

IDH 3931, section 24HD -- The Musical: Genre, Spectacle, Celebrity

The University of Florida (Un)common Arts Honors Course – spring 2018

Course meeting times: Mondays period 8, 3:00 - 3:50, Flint 117

Instructor: Dr. Margaret Butler 351 MUB / (352) 273-3187 / butlermr@ufl.edu

Office Hours: MW per. 6 and by appointment

SYLLABUS

The musical is one of America's most popular entertainment genres, blending song, dance, acting, and stage spectacle. How has it maintained its broad appeal through time, changing to address needs and desires of different kinds of audiences? How have its celebrity performers helped shape certain famous shows in particular, and the genre, more broadly? How does its music relate to contemporary styles, and how do its themes reflect political, social, and cultural concerns? The course will explore these questions and others through an examination of musicals and their creators from the vaudeville era through today. This discussion-based class focuses on questions addressed through short readings, recordings of shows viewed on YouTube, and live performances presented by the UFPA. An annotated bibliography on a specific show, creator, or performer, incorporating performance-related material from UF's Belknap Collection for the Performing Arts, caps off students' work in the course.

We have a rare opportunity this semester to attend and discuss a high number of three professional productions of musicals sponsored by the UFPA. These will be integrated into the course; you are strongly encouraged to attend as many as you can (student tickets are \$10) although alternate productions will be available either on reserve at the AFA Library or on YouTube or other internet resources. All UFPA performances are at the Phillips Center:

Saturday, 2/3, 7:30 p.m., *Cabaret*

Thursday, 4/5, 7:30 p.m., *Cinderella*

Sunday, 4/22, 7:30 p.m., *A Chorus Line*

Students will read chapters in the *Cambridge Companion to the Musical* (below) and other short readings, and view excerpts from stage or film productions, which will be available either on YouTube or other internet resources, or on DVDs in the AFA Library. A list of excerpts and locations will be distributed in class. Students will come prepared with questions and comments based on the issues discussed in the chapters and in the excerpts. Questions for discussion may be distributed in advance; if they are distributed, students should prepare responses to these questions in their notes to help facilitate discussion.

Required Course Materials:

1) William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird, editors. *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*. Third edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. ISBN: 9781107535299. Please note that the 3rd edition is required. No earlier editions will be used this semester.

2) Access to recordings (video/audio) on reserve in the AFA Library or on the Internet (TBA) for listening/viewing assignments. Access to supplemental reading assignments on Ares electronic reserves (ares-uflib-ufl-edu.lp.hscl.ufl.edu) and from New Grove online (article on “musical”).

3) Regular attention paid to your UFL email. The instructor will use the listserv generated by the registrar to communicate with the class. Announcements will be made by email. Make sure you are able to receive email from the listserv (a test will be made early in the semester).

Optional: Margaret R. Butler, “The American Musical,” 204-30 (chap. 9) in *Theatrical Worlds*, edited by Charlie Mitchell. Beta Version. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2014.

Open-access textbook, pdf available as free download at:

<http://orangegrovetexts.org/AA00021870/00001/pdf?search=mitchell>

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is required. Unexcused early departure or excessive lateness of more than 15 minutes count as an absence. More than two unexcused absences will affect your final course grade.

After two, the instructor reserves the right to drop your grade a half letter grade for every additional unexcused absence. Excused absences require documentation and are granted for: 1) a medical illness confirmed by a written statement from your physician or 2) a medical emergency in the family confirmed by a written statement from a parent or guardian, 3) an official university activity for which your attendance is required (not optional) and is confirmed by a written statement from a faculty advisor, or 4) a religious holiday which you must observe. For categories 3 and 4 you must notify the instructor at least two weeks in advance of the absence.

Grade distribution:

Attendance:	20%
Participation and preparation for discussion:	50%
Annotated bibliography:	30%

Academic misconduct policy: Cheating and using someone else’s ideas in written assignments without providing proper recognition of the source (plagiarizing) are serious matters. As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: *“I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion for the University.”* The instructor of this course fully endorses this statement and will not tolerate academic dishonesty. Cheating or plagiarizing is subject to an automatic E and further disciplinary action. All violations of academic honesty will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for disciplinary action without exception. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.

