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MUSI 416.02: History of Musical Theatre

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MUSI 416

The History of Musical Theatre

Spring Semester 2016
Tuesday & Thursday 11:10am – 12:30pm

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Office Hours: TBA

Overview

This is an introductory survey course, which traces the development of the Broadway Musical from its beginnings in the late 19th century to the modern era. We will begin by examining the structural elements of the musical: book, lyrics, and score, to establish an analytical approach to understanding the art form. Then we will explore the evolution of the musical focusing on the shows and creative individuals most influential in its development, and examining the many ways in which it has reflected the changes in American life.

Goals

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to speak and write intelligently about musical theatre: its history and development and the interrelationship of story, lyrics, music, dance, and other elements. Students should also have gained a deeper appreciation of musical theatre and its contribution to the arts and society. You may, in the end, prefer some musicals to others, but you should be able to make convincing arguments about your opinions.

Requirements

Students are expected to attend class, be on time, take copious notes, and prepare for each lecture by completing assigned homework (required reading, listening, script/score study). Each student will give one 10-minute presentation to the class on a musical of their choice. (See *Spotlight Musical - Presentation* for details.) As an upper division writing course, students are required to submit 20 pages of written work. (See *Writing Assignments* for details).

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on their writing assignments, mid-semester and final exams, listening quizzes, and their in-class presentation (*Spotlight Musical*). The University of Montana requires all Syllabi to include the following policy:

Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor, and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.”

Materials

There is no required textbook for this course. Instead, we will use an online supplement (*Moodle Course Page*) through UOnline. Various materials (articles, script and score excerpts, YouTube links) will be accessible through Moodle. You will be expected to study these materials in preparation for lectures and exams.

Activities

Lectures (in class)

Lectures are supplemented with PowerPoint and recorded excerpts of Broadway shows, both audio and video. Students will participate in class by reading script excerpts aloud, singing as a group, and giving a brief presentation

Lectures (online)

Four additional online lectures are posted on our Moodle course page. (see *Lecture Schedule* for details.)

Writing Assignments

This course satisfies the upper division writing expectation of the GER. Your writing requirement is divided into four separate assignments, plus a section of the Final Exam. (See *Writing Assignments* for details.)

Accessibility

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. The course instructor will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

Examinations

There will be two exams: a Mid-semester Exam and a Final Exam (the Final Exam is not comprehensive). Exams will consist of:

- Identification of terms, titles, and important people via Matching & Multiple Choice questions.
- Broader terms and concepts via Short-answer and essay questions.

Our Final Exam is scheduled for 8am – 10am, Friday, May 13th.

Grading

Breakdown of Assignments, Quizzes and Exams

Listening Quiz 1	25 pts
Listening Quiz 2	25 pts
Listening Quiz 3	25 pts
Listening Quiz 4	25 pts
Midterm Exam	100 pts
Final Exam	150 pts
Writing Assignments	
#1 Rough Draft	50 pts
Final Draft	75 pts
#2 Final Draft	50 pts
#3 Final Draft	75 pts
#4 Rough Draft	75 pts
Final Draft	100 pts
<u>Presentation (Spotlight)</u>	<u>25 pts</u>
Total	800 pts

Grading Scale Letter Grade (% of total points possible)

A+	100 – 97
A	96.9 – 93
A-	92.9 – 90
B+	89.9 – 87
B	86.9 – 83
B-	82.9 – 80
C+	79.9 – 77
C	76.9 – 73
C-	72.9 – 70
D+	69.9 – 67
D	66.9 – 63
D-	62.9 – 60
F	Below 60

Writing Assignments

Rather than assigning one large paper, I have divided the writing requirement into four separate assignments, plus two short essays on the Final Exam. This way, the writing requirement can cover varied aspects of our subject. Each assignment is measured by number of words rather than pages.

Assignment #1. *A proposal for a new musical.* Prepare this assignment under the following hypothetical scenario:

