EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION
THEATRE
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Theatre
FA / THEA 2050 3.0 SECTION A
INTRODUCTION TO DEVISING THEATRE I
FALL 2019 / WINTER 2020

Last Modified Date: 08/26/2019

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION
Offers students an introduction to the devising of original theatre in a collaborative setting. Through classroom exercises and the creation, rehearsal and presentation of devised and interpreted performance projects, the participants will explore the essential questions and investigative tools of the theatre practitioner. Practical studio course. Prerequisites: FA/THEA 1010 3.0, FA/THEA 1100 3.0, and FA/THEA 1200 6.0, and/or permission of the Theatre Department. Open to Theatre majors only. Co-requisites: FA/THEA 2141 3.0 and FA/THEA 2410 6.0

INSTRUCTOR(S)
TBD

SPECIAL FEATURES

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- Time and Location:
STDO (lab) Tuesday 2:30 pm-5:30 pm ACE 207/ACE 209
STDO (lecture) Friday 11:30 am-2:30 pm ACE 207/ACE 209

Instructor/Format/Term/Contact Info:
Sean Robertson-Palmer
317 Centre for Film and Theatre
seanrp@gmail.com
Office hours: by appointment

- Special Features

Expanded Course Description
THEA 2050 3.0 Introduction to Devised Theatre I offers students an introduction to the devising of original theatre in a collaborative setting. Through classroom exercises and the creation, rehearsal, and presentation of devised and interpreted performance projects, the participants will explore the essential questions and investigative tools of the theatre practitioner. Collaboration, commitment, curiosity, and effective communication are the foundations of this rigorous curriculum. The course also introduces key genres and histories of devised and experimental theatre, and students engage in critical discussions of the aesthetics and ethics of these forms.

**Organization of the course:**
The course is structured around several devising modules, each focusing on a different tradition of devised theatre. The module will begin with readings, a lecture, or discussion of this tradition. It will be followed by a devising project in which students will compose a performance piece in that particular medium. Classroom instruction, supervised rehearsal, and scheduled showings will primarily take place on Fridays (lecture days). Here, students will develop performance techniques, investigate compositional aspects of their projects, receive feedback on generating, sequencing, and performing devised material. A mandatory rehearsal lab is scheduled for Wednesday each week to provide students with a structured time and space to plan, rehearse, and devise. (Students will not normally receive formal instruction on Wednesdays.) Full participation in classes and rehearsals is an integral component of this course. Although we have scheduled a lab to assist with the playmaking projects, the devising assignments will require several hours of rehearsal outside of lecture and lab times. By signing up for the class, students are agreeing to regularly schedule and be present at all of these outside rehearsals.

**Important information for students admitted to the Devised Theatre Sequence:**
Maintaining your status: Admission into each subsequent Devised Theatre class is on the basis of a ‘B’ grade standing in the pre-requisite class. Any student who leaves the DT series of courses, for whatever reason, even if in good academic standing, is not guaranteed a spot in subsequent terms, and will be expected to re-audition to re-enter.

Original coursework: Class work in all Devised Theatre courses must be distinct and separate from THEA 3290 6.0 Playwriting and New Play Dramaturgy I, THEA 4290 6.0 Playwriting and New Play Dramaturgy II, and playGround presentations.

Other courses in second year: Highly recommended courses include THEA 2410 6.0 History of Visual Sources and THEA 2141 3.0 Introduction to Design for Theatre. It is also strongly recommended that students in Devised Theatre take courses that fulfill their in-out requirements in 2nd year. In particular, students should consider taking non-theatre courses that will enhance their understanding of performance creation (see course listings in other departments in the School of the Arts, Media, Performance, and Design).

