

# USC School of Dramatic Arts

**THTR 453– Taking It on The Road and Beyond  
Spring 2018—Mondays—2:00-4:50**

**Location: PED 114**

**Instructor: Scott Faris**

**Office: MCC 101D**

**Office Hours: By appointment**

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## **Course Description and Overview**

This course provides specific information needed to prepare Stage Managers for the processes and subtleties of working in professional entertainment including; Broadway, touring, regional, television, corporate, theme park, Las Vegas, and cruise ship, as well as other careers choices. The course will apply the processes and tools learned to date in the BFA Stage Management program to synthesize accumulated knowledge and explore professional avenues of employment after graduation. Through a series of field trips, guest lecturers, and classroom lecture and discussion, the course will provide a deeper exploration of the specific workings environments in each of these areas of production. All students will be required to participate in final presentation of their paper on career strategy.

## **Learning Objectives**

To prepare students for a career in the professional entertainment world. By the end of this course, students will know of viable options available in fields related to their skill set and interests.

**Prerequisite(s): THTR 333, THTR 430**

**Co-Requisite (s):**

**Concurrent Enrollment: None**

**Recommended Preparation: At least two THTR 397 theatre practicum units**

## **Suggested Readings and Supplementary Materials:**

- Actors Equity Rulebook for League Production Contract
- *Stage Management* by Lawrence Stern & Jill Gold, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, Focal Press
- *Running Theatres: Best Practices for Leaders and Managers* by Duncan Webb
- *Notes on Directing*, by Frank Hauser & Russell Reich, 2008, Bloomsbury Press

## Grading Breakdown

- A** Excellent work is neat, concise, detailed and complete as well as on time.
- B** Good work but less neat; still detailed and complete.
- C** Fair quality work may contain errors in substance or style or be late.
- D** Work does not meet the letter of the assignment.
- F** Projects are not turned in or are inadequate to the assignment.

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Class Participation	25	25
Weekly one-page papers	20	20
Stage management skills	30	30
Final Action Paper	25	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## Description of Grading Criteria

- Class participation is essential. Absences from class will have an impact on the final grade, unless for pre-arranged SDA activities.
- Weekly one-page essays; you will be required to turn in a one-page double spaced paper each week throughout the course of the semester, reflecting on that week's subject. Essays may be submitted to instructor by e-mail.
- Stage management skills include, clarity in paperwork and communication, attention to detail, timeliness, precision in calling cues, and a clear understanding of the "soft skills" of managing people in the theatre.
- Final Paper and Cover Letter are a final 5-page project which will be worth 25% of the grade and is described in more detail in the week-to-week section below.

## Additional Policies

- Students should ideally be able to bring a laptop to class to work on assignments in class.
- Because communication and timeliness are central to excellent project management, all assignments will be graded for neatness, spelling and completeness, as well as for clarity in communication.
- No late assignments, projects, exams, papers or exercises shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the instructor or unless exceptional circumstances occur.
- NB: There may be a lab fee related to the site visits such as to Disneyland.

**Course Schedule:**

**(NB: exact dates of lectures could change due to availability of guest speakers and field trip opportunities.)**

**Week 1 (Jan 8) – Jason Trubitt**

- Review goals of class:
  - Each week will try to cover a different aspect of live entertainment
  - You will be required to turn in a one-page paper on the previous week's subject using one of the following prompts:
    - How can you apply what you learned today to your work at SDA?
    - Is there something in particular you learned today that might influence your own career choices? Please describe.
    - Was there anything that was shared that clarified or changed how you view working in professional theatre/entertainment?
    - Acknowledge if this is a possible career option for you.
    - Were you left with more questions than answers? If so, please articulate.
    - The prompts will be adapted accordingly for each week's subject.
  - Coordinate guest speakers as well as off-site visits and shadowing opportunities with professional theatre companies
  - Need to know avails for best times for field trips.
- Broadway/Tours – guest speaker
  - **Jason Trubitt – Disney Theatrical, Production Supervisor for Aladdin**
- Reading for next week:
  - AEA Production Contract Rulebook (available on Blackboard)
    - Rule 68. Stage Managers, pp. 108-113
    - Rule 5. Auditions & Interviews, pp. 8-16
    - Rule 63. Salaries, p. 100-103
    - Rule 63 (C) Per Diem, pp. 100-102

