
TH 4360

Devising with Viewpoints

Summer 2019 - - Monday thru Friday 2:00-3:40pm

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Office Hours: Email for Appointment



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Introduction

*“to create theatre that is full of terror, beauty, love, and belief in
the innate human potential for change.”*

-Anne Bogart

William W. Lewis PhD, is a scholar, teacher, director, and performance collaborator. Will strives to expanding the boundaries of live performance through the integration of digital technologies as participatory tools. His research is focused on performance companies using alternative and devised forms of story telling that include site specificity, locative media, gaming, projection, and virtual reality. He uses his research as an avenue to develop new methods for theatrical creation. Will received a PhD in Theatre and Performance Studies from the University of Colorado Boulder, a MA in Theatre History and Criticism from CUNY/Hunter College, and a BFA in Performance with an emphasis in Directing and Performance Art from the University of Memphis. He has been a member of the Attic Theatre Company in Los Angeles and First Look Theatre Company housed inside NYU's Department of Dramatic Writing where he worked with MFA playwrights. Will has also worked as an independent film and theatre practitioner in NYC, Los Angeles, and regionally. Selected professional directing credits include *A Doll's House*, *Sight Unseen*, *The Dumbwaiter*, *Runaways*, and *All in the Timing*. His recent directing projects at the University of Colorado that implemented technology, devised performance, and physical theatre include *Woyzeck: The Endless Cycle 1.0*, *Everyman*, *Quantified Self*, and *Medea/Mediated*. *Woyzeck* was selected as a KCACTF Region 7 finalist in 2016 and *Quantified Self* was funded by a prestigious Knight Foundation Media Innovation Grant. You can find examples of Will's work at: www.williamwlewis.net

Philosophy

As a teacher my goal is to serve as a guide toward inquiry, knowledge, compassion, and growth allowing you agency to learn in your own way. Each student has different needs and abilities and I attempt to match my knowledge and experiences to fit your expectations. Each student will have varying levels of talent, intelligence, and ability but it is what you do with your given assets that count. Your curiosity, motivation, and discipline to excel will ultimately determine how successful you will be in coursework and in life. I expect you to come prepared and willing to ask questions about the work as well as how you interact with the world around you. I will do my best to encourage your curiosity and show you how and where to find the answers to your questions. I believe there are few wrong answers as long as you take the time and effort to think critically and consciously. We may not always agree in the class but out of the disagreement usually fruitful discussion will result. Most importantly, I believe the necessity of taking responsibility for your actions and being a thoughtful and respectful member of the world.

Course Guidelines

Course Description

- Senior level special topics course on devising theatrical works using the Viewpoints method.

Course Objectives

- The goal of this class is to develop a toolbox for the craft of ensemble-based devising using the Viewpoints system of physical theatre.
- Students will develop a vocabulary for non-text-based creation using the Viewpoints system. This vocabulary will then be applied systematically to develop an original theatrical project using movement, sound, spatial arrangement, music, objects, and spoken language.
- Each in-class session will serve as a laboratory for creative impulse and collaborative development. Students not on the rehearsal floor will serve as audience and outside eye for their peers providing constructive and supportive feedback in the devising process.
- The first three weeks of the course will be devoted to learning the Viewpoints system and working through open composition exercises. In the last week you will be given specific rehearsal prompts to help you refine and utilize the Viewpoints in a rehearsal setting.
- The last few days of class and the weekend before the final will be devoted to developing and rehearsing a short theatrical project with limited rehearsal time.

Textbooks: Required

- *The Viewpoints Book* by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau

Performance Attire: Required

- To participate all students must come to class in appropriate attire for movement.
- This includes: sweat pants, shorts or tights, tops that allow flexibility moving across the space, either dance shoes or be prepared to work in bare feet/socks. Jeans are not allowed as they do not allow adequate flexibility of motion.
- The floor we will work on has carpet over concrete. You might consider knee pads. Due to ongoing construction, the building might be very hot or very cold, please prepare accordingly.

Learning Outcomes

- By the end of this course students will be able to:

- **Define** the individual Viewpoints and **Demonstrate** how to use them in the devising process.
- **Plan, Develop, and Construct** the basis for a theatrical performance using the Viewpoints system.
- **Explain** to peers the development process of devised theatre and **Evaluate** that process through critical feedback.
- **Evaluate** their own practice in order to strengthen their skills at making effective creative choices in an ensemble setting.
- **Create** with their peers original theatrical material in a collaborative manner.

Expectations

- This is an practice-based course, and as such, the main course material will be exercises and information that are almost exclusively experienced in class. **In order to succeed in this course regular attendance and a positive willingness to participate and engage is a necessity!**
- Grading is largely based on process and participation. Your grade will be determined based on the full effort you put into the process versus the final product produced.

Attendance Policy

- This is a practice-based course. You need to be present to learn and demonstrate knowledge of the material. Like performing in a show, if you miss a class it is gone — you cannot make it up.
- **Each student is allowed 1 absence**, it does not matter whether it is “excused,” you only get 1. **After that, your grade will drop your overall participation grade by 20% for the week calculated.**
- Arriving more than 5 minutes late for class will count as an absence.

Participation Grade Scale

(Plus/Minus System)

- A- to A+ (93 to 100%) = Showing up on time everyday, prepared, and putting full effort into the process
- B- to B+ (83 to 92%) = Showing up on time nearly all the time, less prepared, lack of effort is present
- C - to C+(70 to 82%) = Late on more than one occasion, lack of preparation highly visible, minimal effort shown in the process or sitting out of a session.
- D- to D+ (60 to 69%) = Late multiple times or absent beyond limit, not prepared, sitting out or not participating for more than one session per week
- Participation grade is calculated weekly.