This sequence also requires immersion in the history and theory of devising, and this grounding is provided through readings and assignments on collaborative playmaking and contemporary experimental theatre. Students in the DT sequence are strongly advised to take specified courses in theatre production and design, as well as theatre history and theory courses in order to gain the interdisciplinary knowledge that is essential for devised theatre makers. AMPD and non-AMPD courses are required for degree completion and will enable students to develop breadth and interdisciplinary skills. Working within the requirements of the Specialized Honours BA degree, students are free to pursue a particular focus in third year or continue to learn about all areas of theatre. Students may apply to assistant direct an unmounted department production in third year: THEA 3070 3.0 Performance Practicum I for the fall term or THEA 3071 3.0 Performance Practicum II for the winter term. Applications will be made available to prospective third year students at the end of the winter term.

**Topics and Concepts**
Readings:
1. Readings as assigned
2. Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Schedule: Fall Semester

**Students are expected to be present on all Wednesdays for rehearsal lab from 11:30am-2:30pm unless otherwise indicated by the instructor.**

Unit 1: The Art of Devising

Fri. Sept. 6        Introduction to the Course, Improv and Ensemble Building

Fri. Sept. 13      Improv and Ensemble Building, What is Devised Theatre?
                   Reading: Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling, “Introduction” (CK)

Fri. Sept. 20      Bridging Form and Content/ Thinking Compositionally
                   Reading: Junction Avenue Theatre Company, *Tooth and Nail* (CK)

Fri. Sept. 27      Thinking Compositionally / Communicating as an Ensemble
                   Tooth and Nail composition presentations

Unit 2: Deconstructing Texts

Fri. Oct. 4        Physical Theatre (Lecture-Demo)
                   Reading: Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*
                   Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling, “Contemporary Devising and Physical Performance” (CK)

Fri. Oct. 11       Physical Theatre (Performance Supervised Project Rehearsals)

Fri. Oct. 18       Fall Reading Week

Fri. Oct. 25       Physical Theatre (First pass, critiques)

Fri. Nov. 1        Physical Theatre (Second pass)

Fri. Nov. 8        Intermedial Theatre (Lecture)

Fri. Nov. 15       Intermedial Collage (Tech Day, Supervised Project Rehearsals)

Fri. Nov. 22       Intermedial Collage (First Pass, Critiques)
LEARNING OUTCOMES
The specific objectives of the course are that the students will be able to:

- identify and critically engage with major traditions of devised/experimental theatre
- articulate the artistic and sociopolitical goals of their devising work
- apply basic techniques of devising theatre to creating their original pieces
- apply improvisation techniques to enhance communication and spontaneity
- enhance their conceptual and performance skills in their assigned theatre projects
- gain a deeper understanding of “process” and its centrality to devised theatre
- develop confidence in their communication and collaboration skills in a group setting
- develop their ability to offer and receive effective critical feedback about their own work and that of their classmates

GRADED ASSESSMENT

Evaluation:

1. Class Participation 30%
   - interest, commitment, effort; risk-taking, initiative; collaboration, cooperation, respect; engagement with course readings and contribution to class discussions; Tooth & Nail compositions, application of devising fundamentals in class exercises; growth

1. Devising Projects
   - Physical Theatre Project 35%
   - Intermedial Collage Project 35%

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Attendance Policy:
Students are reminded that Department of Theatre rules require attendance at all classes. There is no differentiation between excused and unexcused absences - an absence is an absence and will affect your chances of success in this course. All classes and outside rehearsals with classmates are mandatory. Failure to attend all classes and outside rehearsals will result in either academic penalty or a request that the student withdraw from the class.

Any student who is absent without prior arrangement with the instructor may have 2% deducted from the final grade for each absence. (Two late arrivals is the equivalent of one absence.) Three absences (excused or not) will result in course failure. If a student is going to be considerably late or miss a class for any reason, the student must contact the course director prior to the beginning of that class. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused late or absence.

Part-time jobs or outside employment in theatre-related endeavors do not count as excused absences. The only exception is crew call for a matinee performance of a department production, and the instructor must be informed well in advance about the conflict.
Class Presentations: Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Absences have a profound effect on scene partners and group members. Accordingly, class presentations for this course must be performed on the due dates specified for the assignment, as indicated in the class schedule.

