THEATER GAMES: Theatre 111

Semester: Fall 2018
Credits: 3

Hours required: 50 hours in class, 8 hours presentations and final scene study, 90 hours outside of class independent work.
Instructor: Alan Guszkowski
Office: ComedySportz, 420 South 1st Street, Milwaukee, WI
Email: agg2@uwm.edu

Course description: This course explores the world of improvisational theatre games. Students will engage in ensemble/team improvisation and theater games as a tool for growth. We explore the ComedySportz techniques of team performance, sharing, listening, and reacting. Additionally, students will observe these techniques by attending local improvisational performances. At the end of the semester, all students will participate in a showcase of their work developed in this course.

Course Goals & Outcomes: Students will...
- Gain an understanding of improvisation and teamwork.
- View and reflect on improvisation performances.
- Experience improvisation games, exercises, and warm-ups through role playing and scene work.
- Perform and assist in a performance presentation focused on improvisational competitive team performance.

GER Course Goals: This course meets the GER criteria for the Arts by requiring students to create new work (GER Criteria #1) in a theatre arts-based setting. It is participatory in nature and requires that students learn the essential qualities and skills needed to create an improvisational work of theatre, which is a foundational skill in making theatre (GER Criteria #3).

Important Information for Students: Academic Misconduct: Student academic misconduct is not tolerated in this class, procedures are specified in Chapter UWS 14 and Faculty Document No. 1686 and can be found at http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Acad_Aff/policy/academicmisconduct.html

Religious Observances: From time to time, students who are observing religious holidays or other days of special religious significance will find it necessary to be absent on a class day. Wisconsin law (Chapter 36.43) and UWM Faculty Policy (Document 1918) require that we provide "reasonable accommodation of a student's sincerely held religious beliefs with regard to all examinations and other academic requirements." Please let the instructor know if you need such make every effort to accommodation. A copy of the UW-Milwaukee policy is located on the web at http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad+admin_policies/S1.5.htm.
Drop Policies/Withdrawal/Repeat: UWM Academic and Administrative Policy S-19 details the Drop/Withdrawal/Repeat policies. A student may drop a course(s) through the end of the eighth week of classes.

Students Called to Military Service: UWM and the UW System have in recent years put in place a number of policies and procedures designed to accommodate students who must temporarily interrupt their studies when called to active duty military service. Go to http://www3.uwm.edu/des/web/registration/militarycallup.cfm for more detailed information.


Special Accommodations/Students with Disabilities: If you need special accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. In addition, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the requirements of this course, including what is expected of you in class, i.e., participation, homework, tests, or anything else, discuss this with your instructor as soon as possible. You may also want to contact the Student Accessibility Center at x5822 if you need assistance or have questions on this matter.

Recommended Texts:
- *Impro* by Keith Johnstone
- *Improvisation for the Theater* by Viola Spolin
- *Improvisation in Drama* by Anthony Frost and Ralph Yarrow
- *Gamester's Handbook* by Donna Brandes and Howard Phillips
- *Don't Be Prepared* by Keith Johnstone
- *Acting Games - Improvisations and Exercises* by Marsh Cassady

Requirements:
- All students must attend and fully participate in each class session.
- All students must attend a live performance.
- All assignments must be completed and handed in on time.
- All students must participate in the scheduled final live performance.
- There will be physical activity. Proper dress is required. (Soft shoes, loose clothing)

Attendance: We start on time no matter who is or isn't here. It is better to be late than not come at all. Up to 2 excused absences are allowed. After 2 absences students lose points, which will result in a lower final grade. Points will also be taken off for any and all unexcused absences.
Grades: 100 total points possible

60 points  Attendance - each class attended is 5 points towards your final grade

10 points  Assignments - two assignments worth 5 points each to be done on the proper form and HANDED IN ON TIME.

10 points  Effort/Participation/Attitude - points are lost due to inattention to or lack of listening during class, following the rules of the games, respect for your fellow performers. Students should also show a willingness to jump up on stage and attempt games and exercises.

20 points  Final Show - points are awarded on presentation of skills learned (stage presence, volume, active listening, etc)

Curriculum: All of the exercises and games in this course focus on the following.

- **Effort:** Everyone has a comfort zone. In this class, it’s important to realize yours, then explore beyond it. If you are a follower, take a leadership role. If you are a leader, provide support to another student’s idea.

