apply skills learned in course to a variety of work and social environments.

- Students will function safely and effectively while using theatre technology.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the various means (acting, directing, designing, constructing, playwriting, etc.) through which a theatrical concept is realized.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate proficiency applying the techniques of devised theatre, including improvisational performance, collaborative writing, and non-textual play development.
- Students will develop basic playwriting skills integral to both devised and traditional performances.
- Students will express the results of their research and writing through showcase performance of their devised plays.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EXPECTATIONS

1. Attendance is mandatory. You are required to attend all class sessions and to actively participate. Students are allowed ONE unexcused/excused absence (not on presentation days). Absences beyond the one, whether excused or unexcused, will result in a 5 point deduction (from the total points) for any absence thereafter.
2. BE ON TIME. Class begins promptly at 2pm. Two (2) lates will count as one (1) absence.
3. All assigned work must be on time or it will not be accepted.
4. Be prepared for physical warm-ups and to sit on the floor during every class; wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes. Tie your hair back and do not wear excessive jewelry, skirts, heels, sandals, boots or tight fitting jeans. Hats are not permitted during class. Also, NO FLIP FLOPS!! This applies to everyone.
5. There is no eating or gum chewing in class. A bottle of water is permitted.
6. Please use the restroom before entering class.
7. Cell phones are not permitted during class.
8. All assignments must be typed.
9. Disruptive Behavior: Faculty, staff, and students have the right to be treated with respect and professionalism by students and peers in all classes and activities sponsored by the Theater department. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. If, in the opinion of the responsible faculty member, a student becomes disruptive in class or rehearsal, faculty may exercise their judgment on how best to address the situation, be it by requiring the student to leave, calling Campus Police, or taking other steps deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of the class, rehearsal or group. Such action may affect the student's final grade and standing in the University.

This class *requires* out of classroom work, specifically rehearsals and attending the departments productions. *If you are unable to make the time commitment to class meetings, additional outside rehearsals, attending performances and the thorough exploration of the material, you should consider taking another course.*

A few thoughts on Participation & Professionalism

This class 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. Participation also includes attendance. Not showing up for class and lateness **will** affect your grade.

- Since expanding your sense of self is part of the devising process, a positive attitude and a willingness to expand one's comfort zone are expected and are part of the participation grade.
- 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 me as soon as possible.

ASSIGNMENTS

Five Interviews (20 points)

Create a short questionnaire to give to five random students, faculty or staff members that target questions about current events/issues facing our community, county, state, or country. Each student will administer the questions to five individual **strangers. One on One only. No Group interviews. Also, you CANNOT know the people whom you interview.** These interviews **MUST** happen in person as people communicate verbally and non-verbally. **Coding of the five interviews will be due on 9/17. Please hand in a physical copy at the top of class.**

Coding of Interviews (20 points)

Students will code their interviews and transcribe them, breaking the coding into subjects: topic, opinion, emotion or any other pattern you may notice since other subjects may arise once you have transcribed all the interviews. Students will create a "Key" (i.e. color coding) for each subject as well as a "Key" for language patterns (i.e. how the interviewees speak/speech patterns). Students will also note the interviewees body language and write a side note about your perception of said body language. Failure to complete the Coding portion of the Solo Project will result in a zero for the five interviews, coding and solo project.

Solo Project (20 points)

Each student will research and make a 4 minute solo piece that is based on the interviews. There are no parameters to creating this piece other than the 4 minute time limitation and that it be about your findings from the interviews. Any piece that is shorter than 30 seconds in length will have points deducted. Any piece longer than four minutes will also result in a points deduction. Each project must have dialogue, movement, props, lights, sound (music), costumes and use of architecture (set) – all the elements of Moment work. No phones are to be a part of the piece. Create a theatrical space as if you were actually performing in a theatre.

Readings (30 points – 10 points each)

You will be assigned readings that we will discuss in class, so READ. You will also be required to submit journal entries based on the readings.

- **Three Journal Essays: Based on the assigned readings**, these journal entries are to be typed, a Word document and a minimum of 500 words each. Upload to Course Den BEFORE the start of class time. PDF's or pages not accepted.

****Do not summarize the chapters. Write about the purposes of the exercises, how they**

translate from reading to doing, identify exercises that speak directly to you, and those that you don't comprehend.

Performance Response (20 points)

Details TBD. The paper should be a minimum of 750 words. MLA format (TNR, double spaced, one inch margins). College level writing is REQUIRED.