Disability policy: For students with disabilities: to request classroom accommodations, contact the Assistant Dean of Students/Director of the Disability Resources Program at P202 Peabody Hall or call 392-1261 (V), 392-3008 (TDD). Students requesting accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. Students are fully responsible for providing official college documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

Course schedule

This schedule of topics and related dates are subject to change. Changes will be announced in class or on the listserv. Readings are from CCM (*Cambridge Companion to the Musical*, 3rd edition). Listening assignments TBA from audio/video materials on reserve and on YouTube. Appropriate portions from Dr. Butler's book chapter are to be read before each class period according to the topic coverage below (optional).

Week	Topics, works	CCM chapter	Viewing
Week 1 1/8	Course introduction; the musical's early history; questions of genre; vaudeville, melodrama, minstrel shows, extravaganzas, operetta, George M. Cohan, Ziegfeld; Herbert; Kern; Berlin; Lehar; Gilbert & Sullivan; <i>The Merry Widow</i> ; <i>Pirates of Penzance</i> ; <i>The Mikado</i>	2, 4, 5	video: <i>Broadway: The American Musical</i> , part
Week 2 1/15	Monday, 1/15, Holiday, No Classes		
Week 3 1/22	Annotated bibliography assignment; Intro to Belknap Performing Arts Collection, Special Collections, sources for research; Class meets at Smathers Library East		
Week 4 1/29	Musical Comedies of 1920s & 30s; <i>Anything Goes</i> ; The Gershwins, Rodgers & Hart, Cole Porter; brief introduction to Kander & Ebb, <i>Cabaret</i> and politics Saturday, 2/3, 7:30 p.m., Phillips Center, UFPA: Attend performance of <i>Cabaret</i>	7, TBD	Excerpts to view TBD
Week 5 2/5	Discussion of <i>Cabaret</i> : production, performance, genre, style, form, emphases, effectiveness, other considerations		
Week 6 2/12	Race and musical theater; Bert Williams, minstrel shows, Gershwin; Kern, <i>Show Boat</i>	2; 6	Excerpts to view TBD
Week 7 2/19	Rodgers & Hammerstein, 1940s; The Musical Play, structure & theme; <i>Oklahoma</i> ; musicals and identity, <i>The King & I</i>	9	Excerpts to view TBD

Week 8 2/26	Successors of Rodgers & Hammerstein, 1940s – 60s, Lerner & Loewe, <i>My Fair Lady</i> ; Willson, <i>The Music Man</i> and nostalgia; Styne, <i>Gypsy</i> and character studies; Loesser, <i>Guys and Dolls</i> and return to comedy; Bock & Harnick, <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i> and ethnicity	10	Excerpts to view TBD
	<i>SPRING BREAK – 3/5 - 3/9</i>		
Week 9 3/12	Leonard Bernstein <i>West Side Story</i> , the classic musical, and scene structure	11	Excerpts to view TBD
Week 10 3/19	Stephen Sondheim: Never a formula -- <i>A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum</i> ; <i>Company</i> ; <i>Sweeney Todd</i> ; <i>Into the Woods</i> ; <i>Sunday in the Park with George</i> ; <i>Assassins</i> ; <i>Passion</i>	12	Excerpts to view TBD
Week 11 3/26	After Sondheim: The Rock Musical, <i>Hair</i> ; <i>Rent</i> ; The Megamusical: <i>Les Misérables</i> ; Other directions: <i>Wicked</i> ; <i>Dr. Horrible's Singalong Blog</i>	14, 15, 21	Excerpts to view TBD; <i>Dr. Horrible's Singalong Blog</i> : http://drhorrible.com
Week 12 4/2	<i>Hamilton</i> and new directions for the musical; brief introduction to revivals of classic shows, R&H's <i>Cinderella</i> Thursday, 4/5, 7:30 p.m., Phillips Center, UFPA: attend R&H <i>Cinderella</i>	20	Excerpts to view TBD
Week 13 4/9	Discussion of R&H <i>Cinderella</i> , production, performance, genre, style, form, emphases, effectiveness, other considerations		
Week 14 4/16	The Film Musical (guest presentation) Sunday, 4/22, 7:30 p.m., Phillips Center, UFPA: Attend <i>A Chorus Line</i>	19, 13	Excerpts to view TBD
Week 15 4/23	Discussion of <i>A Chorus Line</i> , production, performance, genre, style, form, emphases, effectiveness, other issues; course wrap-up		

Annotated bibliographies due to Canvas by **5:00 p.m. Friday, May 4**. No late submissions accepted.