- **Observation:** Students can learn as much, or more, from watching others work. Even if you are not on stage at the moment, pay close attention to what others are doing and think critically about what you may have done different.

- **Concentration:** You are encouraged to develop your ability to “stay in the game.” Keep focused on the class even if the attention is not on you.

- **Taking chances:** This includes your willingness to jump up and participate. Everyone is learning these games together, so attempt them without always watching others attempt them first.

- **Team Effort:** Respect for others. Cooperation. “Yes And” ideas that may be different than your own in a game.

- **Performance skills:** Voice, movement, stage presence, ability to follow instructions and take direction, and ability to “solve the problem.”

- **Making choices:** Ability to “make a choice, and make it the right choice.”

- **Participation:** Willingness to attempt things. There are going to be times when you don't feel like jumping in. That's when you jump in.

- **All students are expected to contribute to the evolution of the class.**

- **Respect:** Students may lose grade points for conduct that is disrespectful to other students and/or disruptive to the class.

Measuring Success In This Class:

For some, success in this class is being able to say: “My “A” is my measure of success. Others might say my “B” is my measure of success. Some might actually say: “I learned something of value, hence, I met my standard for success.” I hope success for you means that you made decisions and then made them the right decisions, and did the best you could do or went beyond your comfort zone.
For me, success will be measured by your attendance in class, and how you conduct yourself when you are there. You must be present, paying attention, and willing to jump up and try new things. I must see your active participation and attempts to cooperatively succeed in all of the exercises and games. Throughout the course I will need to see your successful implementation of the warm-ups, exercises and all games learned.

GER Activity/Assignment:

Performance: This assignment focuses on the GER Arts criteria of creating new work. You will be creating an improvisational performance.

1) Choose a theatre game and activity that you have either researched or done in class. You are responsible for modifying the game in some way or redesigning the game;

2) You will be assigned a partner for this project. Meet with your partner and outline how you will show and demonstrate this ‘modified’ game to others in a creative and collaborative way;

3) Perform this game in front of others;

4) After you have demonstrated the theatre game lead the rest of the class in participating. Demonstrate good coaching skills. Remember, clarity is very important here. Some time will be given during class time to rehearse this piece—however—you are also responsible for rehearsing the piece on your own.

GER Assessment: you will be evaluated (using the rubric below) on performance choices, collaboration, coaching skills, and ability to include others in inclusive ways in the project.

GER Rubric for Assessing this assignment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LTR/pts</th>
<th>Criterion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (90-100 points)</td>
<td>Cogent, collaborative (when applicable), creative, original, strong performance style, evocative, interesting, compelling, superb grasp of all performance aspects including narration, flow, characterization, gesture, and voice. Interactive (when applicable), evidence of progress made since first rehearsal, evokes emotional response in audience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B (80-89 points)</td>
<td>Clear, well presented, interesting, collaboration is strong (when applicable), involves audience (when appropriate), points, themes, and ideas are clear and communicated well, progress made since first rehearsal, presentation flows in a holistic manner, characters are clearly delineated, use of gesture variable, clear use of multiple vocal expressions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (70-79 points)</td>
<td>Presentation is clear, collaboration is not apparent and/or weak (when applicable), attempts to involve audience are limited or non-existent (when applicable), somewhat unfocused or unclear, limited progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>D (60-69 points)</td>
<td>made since first rehearsal, somewhat disjointed, character work apparent, use of gesture limited, vocal expression limited in range. Sloppy, thrown together at the last minute, rushed, one person leads the entire group (when applicable), no acknowledgement of audience, generally unfocused, disjointed and not understandable, character work extremely limited, use of gestures extremely limited, vocal work extremely limited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (59 or fewer points)</td>
<td>Inappropriate, late, assignment not done, group collaboration non-existent (when applicable) and/or limited, progress since first rehearsal is minimal or non-existent, unfocused or not understandable, character work non-existent, no use of gesture, vocal variation not included.</td>
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**TYPES OF GAMES WE PLAY IN CLASS**

**NON-ZERO SUM GAMES:** A Non-zero sum game is one in which the gain for one participant is not necessarily at the expense of another. In card games, for instance, there may be more than one winner. Many board games are also Non-zero sum games. This class is a Non-Zero Sum game. Everybody can win. One player’s success is not at the expense of any of the other players. Our show is a Non-Zero Sum game. Everybody wins.