Missed Class Presentation Penalty: Missed class presentations on the due date will be penalized with a grade of zero for the absent student. Exceptions to the missed class presentation penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be considered but will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter). The instructor will attempt to reschedule the missed class presentation to facilitate group members affected by an excused absence. Due to the collaborative nature of this studio course, make-up assignments will not be scheduled.

Assignment Submission: Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received on the due date specified for the assignment. Assignments must be handed in during class time. Email attachments will not be accepted. Late assignments should be date stamped by a department staff or faculty member and handed in to the drop-box marked Levin on the 3rd floor of CFT.

Late Assignment Penalty: Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized 3% per day (including weekends), unless you have arranged for an extension. Assignments that are more than one week late will not be accepted unless special permission has been granted. If you anticipate having difficulty completing an assignment on time, please contact the course instructor for an extension (although don’t expect to receive one if you e-mail them the night before an assignment is due). Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be entertained but will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter).

Dress Requirement: Comfortable clothes and shoes – come to class in clothing and shoes in which you can move freely.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Reminder: Students must maintain a 5.00 (C+) grade point average in their major (i.e. all Theatre courses) to remain in good academic standing in the department. Check the grade point average calculator at the following link if you have any questions:
http://ampd.yorku.ca/current-students/academic-resources/gpa-calculator/

A Note on Challenging Content

One of the central educational goals of the Theatre Department is to produce socially conscious artists — artists who are aware of and capable of participating in challenging dialogues about social injustice and inequality. This means that our courses, public events, and productions often grapple with difficult subject matter, including sex, violence, terror, and illness (among other topics). While these presentations will no doubt provoke strong emotions and cause discomfort, we feel that the diverse experiences they promote are also essential to the development of our students’ critical faculties, empathy, and understanding of the world. Rather than warning our students in advance about every potentially uncomfortable topic that they might encounter in the course of their studies, we instead encourage students to meet them head on in the classroom, in rehearsals, and performances, and to engage in civil and compassionate debate about the possibilities and effects of staging difficult knowledge.
If you require an accommodation related to your participation in Theatre experiences, please ensure that you share relevant documentation with your course director. Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

ACADEMIC POLICIES / INFORMATION: The Senate Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy Committee (ASCP) provides a Student Information Sheet that includes:

York's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures / Academic Integrity Web site
Access/Disability
Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants
Religious Observance Accommodation
Student Code of Conduct
Alternate Exam and Test Scheduling

"20% Rule" - No examinations or tests collectively worth more than 20% of the final grade in a course will be given during the final 14 calendar days of classes in a term. The exceptions to the rule are classes which regularly meet Friday evenings or on Saturday and/or Sunday at any time, and courses offered in the compressed summer terms. Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles. http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/CourseInformationForStudentsAugust20121.pdf

Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy - The Senate Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy stipulates that (a) the grading scheme (i.e. kinds and weights of assignments, essays, exams, etc.) be announced, and be available in writing, within the first two weeks of class, and that, (b) under normal circumstances, graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final grade for Fall, Winter or Summer Term, and 30% for 'full year' courses offered in the Fall/Winter Term be received by students in all courses prior to the final withdrawal date from a course without receiving a grade.

York's Policy on Academic Honesty

York’s Senate Policy on Academic Honesty affirms and clarifies the general obligation for all members of the University to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. AMPD has establish complementary procedures for the investigation and resolution of alleged violations of the Senate Policy involving students in AMPD degree program courses at the undergraduate level.

