

GROUP STUDIO: The Art of Collaboration

Judyie Al-Bilali, jalbilali@theater.umass.edu

UMass Theater Course 680, Fall 2017

Meeting Time: Tuesday, 2:30 – 5:15

Office Hours and Location: Mon, Tues, Wed 12 noon- 1 pm, Rand Theater Lobby 027B

“There is no possible freedom, I believe, if the people working together on a show have not previously known each other. I come back to that human reality which is indispensable to artistic reality. To me the unity and quality of a performance, particularly if the play is one of style, depends mainly on the quality and unity which should exist in the company before work on the play begins”

Michel St. Denis, *Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is a practical workshop centered on a collaborative project where designers, dramaturgs and directors create an original piece for presentation at the end of the semester. The primary objective of the class is to develop a shared vocabulary and common creative experiences in the process of transforming text or ideas into a performed event. Throughout the semester we will host members of the faculty and third year graduate students for informal conversations related to the MFA program, our experiences as artists and teachers and to our roles in the broader society.

SELECTED READINGS (available on Moodle)

Theatrical Jazz: Performance, ASE and the Power of the Present Moment, Dr. Omi Osun Joni L. Jones

JOURNAL

Maintaining a journal, also referred to as an artists' notebook. The journal/notebook is not for submission or grading, rather it is a valuable tool for you to chart your own creative development. It contains notes from class, dreams, useful references for production, photos, pictures, conversations, your own drawings, etc. Please bring your journal to class.

SPECIAL EVENTS REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Attendance at either of the two Five College Theater Alumnae of Color Residency; the Performance Showcase on Thursday, Sept 28, 7:30 pm at Kirby Theater, Amherst College and/or “Theater in These Times” Panel on Friday, Sept 29, 5 pm, Kirby Theater, Amherst College
- 2) Visit to the University Museum of Contemporary Art (UMCA) exhibits ‘5 Takes on African Art: Exploring the Charles Derby Collection’ and ‘42 Flags by Fred Wilson’. The exhibits run from Sept 27- Dec 10, 2017

WRITING/PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT

A final self-evaluation of your role in the collaborative process towards your final Group Studio showing. Your writing will include responses to the mandatory events; the Five College Alumnae of Color Residency and the UMCA exhibits. The paper is 8-10 pages in length, double spaced in 12 point font, submitted in hard copy on Tues, Dec 12. Feel free to include photos, images and drawings.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

As appropriate to theatre practice attendance and punctuality are mandatory. This is a studio class and as a member of the ensemble you are expected to be on time, arrive prepared to work and to remain for the duration of the class. Repeated lateness will affect the final grade. For each unexcused absence your grade will be lowered one half letter grade. Absences are excused at the discretion of the instructor, advanced written notification is expected. Medical absences require a note, either from a private physician or from the UMass Health Center.

- dress for movement and comfort
- water only in the studio, no other food or beverages
- turn off pagers, cell phones and electronic devices *for the entire class including breaks*
- collaborators must schedule outside rehearsals and reserve practice space as necessary

COURSE SCHEDULE

Due dates for readings will be sent via email at least one week in advance.

Dates for visiting faculty and fellow students will be posted as I receive notification of their availability. Several sessions towards the end of the semester will be devoted to rehearsal for your final Group Studio presentation.

Student Conduct and Academic Honesty

Students are responsible for complying with University of Massachusetts' standards of student conduct and academic honesty. The prescribed penalty for academic dishonesty consists of an automatic 'F' for the course.

Individual Needs

This course must be as inclusive as possible and your communication is appreciated. Please notify the instructor if there is anything to be aware of regarding your particular needs or characteristics, such as a medical condition, a hidden disability, etc. that may influence your participation or your personal well-being. This disclosure is optional, or if you wish, only for selected individuals. UMass Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS) you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course.

Open Door Policy

If the requirements for the course are unclear please consult with the instructor during office hours, appointments can be made by contacting the instructor via e-mail or either before or after class times. Every effort is made to create a safe environment and a comfortable learning community for everyone. If at any time you feel it necessary, please feel free to address these issues with the professor.

Email Policy

Email sent during the week will be answered within 24 hours, email sent over the weekend will be answered on Monday.