**ZERO-SUM GAMES:** A zero-sum game is a game in which all outcomes involve a sum of all player's payoffs. Hence, a gain for one participant is always at the expense of another, such as in most sporting events. Given the conflicting interests, the equilibrium of such games is often in mixed strategies. Some of the theatre games we will play will be Zero sum games.

**ONE-PLAYER GAMES or SOLO GAMES:** Some games can be played “against” one’s self. These are called self/goal games. Setting a goal to lose weight and losing that sum means that the “combatant” has achieved a win or a specific amount of success. **SOLITAIRE** is a one-player game. In Sologames, only one player makes up the rules. New year’s resolutions are Sologames. One can set the bar high i.e. as in quitting a habit “cold turkey” or lower, I.e “if I can just get down to one pack a day.”

**GAME GENRES** Most games are combinations of at least two of the below:

- Guessing
- Scene
- Rhyming
- Singing
- Gimmick
- Head to Head
- Toss ups
- Elimination
- Team Building
- Ice Breaker
- Mime
- Gibberish
CALENDAR

1. Class One

CLASS INTRO
STUDENT INTROS
ZIP ZAP ZOP
EVERYBODY GO
ENEMY/DEFENDER
BUILDING TOUR
HUMAN KNOT
CIRCLE AND CROSS
WAYD

2. Class Two

ZIP ZAP ZOP
RED BALL
YES CIRCLE
REACTION CIRCLE
CIRCLE STORY
DR. KNOW IT ALL
SPELLING BEE
WAYD

3. Class Three

ZIP ZAP ZOP
RED BALL
CLAP CIRCLE
10-1
WHISKEY MIXER/FUZZY DUCK
CIRCLE STORY
DR./SPELLING BEE
STORY

4. Class Four

ZIP ZAP ZOP
RED BALL
CLAP CIRCLE
10-1
BIPPTY BIPPITY BOP
GENERAL/MAO
SCENE INTRO
2 LINE SCENES
DOORS
DOUBLE BLIND FREEZE

5. Class Five

ZIP ZAP ZOP
RED BALL
CLAP CIRCLE
10-1
BIPPTY BIPPITY BOP
GENERAL/MAO
MIRROR
CIRCLE MIRROR
OBJECT CIRCLE
TUG OF WAR/JUMP ROPE
DOUBLE BLIND FREEZE

6. Class Six

ZIP ZAP ZOP
RED BALL
CLAP CIRCLE
10-1
BIPPTY BIPPITY BOP
GENERAL/MAO
CHARACTER WALKS
SILENT SCREAM
EMOTIONAL LADDER
EMOTIONAL SYMPHONY
EMOTIONAL PARTY
ASSIGN: “VIEW A SHOW”

7. Class Seven
8. Class Eight

ZIP ZAP ZOP
RED BALL
CLAP CIRCLE
10-1
BIPPTY BIPPITY BOP
GENERAL/MAO

YES . . . AND LINES
2 LINE SCENES
DOORS
BLINDLINE
DOUBLE-BLIND FREEZE

9. Class Nine

ZIP ZAP ZOP
RED BALL
CLAP CIRCLE
10-1
BIPPTY BIPPITY BOP
GENERAL/MAO

MIRRORS (LEAD SWITCH)
WHISPER BACK
SCENE IN THE DARK
COUNTDOWN
DOUBLE-BLIND FREEZE

10. Class Ten

ZIP ZAP ZOP
RED BALL
CLAP CIRCLE
10-1
BIPPTY BIPPITY BOP
GENERAL/MAO

OO . . . AH
SOUNDSCAPES
SWITCH INTERVIEW
REVIEW GAMES

11. Class Eleven

ZIP ZAP ZOP
RED BALL
CLAP CIRCLE
10-1
BIPPTY BIPPITY BOP
GENERAL/MAO

OO . . . AH
GTA
REVIEW GAMES

ASSIGNMENT DUE: “VIEW A SHOW”
ASSIGN: “CREATE A GAME”

12. Class Twelve

ZIP ZAP ZOP
RED BALL
CLAP CIRCLE
10-1
BIPPTY BIPPITY BOP
GENERAL/MAO

OO . . . AH
GO OVER GAMES CREATED
SHOW REVIEW/RUN SHOW
13. Class Thirteen

ZIP ZAP ZOP  BIPPTY BIPPITY BOP
RED BALL  GENERAL/MAO
CLAP CIRCLE  OO . . AH
10-1  FULL SHOW RUN

14. Class Fourteen

SHOW REVIEW AND EVALUATION