

Musical Theatre Survey

Course Description:

This three-credit course is intended as a broad survey of musical theatre popularized on Broadway intended to familiarize students with a selected canon of Broadway classics. This course will explore how musical theatre aims to engage with broader topics in music such as social justice, race relations, gender and sexuality disparagement etc.

Required Texts:

Selected readings as assigned in the schedule below.

Assignments:

Listening Quizzes (30%): At the end of each two-week unit, students will be tested on their ability to recognize selected pieces of music discussed in class, as well as relevant information pertaining to those pieces.

Participation and Engagement (30%): Students will be assessed on their classroom participation, their willingness to engage with critical topics, and their professionalism. Students will gain points for being present and on time, as well as showing they have thought critically on each of the readings. Students will lose points for poor classroom behavior and general dispiritedness regarding readings and discussion. Students are expected to remain engaged, relevant, and civilized.

Writing Assessment (40%): Students must complete a 3000 word research paper over a theatrical production of their choice. Papers must explain how their selected show engages with broader topics in music and musicology. Students will participate in two peer-review classes where they will present their theses and working material in small groups. Students will submit drafts in three stages: the first a presentation of the main subject matter and argumentation, and the second a completed document. They are expected to complete revisions as assigned and submit a third and final document for grading.

An **A paper** answers the presented question, shows a clear understanding of topics and concepts presented in the course, and engages with said topics at a high level. It has coherent argumentation and few grammatical mistakes. A **B paper** answers the presented question with appropriate (but not outstanding) engagement with critical topics. A **C paper** does the bare minimum; it answers the question, but not well, and mentions critical topics, but does not relate them to their chosen piece. A **D paper** does not meet the minimum requirements of a C paper. Students will only receive an **F** if they fail to turn the paper in.

Schedule:

Week 1 – 2: Traditional Theatre (Opened for the first time before 1959)

Rogers and Hammerstein *Carousel*

Berstein, Sondheim, and Laurents *West Side Story*

Rodgers, Barer, Thompson, Fuller, and Barer *Once Upon a Mattress*

Read: Boroff “Origin of Species: conflicting Views of American Musical Theatre History”

Week 3 – 4: Award-Winning Dramas

Sondheim *Sunday in the Park with George*
Larson *Rent*
Loesser *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*

Week 5 – 6: “Scandalous” Theatre - During this week: Peer Review Day

Kander, Ebb, and Fosse *Chicago*
Adams, Vallance, Marshall, and Lawton *Pretty Woman*
Parker, Stone, Lopez, Marx *The Book of Mormon*
Read: Protest through Theatre—the Indian Experience by Pushpa Sundar

Week 7 – 8: Queer Theatre

Sheik and Sater *Spring Awakening*
Lauer and Fierstein *Kinky Boots*
Mitchell and Trask *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*
Read: [Q is for Queer Theatre](#)

Week 9 – 10: Women in Theatre

Styne, Merrill, Lennart *Funny Girl*
Webber and Rice *Evita*
Webber *Phantom of the Opera*

Week 11 – 12: Theatre and Politics - During this week: Peer Review Day

Stone and Edwards *1776*

Week 13 – 14: Black Theatre

Gershwin *Porgy and Bess*
Dream Girls
Miranda *Hamilton*
Read: Savran “The Search for America’s Soul: Theatre in the Jazz Age.”
Read: Kajikawa: “ ‘Young, Scrappy, and Hungry’: *Hamilton*, Hip Hop, and Race”

Week 15: Theatre and Culture

Johnson: Selections from *Mormons, Musicals, and Belonging in America*

Week 16: Final writing Assignment due.

During this week: Students will sign up for a time to meet to discuss their final projects.