Rehearsal Hours

- You will be expected to commit to **7 hours of rehearsal outside** of class during the last weekend (June 29/30) of the course. The time will be set during the second week. It is also highly recommended to reserve **another 2 hours** for outside rehearsal the last half week of class for refining after receiving notes.
- Please exchange phone numbers and/or emails and work with the directors to arrange rehearsal times.

Journals

- Journals are intended to be reflections on work done both in and out of class. There should be a minimum of one page of notes taken per class period and one page of notes for every outside rehearsal to receive full credit.
- The journal will be taken at the end of each week. If you prefer to journal using an electronic device, you must upload the journal in a docx. format to TRACS folder the day it is due. **Late journals will not be accepted.** If you plan on missing on a day your journal is due please arrange to have the journal left in my office mailbox.

Readings

- You are expected to come to each class prepared to discuss any reading assignments or videos detailed on your syllabus or assigned during class. Readings will come from material in the required books.

Note on Content and Conduct

- Some of the subject matter/exercises in this course may become controversial and emotional. Performing can be a difficult art to master and requires a lot of dedication and self understanding. Often you will be asked to be critiqued by and to critique your fellow classmates. I expect that each student come prepared to speak truthfully and respectfully so as to create a safe and supportive environment.
- In this class you will also be asked to develop a safe, consistent, and aware manner of physical collaboration. We will follow strict intimacy protocols to make sure everyone is safe and secure. If at any point you do not feel safe or need to set specific boundaries it is your responsibility to make that known. Open communication is key.

Final Grade Scale

930 - 1000 A

830 - 929 B

700 - 829 C

600 - 699 D

599-Below F

Graded Items

Journal - 4 x 50 = 20%

Participation and Showings - 4 x 200 = 80%

It is against department and university policy to discuss grade electronically. If you wish to discuss your grades please set up a time to talk with the instructor during office hours.

Schedule

Date	Assignment/Reading Due	In Class Activity
June 3	Read Syllabus	Introductions, Class Breakdown, Learn Warm-Up and Statues
June 4 - 6	Read Viewpoints pp. 1-80	Viewpoints of Time
June 7	Journals Due - End of Class	Open Composition - Viewpoints of Time
June 10 - 12	Rehearsal Availability Due Monday See June 29/30 Note on Schedule	Viewpoints of Space
June 13		Open Composition - Viewpoints of Time and Space
June 14	Read Viewpoints Chapter 8 Journals Due - End of Class	Viewpoints with Music
June 17	Read - Viewpoints Chapter 9 Memorize Short A/B Scene	Viewpoints of Sound and Speech
June 18		Open Composition - Time/Space/Sound
June 19	Prompt 1 (Space/Architecture)	Workshop
June 20	Prompt 2 (Images and Tableaus)	Workshop
June 21	Prompt 3 (Objects) Journals Due - End of Class	Workshop
June 24	Prompt 4 (Text)	Workshop
June 25	Prompt 5 (Music)	Workshop
June 26	Prompt 6 (Putting it all together)	Workshop
June 27		Open Composition - All elements
June 28	Ensemble Brainstorming Bring Inspirations	Ensemble Creation/Rehearsal
June 29/30	7 Hours Outside Rehearsal - Time TBD	Ensemble Creation/Rehearsal

Date	Assignment/Reading Due	In Class Activity
July 1	Draft Rehearsal / Notes	Presentation/ Notes / Refine
July 2	Final Draft Rehearsal / Notes Journals Due - End of Class	Presentation / Notes / Refine
July 3	Final Presentation and Discussion	

University/Course Policies

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND HONOR CODE

Academic dishonesty (which includes plagiarism, copying someone else's work, falsifying data, or unauthorized collaboration) is a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action. Don't do it. The Honor Code - <http://www.txstate.edu/honorcodecouncil/Academic-Integrity.html>. Purposefully engaging in acts that go against the honor code policy can cause an immediate zero in the course.

CELLPHONE AND LAPTOP USAGE

Always be respectful of the abilities, opinions, focus and comfort of your fellow students. Please keep cell phones silenced all times while in the classroom. You may use them to take notes or to record material but if you are using the technology in a distracting manner you will be requested turn it off. I encourage the use of laptops or tablets but ask that you do so only to engage in activities directly related to what is happening in the class at the moment, such as taking notes or conducting research.

POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Texas State forbids discrimination in any university activity or program. Faculty members, staff employees, and students who discriminate against others in connection with a university activity or program will be considered to have violated this policy and are subject to disciplinary sanctions. This policy is carried over to individuals in the class. Any discriminatory conduct expressed in the class will be subject to proper disciplinary actions as prescribed by University policy. Discrimination = conduct directed at a specific individual or a group of identifiable individuals that subjects the individual or group to treatment that adversely affects their employment or education because of their race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, veterans' status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR A DISABILITY

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week

prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities.

ACCOMMODATIONS BECAUSE OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

It is the responsibility of every instructor to clearly explain his or her procedures about absences due to religious observances in the course syllabus so that all students are fully informed, in writing, near the beginning of each semester's classes. Campus policy regarding religious observances states that faculty must make reasonable accommodation for them and in so doing, be careful not to inhibit or penalize those students who are exercising their rights to religious observance. Faculty should be aware that a given religious holiday may be observed with very different levels of attentiveness by different members of the same religious group and thus may require careful consideration to the particulars of each individual case.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom may result in a request for the offending student to leave class. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Code of Student Conduct -<http://www.dos.txstate.edu/handbook/rules/cosc.html>