Reflections of American Society on Stage
Spring 2013    PERF 220.001    T/F 10:20-11:35    Katzen 151

Instructor: Dr. Karl Kippola
Phone: (202) 885-3464
Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:45-10:15am & 2:30-3pm; Fridays 9:45-10:15am & 11:40am-2:10pm

Office: Katzen 227
email: kippola@american.edu

CONTEXT
PERF-220 is a course in Foundational Area I (The Creative Arts) in the University’s General Education Program.

OVERVIEW
The musical often is considered a uniquely American art form, and an examination of musical theatre works presents intriguing perspectives on American life and culture, as well as social and political values. While often dismissed as less substantive than dramatic plays, musicals have the power to attract audiences with the promise of entertainment while simultaneously moving and transforming them. By examining the eight musicals awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama – works ostensibly honored for “dealing with American life” – we will explore the ways in which musicals reflect, embrace, challenge, subvert, and shape American society and identities.

OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES
In order to develop and refine informed aesthetic sensibilities and communication skills, you will participate in a group project related to one of the assigned musicals. As part of this project students will perform an excerpt from the show, allowing you to experience the artistic process and understand how theatrical choices influence audience response. Individually and collectively, you also will examine the period and issues of the musical with a critical eye, sharing your findings with the class in an oral presentation, through handouts, and incorporating other visual and aural media. Each student will more fully articulate his/her discoveries in a 3-4 page research paper. Each student will receive both an individual grade and a group grade based on investment in the collaborative process, complexity and clarity of thinking, creativity of presentation, and level of insight provided on the assigned musical.

Through lectures, class discussion, student presentations and experiential work, play readings, film viewings, theatre attendance, and written assignments, students will:

• Learn criteria and vocabulary with which to view and analyze musicals.
• Examine cultural, religious, societal, and artistic phenomena of the United States as reflected in musical plays and theatre performances.
• Gain insight into American society of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.
• Develop creative and expressive abilities by making oral presentations, acting in scenes, and writing essays on subject matter explored in plays, films, and discussions (including issues of race, ethnicity, class, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, culture, and ethics).
• Identify the artistic, social, and political agendas of artists and the ways in which these artists consciously attempt to manipulate audience response.
• Develop critical thinking, creative/aesthetic faculties, and expressive abilities.
REQUIREMENTS

- Due to the participatory nature of this course, attendance is an essential component of your final grade. Each student is allowed two unexcused absences for the semester. Each subsequent absence will automatically result in the reduction of your final grade. Submit a note (when possible in advance of the absence) from a doctor or academic advisor on official letterhead for an excused absence within one week of the absence. Please see American University’s academic guidelines regarding excused absences. Two late arrivals are the equivalent of one absence.

- I often give quizzes at the beginning of class, which cannot be rescheduled.

- Attend, and write a one-page response to, the Department of Performing Arts (DPA) production of *Cabaret* (April 4-6 – 8pm & April 6 – 2 pm) at the Greenburg Theatre (intersection of Wisconsin and Van Ness). All student tickets are $10 and can be purchased at the Katzen or Greenberg box offices or on-line at http://american.tix.com. Also, see the department website at http://www.american.edu/cas/performing-arts/

- You also must attend, and write a one-page response to, *Hello, Dolly* at Ford’s Theatre. The production opens March 15 and runs eight shows a week through the end of the semester. You are required to secure your own ticket and see this play on your own. A performance analysis is due the class after you view the production – but no later than the last day of class, April 26 – please attach your ticket stub. Ford’s Theatre (511 Tenth Street, NW) is within easy walking distance of three metro stops: Metro Center, Gallery Place, Archives/Navy Memorial. Discount tickets ($18) are available for obstructed view, as well as select Friday and Saturday matinees for patrons under 35: http://www.fordstheatre.org/fords-theatre-discounts

- Set aside a lab fee to cover the cost of theatre tickets and photocopying.

- View assigned films in the Bender Library Media Center (or acquire them on your own).

- Complete readings, written assignments, and quizzes according to the class schedule.

- Actively participate in class discussions, group work, and presentations.

- I offer no extra credit for this course.

