

TH 153 Frosh Core: Prep for Ensemble

Thursdays 3:30 PM – 4:45 PM EST

FALL 2022

This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Instructor:

Shamus (he/him/his)

E-mail: shamusm@bu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment; must be arranged via email and in advance.

Course Description:

This course is required of all incoming freshman and transfer students in Design & Production Programs. This course is designed to provide Design & Production students with the necessary tools to fully participate in Theatre Ensemble work with performance majors in the spring. This is a studio class that introduces students to the collaborative creation of theatre as espoused within the School of Theatre. Class work includes contract work to enhance one's artistic process and prepares students for collaborative work that will be explored in Ensemble 1 in the spring.

Courseware:

Readings and links to videos/podcasts will be distributed to students electronically via course Blackboard. Students are required to have access to a computer to complete assignments.

Course Objectives:

- 1) Introduce students to the School of Theatre's approach to collaborative theatre creation.
- 2) Students are given assignments that will explore their own artistic process and how to receive and give critical responses.
- 3) Movement and performance exercises are employed to enable students to participate wholly in the collaborative nature of theatre as taught at BU.

Course Evaluation:

- 1) Students present explorations each week that are critiqued and re-presented.
- 2) Contract work is introduced early in the process and then evaluated at the end of the semester to provide students with observable progress of their artistic selves. Contract work includes:
 - a) Written contracts that will challenge you personally and artistically during the first semester. Contracts will be due the second day of classes in a sealed envelope with your name on the front. They will then be read at the end of the term.
 - b) Process papers will be written and submitted at the end of the course. Process papers will discuss your personal growth over the semester in each of your classes.
 - c) Matinee assignments of attending a School of Visual Arts and School of Music event during the semester are required. Matinee papers will be submitted at the end of the semester and will include your response to the events.
 - d) Attending of at least 2 colloquia of majors for which you may have interest. Story telling, emotional and artistic availability are evaluated and communicated throughout the course.
- 3) Final evaluation is fully explored at the end of the Theatre Ensemble presentations that are occur in the spring and are viewed by full faculty and student body.

Class participation is paramount in the structure of the class. Each day we use techniques that explore one's ability to observe and communicate stories and scenarios through theatrical presentation. Attendance is crucial to the success of students. More than two unexcused absences will result in an F. Grading is based on participation, observation and critique. A letter grade will be given as follows:

100-93 A 79-77 C+

92-90 A – 76-73 C

89-87 B+ 72-70 C-

86-83 B 69-67 D+

82-80 B- 60-66 D

The explorations that constitute and individual classes are based on theatre creating exercises as employed in the School of Theatre. Each class exploration is dependent upon what is resonating within the class and cannot be dictated on a day-to-day basis. Explorations may include but are not limited to 1) Autobiographical work, 2) Adaptation and 3) Devised work. Students will continue these and other explorations in the Theatre Ensemble course in the spring

How to Succeed in this Course

- Class attendance is a must for the successful student.
- Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor in-person or to reach out via email with any questions regarding assignments or in-class discussions.
- Accommodations will be made for students with documented disabilities per Boston University policies: <https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/disability-accommodation/>

Class and University Policies

1) Attendance

- Each student must contribute significantly to in-class analyses and discussions of readings, videos/podcasts and lectures. Students should make a conscientious effort in studying each assignment and coming prepared to contribute their assessments, perspectives, and recommendations for discussion. Class participation is a significant part of students' learning process. Clarity of communication is emphasized, and attentive listening is essential. Quality of contribution to class discussion is important.
- This course covers a wide range of topics, and a significant amount of information will be presented or brought up in discussions in each class. Therefore, students are expected to attend all of the classes. More than one absence can greatly impact your learning the subject matter and class participation and adversely affect your overall performance. If you must miss a class, you are required to contact the Instructor regarding assignments that are due on that day and for any make-up work that may be required.
- Per the School of Theatre Student Manual 2018-2019: In a class that meets one day per week, a maximum of one unexcused class absences is allowed; two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade (i.e. an "F"). Three tardies in any course equals one unexcused

absence. This course follows the Boston University Policy on Religious Observance:
<https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/absence-forreligious-reasons/>

2) Tolerance and Participation:

In order for this class to be successful and for your time to be worthwhile, you must help to create an environment where people are comfortable to take risks and try new, challenging tasks. In a performance-driven course such as this, students will often learn as much -or more- from watching others work as they will learn from working themselves. You should come to every class with a notebook that you can use to write down your thoughts so that you can remember them when the time comes for peer feedback, and so that you can journal insights that you receive while watching your peers. Your goal should be to give feedback to another peer at least once during every class session.

3) Clothing/Attire:

Acting is an embodied process and is experiential in nature. Wear clothing that you feel comfortable in and allows for freedom of movement. Wear clothing that allows you to move freely in space without restricted limitations. No excessive exposure of skin, prints or labels.

- Pants: flexible cotton pants, sweatpants or shorts. No skirts, jeans or other pants that limit your ability for free range of motion.
- Shirts: t-shirts, short-sleeved or long-sleeved. No writings or logos on your shirts.
- Footwear: No sandals, socks preferred, shoes allowed.
- Long hair should be back and out of your face. No hats. No expensive jewelry or watches.
- We will discuss “Character Clothing and appearance” when we move into scene work.

4) Cell Phone & Electronic Policy:

The use of phones, computers, and other electronic devices is prohibited in the studio unless specified by the instructor. Please equip yourself with a notebook and pen or pencil so that you can take notes manually. When we begin working with scripts, please print all materials in advance and bring copies to class.

5) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access Statement:

At Boston University, “We strive to create environments for learning, working, and living that are enriched by racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. We seek to cultivate an atmosphere of respect for individual differences in life experience, sexual orientation, and religious belief, and we aspire to be free of intellectual parochialism, barriers to access, and ethnocentrism.”
bu.edu/about/diversity

The CFA School of Theatre commits to inclusivity, dialogue, and collaboration. We vow to continue to translate these beliefs into action. We recognize our Student Body as future colleagues and artists working with us to make a better world and an art form that will predict the future rather than reflect the past. We embrace a notion of an artistic and intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, socioeconomic class, age, religion, and disability.

As your instructor, it is my intent to foster an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized, respected, and seen as a source of strength. I am committed to presenting materials and activities that are respectful of our diversity of experiences, identities, and world views. Integrating a diverse set of experiences is important for a more comprehensive understanding of Dramatic Literature 3. Please contact me via email if you have thoughts or questions.

Antiracism Statement

As a school, we commit to actively practice antiracism in our classes and in our School of Theatre community. This course will delve into conversations about antiracist theatre practices. We will embrace the following classroom meeting agreements when entering into these discussions:

- We acknowledge that everyone is at a different stage in their learning process. It's okay not to know. Keep in mind that we are all still learning and are bound to make mistakes. Be open to changing your mind and make space for others to do so as well.
- We agree to listen respectfully to each other without interruptions.
- We will assume positive intent. Everyone has come to the table to learn, grow, and share.
- We will use “I” statements, speaking from our own perspective and lived experience.
- We will practice WAIT: Why am I talking? Why aren't I talking?
- We will approach each conversation with self-awareness of our own biases and fragility.
- We agree that no one should be required or expected to speak for their whole race, gender, or for any of the many identities that each of us hold.
- We will respect the inclusive environment of open dialogue that we have created within this classroom. What's said here stays here, what's learned here leaves here.

6) Title IX: BU's Responsibilities Under Title IX requires universities to respond promptly and effectively to complaints of all kinds of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. Universities must take immediate action to eliminate the offending conduct, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects. BU is committed to promptly investigating the circumstances of a complaint to determine what occurred, ensure complainant safety, and provide remedies. Regardless of whether a complainant files a criminal action, BU will undertake its own investigation of the circumstances of the complaint.

<http://www.bu.edu/safety/sexual-misconduct/title-ix-bu-policies/>

7) Boston University Academic Conduct Statement & Scholastic Dishonesty:

Students who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties; you will fail this course. Please read the following website site for information:

<https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>. The College demands a high level of artistic integrity and academic honesty on the part of students. No form of academic dishonesty (for example, cheating and plagiarism) will be tolerated. Disciplinary actions may include warning, probation, suspension, and expulsion.

8) Mental Health and Wellness Statement:

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that result in diminished mental health and wellness that can interfere with academic experiences and negatively impact your daily life, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, problems with eating and/or sleeping, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. We all experience stressful and difficult events as a normal part of life. The CFA School of Theatre faculty and staff are not qualified to serve as a counselor, but there are many helpful resources available on campus. If you experience mental health challenges while at Boston University, please contact BU Student Health Services – Behavioral Medicine. Clinicians are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 617-353-3569 (this number is also on the back of your BUID). For more information visit: <http://www.bu.edu/shs/behavioral-medicine>. A list of additional resources is available under “Quick Links” on butheatrebridge.com. If you need a safe, quiet place to make a phone call or do research visit Brian Dudley's office (CFA 452), Brendan Hoey's office or Ruthie Jean's office in the CFA Dean's Office on the second floor (CFA 201). Remember that getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do – for yourself, for those you care about, and for those who care about you.

9) Disability Services: “Boston University takes great pride in the academic and personal achievements of its many students and alumni with disabilities. The University is committed to providing equal and integrated access for individuals with disabilities to all the academic, social, cultural, and recreational programs it offers. This commitment is consistent with legal requirements, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAAA) of 2008, and embodies the University’s historic determination to ensure the inclusion of all members of its committees. Our goal, at Disability Services, is to provide services and support to ensure that students are able to access and participate in the opportunities available at Boston University. In keeping with this objective, students are expected and encouraged to utilize the resources of Disability Services to the degree they determine necessary. Although a significant degree of independence is expected of students, Disability Services is available to assist, should the need arise.” If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at access@bu.edu or <https://www.bu.edu/disability/> to coordinate any reasonable accommodation requests.

10) General Safety: More information can be found at: <https://www.bu.edu/safety/>.

Course Calendar

Calendar subject to change at instructor’s discretion

Week 1

R 9/8 Review syllabus, Consent and Community Agreements.

Week 2

R 9/15 **Contracts due.** Improvisation into Text, Begin Group Project One: Autobiography

Week 3

R 9/22 Sharing & Feedback Project One: Autobiography

Week 4

R 9/29 Guest Speaker, Jorge Arroyo

Week 5

R 10/6 Final Share & Feedback for Project One: Autobiography

Week 6

R 10/13 Begin Group Project Two: Out of the Box

Week 7

R 10/20 Sharing & Feedback Project Two: Out of the Box

Week 8

R 10/27 Final Share & Feedback for Project Two: Out of the Box

Week 9

R 11/3 Begin Project Three: Company

Week 10

R 11/10 Project Three Work, **no in person meeting**

Week 11

R 11/17 Sharing & Feedback Project Three: Company

Week 12

R 11/24 NO CLASS Fall Break

Week 13

R 12/1 Final Share & Feedback for Project Three: Company

Week 14

R 12/8 Tool Kit Summary