



# THEATER DEPT. INFO

## *Tuesday September 5th*

9:30 – New Student And Faculty Meeting In Theater.

10:30 – New Student Monologue and Song presentations. Please check time slots posted on the call board when you arrive.

## *Wednesday September 6th*

2:00 PM – Returning student Monologue and Song presentations. Please check time slots posted.

New student workshop with faculty in ATC-A

## *Thursday September 7th*

2:00 PM – New and Returning student meeting

2:45 PM – Movement Demonstrations

## PRESENTATION PROTOCOL

1. **Monologue Presentations** - Please prepare a memorized and well-rehearsed monologue that is no longer than two minutes in length. The monologue must be from a published and professionally produced play. **Seniors:** Please try to select material that you feel may also be suitable as a college audition piece.
2. **Song Presentations** - Please prepare a memorized and rehearsed ballad or up-tempo piece from the American Musical Theater repertoire that is no longer than 2 minutes in length. If your sheet music is from a longer piece, please cut and paste it on to single sheets of paper instead of marking cuts, this will make it easier to follow you. The sheet music needs to be legible and placed in a 3-ring binder for the accompanist.
3. Presentation procedures for both Acting and Musical Theater are as follows:
  - a) “My name is, \_\_\_\_\_ and I will be performing the role of (name of role) from (name of play), by (name of Playwright)
  - b) “My name is, \_\_\_\_\_ and I will be singing (name of song) from (name of show), lyrics by (name of Lyricist) and music by (name of Composer)

## THEATER DEPARTMENT GUIDE

### Curriculum

Weekly class schedules consist of acting, musical theater, design and production, movement (includes jazz, tap, and musical theatre dance styles), individual vocal technique and individual musical theatre repertory coaching. Each year the Department produces 2 plays, 2 musicals, a touring children's theatre production and a student-directed series of plays. Sophomores, juniors and seniors present final scene and song projects at the end of each year.

Audition and placement demonstrations are conducted at the beginning of each school year. Acting class placement is based on the student's grade level, freshmen through senior year. Musical theatre and movement class placements for new students are based on the student's skill and execution levels during the placement audition. Class advancement for returning students requires that the student completed the previous year's coursework with a B grade average or higher and a successful placement audition evaluation by the faculty. A student not meeting both of these criteria will not advance. All musical theater and movement classes may be repeated for full credit.

The Design and Production curriculum is constructed to develop an understanding and appreciation for the work of designers and the art of collaboration, thereby facilitating each student's growth as complete theater artists. Skills in all aspects of technical theater including scenic design, lighting design, costume design, and make-up application are developed in class and through practical application in assigned work on productions.

### Requirements

All theater majors take Acting, Musical Theater and Movement class each year and two years of Design and Production. In addition, theater students may take individual lessons in Musical Theatre Repertoire with theatre faculty and individual voice lessons with voice faculty in the Music Department. Students are required to wear black clothing that allows them to move freely for all Acting and Musical Theater Classes.

Theater majors, including those cast, must successfully complete assignments on production crews, or practicum each semester. Crew assignments are made after casting and include production work in stage management, lighting, costume, scenery, rigging, props, running crew, and front-of-house operations. We strive to expose students to a variety of responsibilities, so that they gain a better understanding of the collaborative process and the many tasks necessary to mount a production. All assignments as well as casting are graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Failure to successfully complete these requirements will jeopardize a student's standing as a theater major.



## **Assessment**

Assessment and evaluation in all theater classes is based on the individual growth and development of each individual student, rather than by comparison of one student to another. A thoughtful review of the individual learning **process** as well as the student's performance skills—the end product of their work-- is the criteria for assessment.

Process includes an on-going evaluation of effort, progress, achievement, cooperation, preparation, and risk taking. Product evaluation focuses on the development and application of specific skills and technique to presentation and performance. Strong acting requires skill and hard work. We do not grade solely on the basis of talent.

## **Mid and End of Year Review**

A meeting time between each student and the entire faculty is scheduled at the end of each semester. These meetings are intended to provide students and faculty an opportunity for reflection, feedback and setting future goals. The dialogue that ensues is prompted as much by the student as it is by the faculty, and furthers our continued desire to know each student as an individual.

## **Grading System**

Theater students will be graded in accordance with the following system:

A	
A-	Excellent
B+	
B	Good
B-	
C+	
C	Fair
C-	
D+	
D	Poor
D-	
F	Fail

The following system is used at the end of each semester to assess all casting and crew assignments for that term:

P	Pass
F	Fail

Failure to successfully complete one or more of these assignments may effect future assignments and jeopardize the students standing as a theater major.

