

**SPECIAL TOPICS IN ACTING**  
**THEA 4331**  
**M/W 9:00-10:20**  
**Room D178, STUDIO THEATRE**  
**FALL 2019**

Professor: Kim McKean  
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Office: Worrell 114  
Office Hours: T/TH 1:30-2:30pm  
(or by appointment)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a practical, immersive study in devising for theatre from the actor's perspective. The devising process is increasingly employed for developing material for theatre makers, and actors are often called on to be a creative entity in that process. In this course, you will devise and develop a world-premiere play in conjunction with the fall 2019 playwriting class at UTEP. Additionally, exercises in devising for the actor will be explored through writing and improv workshops, ensemble and physical theatre workshops, and clowning and character creation workshops. The course culminates in an invited reading of the script devised with playwrights, as well as a public presentation of a mini-devised piece of theatre.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- To articulate the practical requirements and vocabulary specific to devised theatre.
- To cultivate better methods of communication with playwrights and collaborators.
- To synthesize conceptual and aesthetic elements resulting in the devising of a short piece.
- To demonstrate effective techniques of devising for theatre including: collaboration, communication, research, movement/physical exploration, and connection to character.

### **Recommended Texts**

- *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre* by Scott Graham
- *Devising* by Gil Lambden
- *Moment Work: Tectonic Theatre Process of Devising Theatre* by Moises Kaufman

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Complete assigned reading on time. Take notes and be prepared to discuss the text.
- Attend performances of *Real Women Have Curves* and 2 other shows from the list provided. **\*\*YOU MUST SIGN IN AFTER THE SHOW OR YOU WILL NOT BE GIVEN CREDIT FOR ATTENDANCE\*\***
- Complete a clowning presentation and a mini-devised piece that demonstrate a thorough application of Learning Goals.
- Complete quizzes on reading/viewings.
- Come to class **ON TIME** and ready to work. **Work with positivity and respect.**
- Meet scheduled deadlines and turn in assigned work on time. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- Be prepared to participate in all classroom discussions and exercises.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Due to the nature of this course, attendance at every session is mandatory. You will be allowed **TWO** “unexcused” absences during the semester. **Each absence after TWO lowers your overall grade a whole letter grade. For example, a ‘B’ becomes a ‘C.’ Three tardies are equivalent to one absence.** If there is an emergency or illness, I will review options for making up the work, but you must document the reason for the absences prior to the review. **SAVE YOUR ABSENCES FOR WHEN YOU REALLY NEED IT.** If you miss more than 5 classes will automatically fail the class.

## EXTRA CREDIT

Extra credit is available for attending and completing a 1-page reflection for an additional show from the list provided. Completing extra credit will take away 1 absence or give you an extra 3 points toward your cumulative grade.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

All paperwork must be typed, double spaced, and printed.

1. UTEP Show Attendance.....	5%
2. Work Responses.....	10%
3. In-Class Work.....	15%
4. Reading/Viewing Quizzes .....	20%
5. Clowning Presentation.....	25%
6. Mini Devised Piece.....	25%

## EVALUATION CRITERIA BREAKDOWN

### 1. UTEP SHOW ATTENDANCE

You must see 3 productions produced by the Department of Theatre and Dance this fall from the list provided. *Real Women Have Curves* is required and the other 2 shows are “Students’ Choice.” There are ushering opportunities for every show (ushers see the show for free) and specific discounted nights for every production. You are required to sign-in to the show to receive credit. If you are in the show or working *Real Women Have Curves*, you must choose 3 shows from the “Students Choice” list. If this is the case, please email me in advance.

### A NOTE ON SUBJECT MATTER FOR REQUIRED SHOWS

The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions, or possibly touch on subjects you might not feel comfortable seeing on stage. If you have concerns about viewing or discussing specific subjects, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations.

### 2. WORK RESPONSES

Over the course of the semester you will turn in three short papers or “Work Responses,” **minimum 2-pages.** Responses can include questions/discoveries/responses to reading and in-class exercises, or something you noticed when working or watching your classmates work that is related to course concepts. Specific due dates are listed below. Responses should be uploaded to blackboard by the due date listed. No late work will be accepted unless pre-determined with me.

### **3. CLASS EXERCISES**

Includes all work done in class and turned in for class. You will be evaluated on preparation, work ethic, professional standards, and ability to apply course concepts.

### **4. QUIZZES & READING RESPONSES**

Throughout the semester, there will be 2 quizzes on blackboard from the assigned reading/viewing. See course calendar for due dates.

### **5. CLOWNING PRESENTATION**

Each student will present a small clowning routine, devised in class. Details to follow.

### **6. MINI DEVISED PIECE**

Students will work in groups to develop a mini devised piece. Work must be done outside of class. Details to follow. Piece will be presented in our final exam period.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

No electronic devices allowed in class unless permission is given beforehand. Students using electronic devices in class will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day.

### **SUBJECT MATTER**

The scripts and scenes studied in this course deal with mature subject matters. Consequently, some of the discussion in class will require discussion of adult subject matter and language. If you have concerns, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. All classroom discussions must be held in a respectful and professional matter.