- A. You are a book writer/lyricist submitting a proposal for a new musical to a producer. This musical will be either an adaptation of an existing work or an original idea. If it will be an adaptation, choose a work from the following options:
 - i. A novel or short story
 - ii. A play
 - iii. A movie script
 - iv. Another suitable literary source (i.e. epic poem, article, interview, etc.)
- B. Your assignment is to write a prospectus (a pitch) for a producer. In this prospectus you need to explain why you have chosen this subject or literary work and how you envision adapting it into a musical. If you are writing an original work, or an adaptation, provide a summary of the story. Also provide the following information:
 - a. Explain the format of the musical: It can be in the traditional “book” format such as *Nine To Five* or *Fiddler On the Roof* or without a book (i.e. continuous music as in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, or *Rent*,). It could also be in a non-traditional format (i.e. a series of vignettes related or unrelated, as in *Cats* or *Company*). Describe what you envision for the musical style (rock, pop – and the various styles within, jazz, blues, folk, acoustic, symphonic, lyrical, etc.).
 - b. Decide on the overall concept, time period, approximate length (i.e. number of acts, full-length show vs. one act, short Cabaret, staged song cycle, etc.) and suggest the overall look of the show.
 - c. List your ideas for the cast (and cast size including principal characters and, if needed, secondary characters and chorus). Which roles are the most central to the story or concept? What are the approximate ages of the main characters?
 - d. List some possible song titles.
- C. You will submit a rough draft, and the producer (the course instructor) will provide feedback and make suggestions for changes. You will then make revisions and submit a final draft.
- D. If you are in need of a model for your prospectus, I have uploaded a former student’s prospectus on our Moodle Course Page. It is entitled *Oh, Canada, Eh?*

500 - 700 words; rough and final draft required.

Rough draft due February 16, by 10pm
Final draft due February 23, by 10pm

Assignment #2. *Write lyrics for a song*

Select one of your song titles from Writing Assignment #1 and write lyrics to be given to a composer to set to music. Briefly describe the set up for this song and its dramatic function (why does the character sing the song? What is its relationship with the story?). The lyric must have some traditional sense of rhythm, meter and rhyme, but doesn’t need to be strict. However, it cannot be in strict prose. You are encouraged to consult other musical theatre lyrics as a guide, but avoid being too influenced by them; I am more interested in reading your original ideas.

200-300 Words (the lyric itself plus other information).

Due March 1, by 10pm (Final Draft only)

Writing Assignments (continued)

Assignment #3. **Essay I – Song Analysis**

Choose a song and/or lyric, a choreographed number, a book scene, or any combination of these from a musical, and write an analysis of it. This should be a song, dance, scene, etc. that you like, and which you regard as an excellent example of musical theatre. If you choose a song, your analysis should focus either on musical aspects (i.e. how melody, rhythm, harmony relate to lyrics, story, and character) or the lyrics (use of form, imagery, metaphor, rhythm, rhyme, etc. and how these related to story and character) or a combination of both. If you choose a book scene, your analysis will be dramaturgical. Be sure to include how the book scene leads to a following musical number. If you choose to analyze a choreographed number, your analysis will focus on the work of a particular choreographer and/or performers (Therefore, you will need a quality video recording). As with a book scene analysis, a dance number analysis should also discuss how the dance is set up as well as its function in the scene. In each case, your analysis must demonstrate how music, lyrics, dance, and script relate to the drama and character(s). If you are working with a particular recording or video, cite it as a reference in a Bibliography. Consult a style manual for proper citations in a bibliography (such as Turabian or the Chicago Manual of Style).

500 Words (Final draft only)

Due March 29, by 10pm

Assignment #4. **Essay II**

Choose a musical you love and explain why you love it. Include statements about the book, lyrics, and musical score, and dance (if dance is an important feature of the work). You may also discuss other pertinent features such as important metaphors, symbols, meanings, and relationships to society, history, politics, humanity, or other issues as long as they add strength to your argument. The essay will require some research: a script, a score and/or sound recording, a good video recording or the fact that you've seen a recent production. In accordance with the requirements for writing courses, the essay must demonstrate critical thinking, and some dramaturgical, literary, and/or musical analysis.

1,000 Words

Rough Draft due April 26, by 10pm

Final Draft due May 3, by 10pm

Essays for Final Exam

On our final day of classes, essay topics will be given. Choose two of them. You will have nearly a week to work on these essays. You will write them on the Final Exam without the use of notes.

Approximately 500 words each.

Grading Information

Your writing assignments will be graded upon the following criteria.

