

THR 490:004 – MUSICAL THEATRE WORKSHOP – Spring 2012

Thursday's 1:30 -4:10

PAB A105 (Theatre Space)

***Note – This Class will be relocated to JC G34 February 23 and April 26 due to production conflicts**

James Gardiner

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COURSE OBJECTIVE:

Because a musical theatre actor's work is two fold – the actor's work on the voice and the actor's work on the role – this course is designed to address both aspects of that process. This course will involve the continued development of each student's physical instrument while focusing on the special challenges and techniques that face the musical theatre actor.

Specific objectives:

- To familiarize oneself with the musical theatre literature from the early 20th century to the present
- To perform in various styles of musical theatre
- To sharpen audition skills and build an audition book
- To develop the skill of working quickly and efficiently

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and active participation are expected and extremely important. Only emergency and medical absences with an official note from a medical professional will be excused. Each unexcused absence will reduce your grade. Promptness is also expected and is a professional courtesy. Every **TWO** late arrivals will be counted as one absence.

Throughout the semester you will have various assignments, listed on the calendar below. These must be prepared and presented on the assigned date.

You are required to maintain a CLASS NOTEBOOK. Note experiences that you find helpful. Collect your observations on musical theatre, class notes, outside observations, thoughts – anything that relates to the class work. It is imperative as an artist that you can articulate your thoughts and observations.

You are required to build "YOUR BOOK" throughout the course. Find songs that work for you. Arrange them alphabetically and by type and make sure they are suitable for any accompanist. We will discuss the requirements of "YOUR BOOK" on the first day of the course.

GOOD HEALTH IS ESSENTIAL for any musical theatre actor. If you don't have it actively strive to acquire it. A commitment is required here to care for your voice and body as a professional instrument.

EVALUATION/GRADING:

Evaluation of your work will be individualized.

80% of your grade will be based upon your presentations. This is largely based on your own demonstrated effort and improvement of the skills and techniques discussed during each class.

20% of your grade will be based on attendance and active participation.

Grading Standards:

A – Excellence in academic requirements and artistic accomplishments.

B – Above average achievement in academic and artistic accomplishments.

C – Average, reflects average work, basic completion of assignments.

D – Below average.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (*subject to change*):

1/26 – Course Introduction, distribute and discuss syllabus, discussion of “YOUR BOOK”, lecture and discussion of how to analyze and approach a song using Maury Yeston’s “Unusual Way” from the musical Nine, discussion of first presentation and group assignments.

2/2 – Contemporary Up-tempo or Ballad from List (1968 – Today) **GROUP A**
Presentation

2/9 – Contemporary Up-tempo or Ballad from List (1968 – Today) **GROUP B**
Presentation

2/16 – Vocal Workshop with Erin Driscoll (Washington DC actress and Helen Hayes award winner) – Singer’s Choice – **GROUP A and B** - Student may present the contemporary ballad or up-tempo that they worked on in the previous class or any song that they find vocally challenging. Not every student will have the opportunity to present this week. Students will be selected at random.

2/23 – **Class at JC G34** – Musical Theatre Workshop with Matthew Gardiner (Associate Artistic Director of Signature Theatre in Arlington, VA) – **GROUP A and B**
– COME PREPARED TO MOVE!

3/1 – Classic Up-tempo or Ballad from List (1927 – 1967) **GROUP B** Presentation

3/8 - Classic Up-tempo or Ballad from List (1927 – 1967) **GROUP A** Presentation

3/15 – NO CLASS – Spring Break

3/22 – Contemporary Pop/Rock Song from List – **GROUP B** Presentation

3/29 – Contemporary Pop/Rock Song from List – **GROUP A** Presentation

4/5 – The Perfect 32 or 16 Bar Cut – Audition Workshop – **GROUP A and B** - Discussion on how to prepare for a musical theatre audition, what constitutes the perfect audition song, come in prepared to sing a 32 bar cut of either a song you've worked on this semester or something entirely new. Not every student will have the opportunity to present this week. Students will be selected at random.

4/12 – Mock Musical Theatre Audition – **GROUP A and B** – DC artists (TBA) will help evaluate students audition skills and offer advice on how the musical actor can best present themselves at auditions. The specific audition information will be emailed to every student a few days prior to the class in an attempt to simulate a real audition experience. Every student will present this week. **COME DRESSED FOR AUDITION!** Final showcase assignments handed out.

4/22 – Final Showcase Preparation with Erin Driscoll – **GROUP B** – for the final showcase student's will present a song that they've already worked on during the semester. James and Erin will select this song for them and this class is a final opportunity for the student to finesse their material vocally.

4/26 – **JC G34** – Final Showcase Preparation with Erin Driscoll -- **GROUP A** – for the final showcase student's will present a song that they've already worked on during the semester. James and Erin will select this song for them and this class is a final opportunity for the student to finesse their material vocally.

5/3 – Final Showcase Dress Rehearsal and Work Session

5/10 – Final Showcase – 1:30 -2:45 preparation, 2:45 – 4:15 Final Presentation

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

As a courtesy to others in the class, and in accordance with George Mason University policy, please turn off all beepers, cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. Also, please refrain from using Instant Messenger or email during class.

Copyright Law

Each student is individually responsible for his or her own work on assignments and creative projects. A willingness to learn from and share ideas with other students is important and equally important is that students do their own work. The use of other artists' images, videos, sounds, music is allowed as long as your inclusion of these creative works falls within the realm of "fair use" as described by copyright law. Students should always cite their sources. Try to use original source material as often as possible.