Research Performance Project (20 points performance/10 points portfolio)

We will create groups of 3-4 people (dependent on class size) and each group will select a current event topic, one that is in the news today and that is a national or international issue. Examples: mass shootings in the U.S., Russian hacking into Brexit elections in the UK and in the presidential election in the US, women's reproductive rights, sexual harassment, gender equality, etc. In other words, your project must be researched based!!

Upon selecting a topic, each group will create a 10-minute play about said topic.

- The play must have a point of view
- Each group member will read and write a response to four (4) different articles about the topic and include them in the group's portfolio that will be uploaded to your Google team drive BEFORE the start of class/performance day. No articles may be duplicated.

The portfolio will be composed of three sections:

- Traditional Research: this will include each group members' articles along with a written paragraph (minimum 50 words) on **each** article describing how the information was used in devising the play.
- Performance Research: Discuss how scenes were created and how they evolved. I don't want to know what you talked about; I want to know what you *did*.
- The Play: Please include a cover page for the portfolio that has the tentative name of the play, the names of the members of the group, and a short summary of the play (minimum 50 words).
- On the day of the presentation, upload all documents to your group Google drive (please add me to it) BEFORE class begins (1:59pm).

Final Performance Project (40 points – performance 25 points, portfolio 15 points)

This project is a continuation of what was presented for the Research Performance Project. All groups will converge and find common ground creating a new piece with elements of each (prior) piece. **The entire play should last a minimum of 30 minutes.** On the performance date the ENTIRE group will submit one portfolio that includes:

- A (minimum 750 words) paper from **each** deviser that describes in detail the individual's experience in the group: were you the leader, or did you add ideas but let others take over the organization? Did you feel that your voice was heard? How did the groups combine? Did the small group dynamic or vibe continue, or was it lost? After working in a small group and then graduating to a bigger one, what are your insights on collaboration? Please feel free to add more insights as they come up.
- A cover sheet with the title of the play and each deviser's name listed.
- The play.
- Other Sources must be added to this process. PRIMARY SOURCES ONLY.

Grading:

Participation & Professionalism	30pts
Five Interviews	10pts
Coding of Interviews	20pts
Solo Project	20pts
Three Journal Entries (10pts each)	30pts
Performance Response	20pts
Research Project Performance & Portfolio	30pts
Final Performance Project & Portfolio	<u>40pts</u> - 20pts – (Perf) /5pts – SAC /15 – (Port) 200pts

180-200pts	A
160-179pts	B
140-159pts	C
120-139pts	D
Below 119pts	F

Federal, State and University Policies Regarding Course Work

https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/assets/docs/faculty-resources/common_language_for_course_syllabi_v2.pdf

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Accessibility Services: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact Accessibility Services.

Center for Academic Success: The Center for Academic Success provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu

University Writing Center: The University Writing Center assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or writing@westga.edu

ONLINE COURSES

UWG takes students' privacy concerns seriously: technology-enhanced and partially and fully online courses use sites and entities beyond UWG and students have the right to know the privacy policies of these entities. For more information on privacy and accessibility for the most commonly used sites, as well as technology requirements visit the UWG Online site. Students enrolled in online courses can find answers to many of their questions in the Online/Off-Campus Student Guide. If a student is experiencing distress and needs help, please see the resources available at the UWG Cares site. Online counseling is also available for online students.

HONOR CODE

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the Student Handbook.

UWG EMAIL POLICY

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her email.

CREDIT HOUR POLICY

The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

HB 280 (Campus Carry)

UWG follows University System of Georgia (USG) guidance:
http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information#

You may also visit our website for help with USG Guidance:
<https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php>

Course Schedule

Syllabus and/or Course Schedule are subject to revision by the Instructor at any point during the semester

This section of the syllabus provides an outline of what you can expect to experience throughout the semester. However, I believe that learning occurs best when teachers have the flexibility to adapt their plans in light of students' responses and questions. This, therefore, is my attempt to share with you what I think will happen from week to week. It is subject to change, based on my assessment of our collective needs. Each class, I will clarify the exact assignment for the subsequent class.

