

History of the American Musical
Course Syllabus
Spring 2018

Sam Houston State University
Department of Theatre and Musical Theatre
THEA 4371
MWF 11:00 a.m.-11:50 a.m.
PAC 240

Instructor – Dr. Laura Avery
Office – PAC 284D
Office hours – by appt.
Phone – 936.294.3404
E-mail – lka005@shsu.edu

Text: *Musical! A Grand Tour* by Denny Martin Flinn

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an examination of the history and development of the structures of the American musical. It is designed to familiarize the student with the genre of musical theatre, highlighting its evolution as an American stage tradition.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Class time will allow for viewing of and listening to recorded footage of historical performances. Students will be expected to record the names of the performers and performances in a notebook. The information will appear on class quizzes.
2. Students will be asked to attend the SHSU production of *Pippin* plus one off campus professional musical theatre production. Students will be asked to write a 2 page response for each production viewed. Papers should be typed and double-spaced; font size 12, with one-inch margins.
3. Working with a partner, students will be given the opportunity to present a final 10-minute lecture performance on a topic selected from a list of topics prepared by Dr. Avery. The presentation should include moments of lecture and performance.
4. Working independently from their presentation partner, students will be required to write a paper to accompany their portion of the presentation. The paper should be 10 pages in length. Papers should be typed and double-spaced; font size 12, with one-inch margins.
5. Students' success in the class is based on daily preparation and participation. If you don't attend, you can't contribute and your grade will suffer.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

If you are absent from more than **three (3)** classes, your final grade will be reduced by **two (2)** points for **each** absence. Tardiness is unacceptable. If you are tardy **three (3)** times, that equals **one absence**. Excessive tardiness will result in a reduction of your final grade.

RULES OF CONDUCT:

Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus impedes the mission of the university. Please turn off or mute your cellular phone and/or pager before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, talking among each other at inappropriate times, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a directive to leave class or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy. Please talk to me prior to class if you would like to bring a visitor to class.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy University policy states that if any student must be absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day, they must notify their instructor by the 12th calendar day after the first day of the semester.

Americans with Disabilities Act SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may adversely affect your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) and to talk to me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential.

NOTE: no accommodation can be made until you register with:

SSD Office Location: Lee Drain Annex (next to the Farrington Building)

Telephone: 936-294-3512 / TDD: 936-294-3786

E-mail: disability@shsu.edu

Web Address: www.shsu.edu/disability

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

1 page assignments- worth 10 /each	70
Show response papers- worth 20/each	40
Final Project- worth 50 (paper 30/presentation 20)	50
Quiz	20
Class Participation	20
Total	200

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January

- 17 Syllabus/Intro. video
How much do we really know? Trivia Quiz
- 19 Chapter 1 Greek Drama
- 22 Chapter 2 Dark Ages- Newspaper Plays
- 24 Chapter 3 Renaissance (The Arts Reawakened)
- 26 Renaissance Dance&Ballet / **DUE:**1-pg discussing the English Masque's link to musical theatre
- 29 Commedia Dell'arte
- 31 Commedia Dell'arte

February

- 2 Character Types / **DUE:** 1-pg discussing Molière's Comédie-ballet's link to musical theatre
- 5 Chapter 4 *Beggar's Opera*
- 7 Continue *Beggar's Opera*
- 9 Chapter 5 Gilbert and Sullivan
- 12 Gilbert and Sullivan continued
- 14 Chapters 6&7 *Black Crook* / **DUE:** 1-pg discussing G&S operettas' influence on musical theatre
- 16 NO CLASS
- 19 Chapter 8 Ziegfeld (Irving Berlin, Fanny Brice, Bert Williams and other legacies of the Follies)
- 21 Chapter 9 George Cohan and Vaudeville (*For Me and My Gal*)
- 23 Busby Berkeley / **DUE:** 1-pg discussing how Ziegfeld's revues advanced musical theatre
- 26 Chapter 10 Jerome Kern
- 28 Chapter 11 *Show Boat* / **DUE:** 1-pg discussing how vaudeville (Cohan) advanced musical theatre

March

- 2 *Show Boat* cont'd
- 5 Cole Porter
- 7 1930's Hollywood Movie Musical
- 9 NO CLASS / **DUE:** 1-pg discussing *Show Boat*'s significance in the history of musical theatre
- 12 Spring Break
- 14 Spring Break
- 16 Spring Break
- 19 "Syncopated City"
- 21 George Gershwin's music
- 23 Chapter 12 *Porgy and Bess*
- 26 Chapter 13 *Oklahoma*
- 28 *Oklahoma* continued
- 30 NO CLASS – Good Friday

April

- 2 The Golden Age of Musical Theatre / **DUE:** 1-pg discussing *Oklahoma*'s significance
- 4 The Golden Age continued
- 6 Chapter 14 *West Side Story* / **DUE:** 2-pg Off Campus Performance Paper
- 9 Chapters 15-18 1960-1980
- 11 1960-1980 cont'd / **DUE:** presentation topics and partners
- 13 1960-1980 cont'd
- 16 Chapter 26 Sondheim / **DUE:** Quiz
- 18 Final Presentations Begin
- 20 Final Presentations Continue
- 23 Final Presentations Continue
- 25 Final Presentations Continue
- 27 Final Presentations Continue / **DUE:** 10-pg paper
- 30 NO CLASS

MAY

- 2 NO CLASS
- 4 NO CLASS / **DUE:** 2-page *Pippin* paper