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DRAM 108.01: Introduction to House Management

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Introduction to House Management Fall Semester-05

Course #: Drama 108
Time: W 4-5, for the first three weeks of the semester, after that as assigned.
Instructor: Mike Monsos
PARTV Building Room 192
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Materials: None

Course Description:

Students learn the process and responsibility of House Management and the front of house staff through participation in several class/workshops and then putting those skills into practice by working the Drama/Dance Departmental productions. It is expected that students will develop an understanding of the importance of this first interaction a theatrical event has with its patrons as well as the professionalism necessary to work in the industry in this capacity. Students will also learn methods to safeguard the audience during the events and the proper steps to take during an emergency. Finally, students will gain insight into potentially liable situations in the theatre environment and how best to avoid hazards.

Students will meet at the beginning of each semester as a group to have the course explained, receive syllabi and to sign up for their assignments. Class/workshops will occur once a week for the first three weeks of class to provide training and instruction. Students will sign up for multiple assignments throughout the semester, giving them the opportunity to work a variety of productions under a variety of situations. Each production will have an orientation meeting prior to opening of the show to review and familiarize students with the inherent qualities of that particular show. A final review and assessment will take place at the end of the semester where students will be provided an opportunity for feedback and questions.

In order to complete the assignments for this class you must sign up for and work ten (10) shifts throughout the semester: seven (7) as an usher and three (3) in the concession area. **Call times for you will always be one hour before curtain time.** If you are signed up for an usher or concession stand shift for a show that starts at 7:30 PM, you must be dressed and at the theatre at 6:30 PM sharp! Please be aware of whether the show you are working is an evening performance or matinee. Meeting place for all productions will be at the Drama/Dance box office.

Course Objectives:

This course is designed to give you an understanding of the process and working responsibilities of the front of house staff at a theatrical event. A knowledge of, and an ability to understand and appreciate theatre only occur when we have experience in every

aspect of a theatrical production. We fully expect everyone in theatre from directors to volunteers to aspire for professionalism and the highest quality possible.

Safety is of utmost concern. You will learn appropriate action to take in the case of an emergency, and you will learn to recognize and identify potential problems and accidents before they occur. Although theatres are becoming safer every year, the inherent situations created in theatres along with a history of catastrophic fires require heightened awareness and precautions. Also, theatres are often subject to litigation from audience members because of falls and accidents. People unfamiliar with a space or exiting or entering during a blackout are at a greater risk of injury. Ushers are often only defense against such accidents.

One of the tenets of theatre is that everyone must be on time. Remember in theatre-If you are early, you are on time, if you are on time, you are late, and late is completely unacceptable. Because theatre is a collaborative art, everyone involved must be reliable and prepared to do his or her part in ensuring a successful evening of theatre. This includes actors, crew, stage managers, front of house staff and anyone else associated with the production. If any one person doesn't perform their responsibilities, the performance suffers greatly. We cannot stress how important you are to the success of the show. You are the audience's first and sometimes last contact with the production. It is important to set a tone that appropriate and professional.

Front of House staff must be at every performances for which they are called. YOU CANNOT MISS A SINGLE PERFORMANCE!

Please dress nicely, torn or dirty clothes are not appropriate nor are t-shirts with slogans.

Duties:

Ushers- Upon arrival, review theatre space and familiarize yourself with the venue. You will greet the audience members, take tickets and show patrons to their seats if the event has reserved seating. Ushers must sit near the doors during the show in order to assist in exits and entrances by audience members and to open doors quickly for intermission, the end of show, or in the event of an emergency. Ushers are also required to stay till the end of the show to assist in exits and clean-up. Additional instruction in duties will occur prior to the house opening by the Box Office and House Manager.

Concessions- You will greet audience members and sell concessions prior to the show and during intermission. You will interact with the patrons, providing a welcoming atmosphere and informing them, when necessary of departmental policies regarding food and drink in the theatre. You will be responsible for set-up, tear down and cleaning of the concession booth, as well as informing the faculty and staff of inventory and equipment malfunctions.

Course meeting times:

This course will meet on Wednesday afternoons from 4-5 for the first three weeks of each semester for training and instruction. Students will then sign up for multiple front of house assignments, including 7 ushering slots and 3 concession slots. At the end of the semester, we will meet for an assessment and review of the semester.

Grading:

A grade will be given after comments and input from the stage manager, box office manager as well as the faculty and staff that had contact with you during the production. **Missing a call will result in an "F" grade.** It is too important and there are too many people counting on your work.

Contacts:

The box office manager of the production you are working will contact you at least one week prior to the time to remind you of your assignment and to finalize dates and times. The Box Office Manager and I will be your contacts for this class.

If the Box Office Manager has not contacted you prior to the listed starting dates, or if any of your contact information has changed since you signed up, you **MUST** contact me, MIKE MONSOS in person in the PARTV building, or by calling or e-mailing me.

Productions:

It Just Catches
Sept. 9-10

Masquer Theatre

BatBoy
Oct. 4-8, 11-15

Montana Theatre

Proof
Oct 25-29, Nov 1-5

Masquer Theatre

Fall Dance Showcase
Nov. 15-19

Open Space

Peter Pan
Nov 25-26, 29-Dec. 3, 6-10
Matinees @ 2:00 pm, Nov. 25, 26, Dec 3

Montana Theatre

***PETER PAN takes place over THANKSGIVING. If you are in town for the break, please sign up for those usher spots!!!**