Date	Class	Homework
Thurs Aug 15	Introduction of Class & Discuss Syllabus Ensemble Building Exercises: Tableaux Work; Theatre vs Devising	Find a topic for the research project
Tues Aug 20	Ensemble Building Exercises: Tableaux Work – Poem: 1) the moment before; the moment after 2) how he really is; how his father sees him	Watch <i>Devising The American Family</i>
TH 08/22	Discussion of Video Ensemble Building Exercises – Introduce Moment Work: solo, partner, group	Come up with three (3) topics for Solo Project; how to ask better questions
T 08/27	Energizer game (1/12/123/1234); Moment work – Architecture & exploring the space Discussion of topics – topic approved	Read Weigler, pgs 1-29
TH 08/29	Discuss reading Warm-up (what are you doing); Introduce Moment work using props Due: Questions for interview survey	Read Weigler, pgs 31-50
T 09/03	No class	Work on transcribing for coding
TH 09/05	Discuss reading Warm-up/relaxation Discuss Interviews – Challenges? Similarities? Clarify assignment. Moment work	Work on transcribing for coding
T 09/10	Material/Ensemble building exercises – knock knee chase Moment work w/architecture, props & using one line from their topic	
TH 09/12	Discuss reading	Read: Weigler, pp 51-74
T 09/17	Due: Coding w/Body Language (key) Material/Ensemble building exercises	Read: Orti, pgs 1- 31
TH 09/19	Discuss Reading Review	Read Orti, pgs. 33-50
T 09/24	Discuss Reading Solo Pieces Rough Presentation (for evaluation/feedback)	
TH 09/26	Reflection of process/solo pieces rough presentations	Write Journal Essay #1, due 10/01

T 10/01	Due by 1:59pm: Journal Essay #1 (covering Weigler, pgs 1-74 & Orti, pgs 1-50)	
TH 10/03	No Class – Fall Break	
T 10/08	Solo Pieces Presentation	<i>Gospel at Colonus</i> opens 10/9
TH 10/10	Solo Pieces Presentation	Read Weigler, pgs 75-84
T 10/15	Discuss reading Discuss <i>Gospel/Colonus</i> Discussion of process, Groups assigned. First group meeting. Topics due by 10/22	Meet with group to finalize topic
TH 10/17	Group Moment work	Read Orti, pgs 51-69
T 10/22	Discuss Reading Topics Due Kitty Genovese Article	Bring in articles of your topic
TH 10/24	Article Work	Write Journal Essay #2, due 10/29
T 10/29	Due by 1:59pm: Journal Essay #2 (covering Weigler, pgs 75-84; Orti, pgs 51-69) In class work session	
TH 10/31	Research Project <i>Rough</i> Performance & Portfolio due (for evaluation/feedback)	Read Weigler, pgs 85-101
T 11/05	Debrief – what worked/what didn't work? Where do we go from here?	
TH 11/07	Research Project Presentations	
T 11/12	Research Project Presentations	<i>Abigail/1702</i> opens 11/13
TH 11/14	DUE by 1:59pm: Journal Entry #3 (covering Weigler 85-101); Debrief & Combine Groups	
T 11/19	Discussion of <i>Abigail/1702</i> In class work	
TH 11/21	In class work	
Week of 11/25-11/29	Thanksgiving Break	
T 12/03	“Dress” Rehearsal – as many technical elements as possible!	
TH 12/05	Final Presentation & Portfolio Due (via Google drive)	
T 12/10, 2-4pm	TBD	

PHYSICAL CONTACT AGREEMENT

Physical contact between instructor and student, student and student, and student and the self, is a traditional and effective pedagogical tool used to train actors in acting classes, stage movement classes, voice, speech, and dialect classes, rehearsals and coaching sessions. The instructor may employ physical contact in order to educate and facilitate:

1. Safe and effective motion
2. Alignment
3. Breathing and sound production
4. The identification of habitual holding patterns and areas of tension
5. Flexibility and / or mobility
6. Release and / or relaxation
7. The deepening of an emotional or behavioral response

Physical contact will always take place during class time and rehearsals. If you have an injury, chronic condition, or area of sensitivity or pain, please notify me immediately. If you are uncomfortable at any time with the physical contact, please inform me immediately.

While I will make every effort to provide a safe environment for students, the teacher assumes no liability for injuries resulting from participation in class, rehearsals, or coaching sessions, if applicable.

I, _____, agree to the above. I understand and agree to follow the course syllabus. I further understand and agree to monitor myself and to voice my limitations.

Student signature _____

Date _____

Please return this page signed by Tuesday August 20, 2019.