THE ACADEMIC HONESTY PROCESS
An Overview
1. Investigation
2. The person discovering the suspected violation will notify the course director. The course director should not meet with the student or discuss the case at this point.
3. The course director will notify his or her department Chair, providing all documentary evidence.
4. The Chair will consult with the Manager, Faculty Governance & Policy. It will then be determined whether there has been an infraction, and if so, whether it is minor or more serious. In either case, if there has been an infraction, an exploratory meeting will be held (Part B, below). A case is minor where the infraction is small in extent, can reasonably be construed as an error on the student’s part, and where there appears to be no intent to deceive.
5. If, on consultation, it is determined that an infraction has taken place, the Manager will place a “flag” in the student’s file, block enrolment activity in the course, and investigate whether there is a prior history. If it is a repeat offence, then the matter must proceed directly to a formal hearing (Part C, below).
6. Exploratory Meeting

If Minor:
1. The department Chair will conduct an exploratory meeting, attended by the course director and the student. If there is more than one student involved, each should be met with separately. Each may bring a representative.
2. If the student admits to a breach of academic honesty, a suitable penalty — not exceeding failure in the course — will be agreed upon.
3. In all cases, outcomes are reported to the Manager, Faculty Governance & Policy. Where a penalty is imposed, a joint agreement is signed by both parties, and approved by the Associate Dean Academic.

If Serious:
1. The Manager, Faculty Governance & Policy will chair an exploratory meeting, attended by the course director and student and their representatives.
2. If the student admits to a breach of academic honesty, a suitable penalty — not exceeding failure in the course — will be agreed upon. The Associate Dean, Academic may be consulted on a penalty, if necessary.
3. A joint agreement is signed by both parties, and approved by the Associate Dean, Academic.

1. Formal Hearing

A formal hearing by AAPPC will be held in cases where:
1. a) It is not the student’s first offence.
2. b) The student neglects to attend the exploratory meeting and it is found that there are grounds to proceed with a charge of a breach of academic honesty.
3. c) The student admits to a breach of academic honesty, but no penalty can be agreed upon.
4. d) The student does not admit to a breach of academic honesty.

For further information on the penalties for academic misconduct, please see AMPD’s Policy on Academic Honesty.

As approved by AMPD Faculty Council, March 21, 2018

COUNSELLING & SUPPORT SERVICES

Personal Counselling Services (PCS) aims to help York students realize, develop and fulfill their personal potential in order to maximally benefit from their university experience and manage the challenges of university life. Students come to PCS because of a wide range of concerns including, but not limited to: depression, anxiety, abuse, stress, self-esteem, relationship issues, eating and body image as well as issues related to sexuality.

PCS provides:

- Short-term individual, couple, and group counselling services to York University students
- Personal development workshop and workshop series
- Crisis intervention for York students
- Consultation to the York Community regarding students in distress/crisis and issues related to mental health in general
- Critical incident response debriefings and consultations
- Clinical training for graduate students in Psychology, Social Work, and Psychotherapy

Learn more about other York University resources related to mental health and wellness at York.

The Centre for Sexual Violence, Response, Support & Education coordinates supports and resources for all members of the community that have experienced sexual violence, receives disclosures and complaints, facilitates safety planning, and assists survivors through the complaint process.
If you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence and is in need of support, the Sexual Violence Response Office (SVRO) can help. Please call 416-736-5211 or find them online at yorku.ca/svro.

*You shouldn't ever feel guilty or be made to feel guilty about reporting a problem.*

**COURSE-RELATED DISPUTES:** The following steps are the steps to be taken in the event of unresolved issues within the class:

- If your class has a tutorial leader or studio instructor, speak to your instructor first.
- If unresolved, speak to the Course Director.
- If unresolved, contact the Chair of the Department at thechair@yorku.ca.

**IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY SESSIONAL DATES** (where you will find classes and exams start/end dates, reading/co-curricular week, add/drop deadlines, holidays, University closings and more.

http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/index.htm

Manage my Academic record [http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/](http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/)

- Last date to drop a fall term (F) course without receiving a grade: Nov. 8, 2019
- Last date to drop a winter term (W) course without receiving a grade: March 13, 2020
- Last date to drop a full year (Y) course without receiving a grade: February 3, 2020

**DEGREE STATUS – BA AND BFA:** All students accepted into the Department of Theatre in the School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design (AMPD) enter as Specialized Honours BA Theatre-Theatre Studies majors. The first year is a program common to all Theatre students, and offers courses in Acting, Production/Design and Performance Creation & Research. At the end of the first year, there is a selection process (either by audition or interview) to proceed into the various areas of interest.

**POLICY REGARDING LOSS, DAMAGE AND THEFT OF PERSONAL EQUIPMENT AND BELONGINGS:** The School of Arts, Media, Performance & Design at York University will not be held responsible for the loss, damage or theft of personal equipment or any other personal belongings that are left in studios, classrooms, storage areas or any other space within the School. It is each individual’s responsibility to take care of their own property. Under no circumstances will the School incur liability for loss, damage or theft of such property.

Please take all reasonable measures to protect your personal belongings. If you do experience loss, damage or theft of personal property, please report it immediately to the Department of Security Services at (416) 736-5333 or extension 33333 from any University phone.

**ROOM BOOKING POLICY:** Rehearsals for mainstage productions take precedence when assigning rooms, followed by faculty assigned work. Personal projects, including playGround, will be considered only if space allows.

First-year Theatre majors are not eligible to book studios.
Adopt professional standards by agreeing on a rehearsal schedule with group members and by having one group member do the arranging of the space in advance. Please ensure that the floors and walls are clean. **All garbage must be removed.** Please treat the studios with respect.

The studios are available only within the following hours: **Mon-Fri 8:00am-10:00pm and Sat-Sun 10:00am-6:00pm**

All spaces must be booked one week in advance and will be accepted **only until 4:00pm on Thursday the previous week.**

Requests will be confirmed Friday by 4:00pm.

Requests must be sent by e-mail only to rehearse@yorku.ca

*Include your full name, student ID, program, brief explanation of what the space will be used for and what kind of space you need (studio / classroom / big / small).*

Requests must be submitted **each week** for a room unless special arrangements have been made.

You cannot “claim” a space by writing in your name or the course name in an empty slot on the weekly schedules posted outside each space (exception – Light Lab CFT 153).

Spaces must be returned to neutral at the end of each booking session. There will be a picture of what “neutral” is in each studio.

The sign-off sheet must be checked and signed at the end of your studio time. If you enter a space and find it not “neutral”, please e-mail rehearse@yorku.ca.

Anything left behind in the spaces after your booking will be thrown out.

**Procedures for use of studios after-hours:** These procedures are designed to enhance the safety of authorized students when working alone in one of our studios after-hours - Monday through Friday from 11:00pm to 6:30am, and Saturday/Sunday from 10:00pm to 8:00am.

An After-Hours Use form will be completed and emailed to University Security at: scc@yorku.ca;

Be advised of the University’s emergency protocols (e.g. contact 911 in the event of a life threatening situation) and University Security’s urgent number (416.736.5333);

Contact University Security non-urgent number - 416.650.8000 - upon arrival and departure.

**SITE-SPECIFIC PROJECTS:** All site-specific theatre projects anywhere on campus must be cleared by the course director, York University’s Security Services, and the department or governing body of the proposed site. This request should be made in writing at least three weeks in advance of the date required.

All public spaces on Campus require contact with the Office of Temporary Use of University Space - http://tuus.info.yorku.ca/space-room-reservations-forms/
The course director will also need to complete a “Temporary Use of University Space Application and Notification Form” and submit it two weeks in advance of the date required.

For ALL site specific work, the course director must send the request to security@yorku.ca outlining where and when the work is to take place.

Please note: at no time shall any form of replica, prop, or real weapon (handguns, rifles, shotguns, swords, daggers, knives, etc.) be used in any site specific work.

Many courses utilize Moodle, York University’s course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.

Moodle @ York University