**Week 2 (Jan 15)      MLK'S BIRTHDAY – NO CLASS**

**Week 3 (Jan 22) – Auditions, rehearsals & reports**

- Auditions
- Studio rehearsals
- Reports; both rehearsal & performance

#### **Week 4 (Jan 29) – Tech rehearsals/dress rehearsal/orchestra rehearsals/recordings**

- Intro: What's new?
- Random notes:
- Tech rehearsals
- Orchestra rehearsals
- Dress rehearsals
- Outside recordings – voice over, augmentation, click-tracks

#### **Week 5 (Feb 5) – Disney Entertainment**

- Guest lecturer – Matt Conover, VP Disney Entertainment
- Visit to Disneyland to be scheduled later in semester

#### **Week 6 (Feb 12) – Television**

- Guest Speaker – Steve Hollander, Television SM, Conan O'Brian
  - Guest talks about specifics to SM'ing in TV and career possibilities

#### **Week 7 (Feb 19) PRESIDENTS DAY – NO CLASS**

#### **Week 8 (Feb 26) – Spectacle/Corporate/Live Events**

- Kevin Lee Harvey, CEO & Founder of Senovva
  - <http://www.senovva.com>
  - Grammys
  - Oscars
  - Corporate
- Visit the Dolby Theatre

#### **Week 9 (Mar 5) – Las Vegas/Rock & Roll**

- Guest speaker: Randall C. White, PSM
  - Particulars to management structure and touring life

#### **Week 10 (Mar 12) – SPRING BREAK – NO SCHOOL**

#### **Week 11 (Mar 19) – Calling Musicals**

- Calling musicals

#### **Week 12 (Mar 26) – Professional Practices, protocols & structure**

- Quiz – odd theatre terminology
- Professional practices:
  - Senior management
  - Designers
  - Music department
  - FOH

- Unions – rule books and maybe guests from these unions...?
  - AEA Production Contract Rulebook
    - Rule 58. Rehearsals, pp. 83-85 (stop at (D) Breaks &
    - Rule 61. Rest Periods & Days Off, pp. 91-94
    - Rule 62. Safe & Sanitary, p. 95-100
  - IATSE – Discussion
  - Local 802 (musicians)
    - Rule IV Rehearsal Conditions, pp. 6-12
    - Focus on hours not salary

### **Week 13 (Apr 2) – How to run a show/overcoming communication obstacles role-play**

- Lecture – How to run a show
- Crisis management:
  - Use Role-play simulation to learn how to deal with confrontation
  - Egos
  - Getting what you want
  - How/when to speak up in rehearsal

### **Week 14 (April 9) – International entertainment opportunities**

- Guest Speaker: Francois Bergeron, Chief Operating Officer – THINKWELL
  - <https://thinkwellgroup.com>

### **Week 15 (April 16) – Working on Cruise Ships**

- Guest speaker TBD
  - Possibilities for employment
  - Scenic Design challenges
  - Life at Sea

### **Week 16 (April 23) – The Finish Line:**

- **Resumes/Networking/promotion**
- **Final Reflective paper & Cover Letter – 5 pages**
  - Write a detailed paper with a synopsis of your career plan after graduation, laying out production companies, people and dates as part of your action plan. Describe in detail the key characteristics of the areas that interest you. List why you would be a perfect candidate for work in this area and any areas of weakness that you could improve upon to become more employable. The final page should be in the form of a cover letter that you can use to seek employment.

**Final Examination Date: Monday, May 7, 2018 2-4PM**

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP:

[http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html), (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.