PLEASE NOTE: Students are expected to obtain notes, assignments, and handouts distributed in their absence.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Grade Breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment #1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Page Responses (3 @ 25)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project – Presentation</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project – Written Assignment</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grading Scale (based on percentage of final points):

- A = 94-100
- A- = 90-93
- B+ = 88-89
- B = 84-87
- B- = 80-83
- C+ = 78-79
- C = 74-77
- C- = 70-73
- D = 60-69
- F = below 60

Evaluation of a student's performance in this course as a whole will be guided by the following criteria:

- A: Demonstration of superior work (written and oral) in fulfillment of course requirements; improvement during the semester will be weighed in evaluation.
- B: Excellent work (written and oral) in fulfillment of course requirements; improvement during the semester will be weighed in evaluation.
- C: Satisfactory work (written and oral) in fulfillment of course requirements.
- D: Assigned work is not satisfactory or not completed and/or student fails to meet minimum attendance requirements.
- F: Failure to meet minimum course goals – written assignments, class participation, and other course requirements.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course. http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm

REQUIRED TEXTS AND DUE DATES

Students are required to read all libretti (scripts) and listen to all cast recordings in their entirety. Videos may be assigned, and in some instances substituted, for some of the musicals studied. All libretti, cast recordings, and videos will be put on reserve in the Bender library; they also will be posted on Blackboard if possible. Additional readings or viewings will be posted on Blackboard or available online.

I. *Of Thee I Sing* (Book by George S. Kaufman and Morrie Ryskind, Lyrics by Ira Gershwin, Music by George Gershwin) January 22*
   Compact Disc 9912

II. *South Pacific* (Book by Oscar Hammerstein II and Joshua Logan, Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, Music by Richard Rodgers) February 1*
   Compact Disc 1573
   *Tales of the South Pacific* (James Michener) – pp. 118-143, 165-226*
   *The War* (Ken Burns documentary) – Episode 3 “A Deadly Calling” (120 minutes): DVD 3262
   Lincoln Center Broadway Revival video – on reserve, or in 12 parts on youtube
   Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jR1in9Q6_Lo
III. *Fiorello!* (Book Jerome Weidman and George Abbott, Lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, Music by Jerry Bock) February 12
Compact Disc 3180

*Life with Fiorello* (Ernest Cuneo) – pp. 31-54, 109-136*
Fiorello LaGuardia Documentary (27 minutes):
http://catalog.wrlc.org/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBID=8507282

IV. *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Book by Abe Burrows, Jack Weinstock, and Willie Gilbert, Music and Lyrics by Frank Loesser) February 22
DVD 297 121 minutes
Compact Disc 582

*How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Shepherd Mead) – pp. 1-39*

*Mad Men*, Season 1, Episodes 1 & 2 (each episode 47 minutes): DVD 4541

V. *A Chorus Line* (Book by James Kirkwood, Jr. and Nicholas Dante, Lyrics by Edward Kleban, Music by Marvin Hamlisch) March 8
Compact Disc 9454

*Every Little Step* (93 minutes): DVD 6894

VI. *Sunday in the Park With George* (Book by James Lapine, Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim) March 26*
Compact Disc 5361
DVD 913 (Bender) 146 minutes
DVD 242 (Katzen)

VII. *Rent* (Music and Lyrics by Jonathan Larson) April 5*
Compact Disc 1517

Preface to *The Bohemians of the Latin Quarter* (Henri Murger)
http://www.bohemianlit.com/full_text/murger/preface.htm

*La Boheme* (149 minutes):
http://catalog.wrlc.org/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBID=8302609

VIII. *Next to Normal* (Book and Lyrics by Brian Yorkey, Music by Tom Kitt) April 19
Compact Disc 5166

*These readings will be available through Blackboard.

REQUIRED VIEWINGS
Attend the DPA production of *Cabaret* (April 4-6) and the Ford’s Theatre production of *Hello, Dolly* (opening March 15). The Washington/Baltimore area is the second largest theatre market in the United States. While I do not offer extra credit, I hope that you will choose to take advantage of the opportunity to see as much professional theatre as possible. Many local theatres offer students discounted tickets.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>1/15</th>
<th>Introductions, Syllabus, Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/18</td>
<td>Due: Personal American Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very brief overview of early musical theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>Due: Read and listen to <em>Of Thee I Sing</em> (on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Musical as Political and Gender Satire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/25</td>
<td>Due: Read excerpts &amp; listen to <em>Let ‘Em Eat Cake</em> (Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue <em>Of Thee I Sing</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>1/29</td>
<td>Continue <em>Of Thee I Sing</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Politics and Elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Groups Assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Due: View <em>South Pacific</em> (on reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Musical on War and Prejudice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>Due: Read <em>Tales of the South Pacific</em> (118-143, 165-226 – on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue <em>South Pacific</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>Due: View <em>The War</em> “Deadly Calling” (on reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Short Written Assignment – Details TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue <em>South Pacific</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Due: Read and listen to <em>Fiorello!</em> (on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Musical as Biography and on Political Corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>Due: Read <em>Life with Fiorello</em> excerpts (31-54, 109-136 – on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue <em>Fiorello!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>Due: View Fiorello LaGuardia documentary (online)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue <em>Fiorello!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/22</td>
<td>Due: View <em>How to Succeed in Business</em> (on reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Musical Mocks Big Business and Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>2/26</td>
<td>Due: Read and listen to show excerpts (on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Project #1: <em>How to Succeed</em> Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue <em>How to Succeed in Business</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>Due: Read Mead <em>HTSIBWRT</em> excerpts (1-39 – on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>View <em>Mad Men</em> (Season 1, episodes 1 and 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Project #2: <em>How to Succeed</em> Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue <em>How to Succeed in Business</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>Mid-Term Check Up/Catch Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pulitzer Near-Misses: <em>GAD, GAC &amp; ITH</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/8</td>
<td>Due: Read &amp; listen to <em>A Chorus Line</em> (recording on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meta-Musical, Concept Musical, Dance Musical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>3/19</td>
<td>Due: View <em>Every Little Step</em> (on reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group Project #3: <em>Chorus Line</em> Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue <em>A Chorus Line</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/22</td>
<td>Group Project #4: <em>Chorus Line</em> Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continue <em>A Chorus Line</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wee