Assignments #1, 3, 4 and Essays of Final Exam: Content 20% Effective introduction 10% Convincing argument 20% Effective conclusion 10% Mechanics & Style (spelling, grammar, clarity, flow, transitions) 20% Logical organization 20%	Assignment #2: Convincing Introduction 25% Structure 25% Effective use of language/rhyme/rhythm 25% Dramatic viability 25%
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Scorebusters

Typo/spelling/grammatical errors: - .5 pt./each

Late Rough Draft: -5 pts./day

Late Final Draft: -10 pts./day (no papers accepted after 12pm May 9)

SPOTLIGHT MUSICAL - Presentation

Each student will choose a 21st century musical to present to the class. Choose a show that premiered on Broadway, Off-Broadway, London's West End, or elsewhere, but make sure it is a legitimate, professionally staged musical (no movie musicals). Provide the following information in your presentation:

- Date and location of the show's premier
- Writer(s) of the book and lyrics, composer of the music
- A very brief summary of the plot
 - If it is a review or plotless musical, provide a brief overview of the show
- Summary of the musical/dramatic style
- An example of one musical number
 - We have a stereo/CD/DVD player and internet, and a hookup to iphones, ipads, etc.
- Any other pertinent information (concepts, choreography, scenic elements, themes, etc)

The instructor will assign the date for your presentation.

You may use notes, and you are encouraged to rehearse your presentation. You will be graded on:

- Content
 - Effective introduction
 - Convincing summary of the subject
 - Effective conclusion
- Delivery
 - How you address the group (speaking clearly, and intelligibly)
 - Your enthusiasm for the subject

Listening Quizzes

The approach to the subject of this course is broken down into four main aspects:

1. Dramatic
 - a. Story/plot, concept, themes, character development, adaptation, dialogue, lyrics, direction
2. Musical
 - a. Vocal styles, orchestral styles, musical forms, melody, harmony, rhythm, lyrics, dance
3. Visual
 - a. Choreography & dance, scenery, costumes, lighting & effects
4. Historical

Lectures will cover a lot of information, which students will be tested over. The key to comprehension is:

Active and repeated listening to the examples on the Listening List

Your ability to comprehend the content of this course will be greatly enhanced by repeated listening to the examples from the Listening List. Due to the nature of our subject, where what you see is just as important as what you hear, our listening list contains both audio examples (on *Spotify*) and video clips (from *YouTube*). Four separate Listening Quizzes will be given throughout the semester (thus dividing the Listening List into four parts). Ten examples from the list will be played. You will be asked to identify each example by naming:

- The title of the show from which the example comes
- The composer or lyricist of the example
- Or, in some examples, the choreographer

In addition to the ten examples, one “unknown example” not from the Listening List will be played, which you will be asked to guess either the composer or lyricist. The “unknown example” will be for extra credit only. It is designed to enhance your ability to analyze what you hear, and break down the individual components, and then measure that information against your knowledge of style, to venture a guess.

The dates of these quizzes are TBA.

MUSI 416: THE HISTORY OF MUSICAL THEATRE - SCHEDULE

Sessions

Lecture 1	The Musical – definition. Styles.
Lecture 2	Book, Music & Lyrics: The musical's structural triumvirate, Part I
Lecture 3	Book, Music & Lyrics: The musical's structural triumvirate, Part II
Lecture 4	George M. Cohan – The Man Who Owned Broadway
Lecture 5	Follies, Scandals, & Vanities
Lecture 6	The Operetta: European import becomes Broadway staple
Lecture 7	The Princess Musicals of Bolton, Wodehouse & Kern
Lecture 8	<i>Shuffle Along</i> – The Gershwins – <i>No, No, Nanette</i>
Lecture 9	<i>Showboat</i> : The musical evolves
Lecture 10	Rodgers & Hart
Lecture 11	The 1930's Part I – The Broadway Musical & The Great Depression
Lecture 12	The 1930's Part II – Risk Takers
Lecture 13	<i>Oklahoma!</i> A new age in musical theatre (Rodgers & Hammerstein and Agnes DeMille)
Lecture 14	Rodgers & Hammerstein
Lecture 15	New Kids on the Block
Lecture 16	Old Dogs New Tricks: <i>Annie</i> , <i>Get Your Gun</i> & <i>Kiss Me, Kate</i>
Lecture 17	Frank Loesser
Lecture 18	Adler & Ross
Lecture 19	Lerner & Lowe and <i>My Fair Lady</i>
Lecture 20	1957: What a Year It Was (<i>The Music Man</i> & <i>West Side Story</i>)
Lecture 21	The Golden Age Part I
Lecture 22	The Golden Age Part II
Lecture 23	The 1960's Part I
Lecture 24	The 1960's Part II
Lecture 25	Sondheim
Lecture 26	Andrew Lloyd Webber and "Popera"
Lecture 27	The 90's

Online Lectures

Online Lecture A	Musical Theatre before 1900: Forerunners in Europe, Early Broadway musical comedies
Online Lecture B	One Hit Wonders
Online Lecture C	The Director/Choreographer
Online Lecture D	The British Musical outside of Lloyd Webber