### **PARTICIPATION**

Active participation is vital to your growth as artists and to your success in this class. You will be expected to come to class on-time and fully prepared, actively engage in class discussions, and give your all to class exercises. Share your voice! We only get better by asking questions and taking risks.

### **RESPECT**

The work in this class may elicit a strong emotional response. In order for this work to be done respectfully, it is crucial that the classroom be a SAFE PLACE. Absolutely no bullying, gossiping, or judgement will be tolerated. Any student who is not contributing to a safe, creative, work environment will be asked to leave class and receive an absence for that class period. *Any student who engages in conduct that is harassment of any University community member, including sexual harassment as defined in Section VI. in the UTEP Handbook may be subject to discipline.*

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Any incident of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero on the assignment. This includes cheating and plagiarism. Please visit <http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/> for more information.

### **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at UTEP provides students with disabilities, accommodations and support services to help them pursue their academic, graduation, and career goals. If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor

and/or the director of the Disabled Student Services. For more information, visit <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>.

### **CLASS VIDEO RECORDING**

This class will occasionally be filmed in order to document the devising process. If you would prefer not to be on film, please let me know.

### **Grading Scale**

A = 90%-100%

B = 80% - 89%

C = 70% - 79%

D = 60% - 69%

F = 0% - 59%

“**A**”—indicates exceedingly high quality work. Masters all assigned work, completes work on time, shows originality and initiative, does more than required, and makes quality contributions in class.

“**B**”—indicates good progress, above the average, masters portions of the work, is alert and shows an interest in the work, completes work on time, and offers good discussion points in class.

“**C**”—indicates a quality of work acceptable at this level. Satisfactorily completes most assigned work under normal conditions and direction, shows interest in work, and completes work on time.

“**D**”—indicates that although most assignments may be completed there is a need for greater effort to meet the expected level of work for this course, student is hesitant to engage in the work or at times shows little interest, and seldom responds in class.

“**F**”—indicates failure to produce an accepted quality of work for this course.

### **Schedule of Classes & Assignments**

*(subject to change)*

*\*the reading and assignments are due the day they are listed*

Week	Date	IN CLASS	Assignment(s) Due
1	M 8/26	Class with Playwrights—Intro to Script Devising	
	W 8/28	Class with Playwrights—Sourcing Materials of Inspiration	
2	M 9/2	No Class, Labor Day	
	W 9/4	No Class, Attend Paula Vogel Workshop from 4:30-6PM	
3	M 9/9	No Class, Attend Paula Vogel Workshop Previous Week	
		Class with Playwrights, Paula Vogel Bake-	Work Response 1 Due by

	W 9/11	Off Sharing	F 9/13 at 5PM—Written Reflection Due on Blackboard from first 3 weeks of class
4	M 9/16	Risk Taking, Confronting Fear, and Ensemble Building	Watch <i>Devising the American Family</i> by today, 9/16
	W 9/18	Risk Taking, Confronting Fear, and Ensemble Building	
5	M 9/23	Tectonic Theatre Project Moment Work	Read “Moment Work” and “Devising” Articles on Blackboard
	W 9/25	Tectonic Theatre Project Moment Work	Reading/Viewing Quiz 1 (blackboard quiz about film and reading) due on Blackboard by 9PM 9/20
6	M 9/30	Clowning to Connect	
	W 10/2	Clowning to Connect	
7	M 10/7	Clowning to Create Character	
	W 10/9	Clowning to Create Character	
8	M 10/14	Clowning In-Class Presentation 1-10	
	W 10/16	Clowning In-Class Presentation 11-20	Work Response 2 (response on clowning) due on Blackboard by 9PM 10/18
9	M 10/21	Devising Group—Staging Thoughts and Devising Moments from MWC Intro to Devising Strategies	
	W 10/23	Devising Group—Staging Thoughts and Devising Moments from MWC Devising Strategies Continued...	
10	M 10/28	Devising Group—Staging Thoughts and Devising Moments from MWC	Read “Moments 2” Articles on Blackboard

	W 10/30	Devising Group—Staging Thoughts and Devising Moments from MWC	Watch Devising Interviews on Digital Theatre Plus
11	M 11/4	In-Class Workshop and Intro for Mini-Devised Piece	
	W 11/6	In-Class Work on Group Mini Devised Piece	
12	M 11/11	Mini Devised Piece Intro/Research Presentation in Class	
	W 11/13	Devising Group—Class Read Thru	Reading/Viewing Quiz 2 (blackboard quiz about viewings and readings) due on Blackboard by 9PM 11/15
13	M 11/18	In-Class Work Mini Devised Piece	
	W 11/20	Devising Group—Staging Moments and Transitions	
14	M 11/25	Devising Group—Dream Design for Monsters we Create	
	W 11/27	In-Class Workshop for Devised Piece 2	
15	M 12/2	Mini Devised Piece Presentation with Notes	
	W 12/4	Devising Group Invited Read Thru	Written Work Response 3 Due by 9PM on 12/6 (Response on Devising MWC)

**FINAL EXAM:**

Final Presentation of Mini Devised Piece

Wednesday, December 11th 10:00-12:45PM