## Auditions and Casting

Auditioning and casting occurs five times during the course of the year. All theater majors are required to audition for all productions and accept any and all casting, or crew assignments. The Director of the production, in consultation with the head of the Theater Department, make all casting decisions. The actor best suited to the needs of the role and the play/musical regardless of the actor's grade level will be cast.

We cast actors on the basis of the quality of their audition, the attitude and work ethic of the student and the actor's emotional and physical compatibility for the role. The department chooses plays and musicals each year with the intention of using as many majors as possible. We attempt to provide students with opportunities to grow and develop as performers and required auditioning furthers this goal. However, theater is a competitive, demanding art form and its inherent competition is part of the teaching and learning. It's integral to any serious theater casting process, and our program is no exception. In the audition situation, the only aspect an actor has control over is her/his preparation beforehand and execution in the moment. Casting is based on the artistic vision of the director and designed to communicate the story and the world of the play. The complexities of casting do not allow us to guarantee roles for any student, but it is rare that a student leaves the program without being cast. Upperclassmen typically have the most experience and greatest need, with regard to casting. However, all casting is based primarily on successful, competitive auditioning and a student's placement, or year in the program is given secondary consideration.

The Department believes and emphasizes that any measurement of success must go beyond casting. Because of the reasons cited above, casting is an inaccurate and misleading measure of the skills a student is acquiring and executing in the studio. The faculty supports the view that the true measurement of success needs to be a student working to her/his personal best.

When a young actor is not cast in a particular production, she/he learns strategies for coping with disappointment and developing resilience. And while we recognize that the emotional stakes are high for adolescents, the ability to persevere in the face of disappointment is a life skill needed by everyone, not just by young actors. It's important to remember that not being cast in a particular production in no way inhibits the possibility of future success.

*Competition plays a role in our program and is manifested primarily in casting. It's a central point of discussion for our students and parents and our goal is to be as transparent as possible. However, we cannot remove its inherent and important role in the art form. As a faculty, we support and foster healthy competition in our program. It encourages and motivates students to strive harder for excellence than they would have without it. It allows students to realize greater levels of achievement, personal growth and mental toughness whether one wins or loses. Healthy competition propels one beyond what he/she thought possible to realize. It requires courage, taking risks and doing one's best at something one cares about.*

When all things are equal in the judgment of the Director at the time of the audition, casting priority will be in the following order:

- 1) Seniors who have yet to be cast
- 2) All other department members

The perception of fairness is one that we take very seriously and we work hard at having a process that is as transparent as possible. The faculty offers feedback after each round of casting, and encourages students to make appointments to take advantage of this opportunity.



## **A Commitment To Training**

Being a theater major at Walnut Hill requires making a strong commitment to training and participating fully in all departmental scheduled classes, rehearsals and performance opportunities. At times this commitment may come into direct conflict with outside opportunities and it's important that our program and its delivery always take priority.

## **Outside Performances and Permissions**

Students interested in participating in an activity not sponsored by the theater department must have approval from the director of theater. A letter outlining the requirements of the activity must be presented to the director IN ADVANCE of a commitment to the outside activity. Each request will be considered individually.

Students may not participate in an outside activity whose rehearsal or performance obligations conflict in anyway with theater department scheduled classes, rehearsals or performances. Attempts made in the past to accommodate such conflicts were unsuccessful and are no longer permitted. Permission may be granted for a student to visit a college, or attend a summer program audition, but this decision must be made in consultation with the director.

## **Body Alteration or Modification**

Intentional body alteration or modification that visibly changes the student's natural physical appearance and impedes the student from working from actors neutral in class, rehearsal, or performance is not allowed. Examples include, but are not limited to, visible tattoos and body piercing (other than traditional ear piercing for women).

## **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

The following applies to students who participate in theater department productions in addition to the Walnut Hill drug and alcohol policy and consequences found in the student handbook:

During the period of rehearsal and performance of a theater department production, a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, posses, buy/sell, alcohol; marijuana; or any controlled substance. The consequence for a violation is as follows: The student may be suspended from rehearsals, crew assignments and performances at the time of the offense at the discretion of the director of theatre in consultation with the Dean of Students. If the Dean of Students office confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall be dismissed from the production.

Each year department faculty review this policy with students and every student signs a document stating that they fully understand its purpose and consequences.