Week 1

Due:

3/26 View Sunday in the Park with George (on reserve) The Musical as Exploration of Artistic Process

3/29 Group Project #5: Sunday in the Park Context Continue Sunday in the Park with George

Week 11

4/2 Group Project #6: Sunday in the Park Issues Continue Sunday in the Park with George

4/5 Due: Read and listen to Rent (on Blackboard) The Musical as Sex, Drugs, and Rock & Roll

Week 12

4/9 Due: Performance Critique of Cabaret (Greenberg) Discuss Cabaret

4/12 Due: View La Boheme (online) Group Project #7: Rent Context Continue Rent

Week 13

4/16 Due: Read Preface to Bohemians of the Latin Quarter (online) Group Project #8: Rent Issues Continue Rent

4/19 Due: Read and listen to Next to Normal (recording on Blackboard) The Musical on Family, Suburbia, and Mental Illness

Week 14

4/23 Continue Next to Normal

4/26 Continue Next to Normal Discuss Hello, Dolly (Ford’s) The Future of the American Musical

Final Examination Friday, May 3, 8:55-11:25am

Final Examination

*This schedule may change. Assignments and readings may be added. All changes will be announced in class. You are responsible for any and all changes. Specific details and requirements on all assignments will be given no later than one week before they are due. While quizzes are not shown on the schedule, I reserve the right to give them at any time.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Academic Support Center (ASC) Disability Support Services
243 Mary Graydon Center, x3360 206 Mary Graydon Center, x3315

International Student Services Counseling Center
410 Butler Pavilion, 4th floor, x3350 214 Mary Graydon Center, x3500

Writing Center Student Health Center
228 Battelle Tompkins Hall, x2991 McCabe, 1st floor, x3380
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS
Detailed information on writing assignments will be distributed well before the due dates. All assignments must be at least the specified minimum number of pages. Papers must be typed, double-sided, double-spaced (unless otherwise specified), stapled, with one-inch margins, in a 12-point Times New Roman font, with a cover page (not included in the minimum number of pages) noting the student’s name and ID #. Do an outline or rough draft first. Organize your thoughts to avoid redundancy. Check grammar, spelling, punctuation, and the clarity of your argument. Proofread your work. Papers must be submitted at the beginning of class on the date due. There will be no extensions or incompletes. Papers may not be re-written for credit.

Writing Assignments:
1) Personal essay defining what it means to be an American
2) One-page assignment on South Pacific (details TBA)
3) Written component of Group Project
4) Two one-page performance critiques: Cabaret and Hello Dolly
5) Final in-class examination

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 – Due January 18
What does it mean to be an American, and how would you define the American Dream? Make your answer personal. You may be pragmatic or idealistic, patriotic or cynical, witty or impassioned. Be specific and detailed both in your definitions and in your use of personal examples/connection. Please provide at least one example from the arts – visual arts, theatre, dance, music, film – that directly or indirectly exemplifies, encapsulates, or inspires your definition. Specifically describe (or quote from) the art work and explain why you chose it. You will be graded on your personal investment and the persuasiveness and clarity of your writing.

Assignment requirements:
• 2-3 typed pages – double-sided, double-spaced, stapled, with one-inch margins, in a 12-point Times New Roman font. Write at least two full pages.
• Include a title page (give your paper a title), with your name and ID#.
• Write what you feel and believe, rather than attempting to give me the answer you think I want. Invest of yourself. Write well.