Honor Code

The Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Undergraduate Catalog, applies to all students in this class. The Honor Code requires that the work you do be your own. As a university faculty member, I have an obligation to refer the names of students who may have violated the Honor Code to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously.

Using someone else's words, ideas, music or art without giving them credit is plagiarism, a very serious Honor Code offense. It is crucial to understand how to avoid plagiarism when using material from other sources. No grade is important enough to justify cheating, for which there are serious consequences. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or a member of the Counseling Center staff.

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.

Missing class for productions

Under what circumstances is involvement with a Mason Players production justification for missing a class? Here are the general ground rules which we work with:

- 1) Students are never required to miss a class to participate on a Mason Players production. This includes rehearsals, load-ins, performances, etc.
- 2) Students are asked to provide their class schedule when auditioning, being selected as a designer, etc. When cast, etc, directors accept these conflicts.
- 3) Subject to the attendance policies of a given class, students may request of their instructor to miss a class or portion to participate in critical activities. Such a request should be rarely be made and is subject to approval of the instructor. The syllabus policy on absence would apply. Student academic success is the priority.
- 4) In the case of our Mainstage including weekday matinees on Friday, because of the unique nature of the situation, the director of the production will provide an email confirming a student's participation in the performance (on stage, back stage, etc), but it is still at the discretion of the instructor to excuse the absence. As this conflict, if it exists, is known at least 6 weeks in advance, it is the student's

responsibility to confirm that they will be able to participate in the performance so alternative arrangements can be made if necessary.

Given the dual nature of our learning experience - in the classroom and in production - it is not surprising that schedules sometimes conflict. In the end, we are an academic institution, and that is where the priority lies.

GRADING:

Letter grades will be assigned based on the George Mason University undergraduate grading system in which a letter grade of "A" is equal to 4.00 grade points, "A-" equals 3.67 grade points, etc. See the Academic Policies section of the *University Catalog* (available online at www.gmu.edu) for more information.

Grading Standards: What makes a project or other assignment an "A"? (B, C, D, F)

Grading Standards:

- A grade of "A" is given for superlative work that demonstrates a profound commitment to the course material, and further, employs this material as a springboard for independent thought and work.
- A grade of "B" is given for very good work that completely fulfills all the requirements of the course in a conscientious and dedicated manner, and that demonstrates mastery of the course content.
- A grade of "C" is given for work that fulfills all the requirements of the course in a satisfactory manner, but that falls short of demonstrating rigor and mastery.
- A grade of "D" is given for work that is unsatisfactory in content, but meets the standards of submission.
- A grade of "F" is given for work that fails to fulfill the requirements of the course.

All communications regarding this course must occur via Mason email accounts.

GMU Add/Drop Policy: The last day to drop this class with no tuition liability is **1/31/2012**. The last day to drop this class without Dean's permission is **2/24/2012, by 5pm**. The selective withdrawal period is 2/27/2012 – 3/30/2012. It is the student's responsibility to check to verify that they are properly enrolled as no credit will be awarded

Honor Code, Copyright, & Computing Policies: *To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code:* Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

You are expected to adhere to all University policies and guidelines during your participation in this course. All work must be your own. Inappropriate use of the work of

others is a George Mason University Honor Code violation. Please review the University's website for information on the following: Honor Code and Judicial Procedures; Copyright/Fair Use; and Responsible Use of Computing.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Students must inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester, and the specific accommodation will be arranged through the Disability Resource Center.

GMU Email Accounts

Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. The GMU email accounts are the official accounts for this class.

Writing Center: Students in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of the Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). These services are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.

Other Mason resources:

<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/freshman/resources.html>

University Policies: University Catalog can be accessed catalog.gmu.edu

University Libraries "Ask a Librarian" <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) caps.gmu.edu or (703) 993-2380

University Policies

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

You are encouraged to sign up for the Mason Alert System by visiting the website <https://alert.gmu.edu>. Emergency information is posted in each classroom explaining what to do in the event of crises. Further information about emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert>.

NOTE: Cell phones, pagers and alarms must be turned off in class. Exceptions will only be made in advance or in case of emergency.

Important Dates:

<i>January 1 Day of Week</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	Mon Jan 16
First day of classes ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed	Mon Jan 23
Summer 2012 Graduation Intent Available via Patriot Web	Mon Jan 30
Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	Tues Jan 31
Last day to add classes —all individualized section forms due	Tues Jan 31
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	Tues Feb 14
Last day to drop with a 67% tuition penalty	Fri Feb 24
Last day to drop	Fri Feb 24
Last day to file your Spring 2012 Graduation Intent	Fri Feb 24
Immunization Record Deadline	Tue Mar 1
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web	Mon Feb 20 - Fri Mar 23
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	Mon Feb 27 - Fri Mar 30
Spring Break	Mon Mar 12 - Sun Mar 18
Incomplete work from Fall 2011 due to instructor**	Fri Mar 30
Incomplete grade changes from fall 2011 due to registrar**	Fri Apr 6
Dissertation/Thesis Deadline**	Fri May 4
Last day of classes	Sat May 5
Reading Days	Mon May 7 & Tue May 8
Exam Period (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)	Wed May 9 - Wed May 16
Commencement and Degree Conferral Date	May 19, 2012

** These dates will not change.