ONE-PAGE PERFORMANCE RESPONSES
Primarily, this is your opportunity to demonstrate that you viewed the performance. Each response should be one typed page, single-spaced, with your name and a word count at the top of the page – 400-450 words. Please attach your ticket stub. You must address the ways the musical and production reflect(ed) American society and values. Use multiple, specific, detailed examples from the production/musical – again, remember you are demonstrating that you viewed this performance. A plot summary is unnecessary. When evaluating the intentions and effectiveness of the artistic choices, focus on the following two questions: What is the production attempting to do? Is it successful in its intentions? These assignments do not require a title page. The written responses are due on the following dates:

Cabaret April 9
Hello, Dolly Class after production viewed. Submitted no later than April 26
GROUP PROJECTS/PRESENTATIONS

Objectives:
- To learn experientially as well as cognitively.
- To experience the artistic process and understand how theatrical choices influence audience response.
- To work collaboratively in peer groups.
- To absorb, analyze, and discuss materials, apply these ideas to plays, and develop creative presentations in order to instruct and entertain the class.
- To provide practical experience in oral communication.

Overview: Each student will participate in one group project. Groups will be assigned by the instructor. The goal of each presentation is to teach, illuminate, engage, stimulate, and entertain the class. Be clear, be creative, be substantive. Use visuals and handouts. Feel free to use notes and index cards, but your individual and collective presentations should be polished and prepared. Because two groups are assigned to each musical, groups must communicate with one another to ensure no significant duplication of topics and information.

Written Component: Each student will submit an individual written assignment addressing a substantive topic related to the period and/or musical – i.e. social and political context, issues addressed or implied, etc. Your topic must provide substantive insight into the play and/or period and must not duplicate the information of any other group member. Cite all sources and include a bibliography (a minimum of three sources in addition to the script, at least one of which should NOT be an internet source). This information should be different from, yet augment, anything we have read in class and must adhere to the following guidelines: 3-4 typed pages – double-sided, double-spaced, stapled, with one-inch margins, in a 12-point Times New Roman font. Write at least three full pages.

Grading: Each student will receive both an individual grade and a group grade. In addition to the written component described above, each student will submit a written evaluation of every member of her/his group, including him/herself. Devote at least one paragraph to an overview of your group process. Then speak about each group member’s assigned task and how effectively and enthusiastically they contributed to the project (a short paragraph of at least 3-4 sentences for each member). Also, rate each person in your group, including yourself, on a scale of 1 to 10 overall, based on the following questions: Did the student contribute passionately to the group’s efforts? Did the student attend all meetings and rehearsals – on time and prepared? Was he/she helpful and cooperative? Did he/she actively participate in discussions, respectful of others’ opinions, while contributing substantively to the academic and artistic choices made? Did he/she take on an equal share of the work required? I will be the only person to read these evaluations, so be candid. Finally, for yourself, go into more detail about your contribution to the presentation and the process by which you prepared and researched, and honestly evaluate your own work. Clearly outline the specific work you did in order to prepare your presentation. This written component should be one page, single-spaced. Please attach this group and self evaluation to the written component of the group project.

Preparation Time: A very limited amount of class time will be designated to allow groups to meet and organize. However, meeting outside of class is essential and required. Everyone has a busy schedule. Avoid conflicts by planning well in advance.

Supplementary Materials: Handouts are an important component to each presentation. Design and photocopy tasks must be shared among group members.

Fairness: It is critical that every student pull her/his own weight. If a member is missing meetings and/or not doing the work, act quickly and try the following steps:

1. Speak to the student before or after class AND leave messages by phone and email (sending a copy of the email to me). If this has no effect, then:
2. Vote by majority to eject student from group, reassign tasks, and inform me.

NOTE: If you are ejected from a group, you will need to write a makeup paper by yourself on the same topic. This paper will be graded on a scale of B-F.
PERF 220.001 – Reflections of American Society on Stage

CLASS CONTRACT

Name (printed): __________________________________________

ID#: ______________________________________________________

Phone #: __________________________________________________

Email: ______________________________________________________

Do I have permission to share your phone number and email on a class contact sheet? ___

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE GUIDELINES FOR THIS COURSE AS OUTLINED IN THE SYLLABUS

Signature: ________________________________ Date: __________

Brief Survey

What is your intended major? ________________ Minor? __________

Have you had experience as an actor, director, designer, playwright, or crew member?

If you have any, list two or three favorite musicals:

If applicable, list the last two or three musicals you have seen, read, or listened to:

Aside from a grade, what is the most important thing you hope to get out of this course?