

THTR 317 Section 63044R

Theatre Clown

Units: 2

Spring 2020

TTH, 11-12:50pm

Location: PED 205

Instructor: Zachary Steel

Office: JEF 208

Office Hours: available by appointment

Cell: 347-546-0298

Email: zsteel@usc.edu

Course Description

This class will challenge students to fully surrender to the immediate stakes of performance, to redirect their focus to the relationship between performer and audience, to examine the threshold of what can be done with our bodies and voices in performance, to confront preconceptions about one's own individual capabilities and discover what makes each individual funny, to celebrate one's greatest failures and experience the magnitude of true openness in front of an audience. And most of all, this class will guide you toward discovering a pre-socialized, chaotic, playful, maybe forgotten version of yourself: the clown.

Learning Objectives

The function of the class is as follows:

- To introduce students to the practice of theatrical clowning and its origins
- To discover and develop an open and honest relationship between performer and audience
- To harness listening and responding skills and hone the performers awareness of the moment
- To be able to differentiate between choices made from a place of celebration and those made from a place of fear
- To empower the actor not merely as a performer, but as a creator/deviser of theatre
- To draw the links between the principles of theatre clown and other modes of performance

Prerequisite(s): THTR 101

Co-Requisite(s): N/A

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

The required excerpts from these books will be available on Blackboard as PDFs:

Clowns: In Conversation by David Bridel and Ezra LeBank

Why Is That So Funny? By John Wright

The Physical Comedy Handbook by Davis Rider Robinson

Description and Assessment of Assignments

There will be one 3-5 page paper (due date on weekly breakdown) and it will be submitted through Turnitin on Blackboard.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Participation	100	15
Class Work	100	35
MidTerm	100	10
Clown Profile	100	15
Final Project	100	25
TOTAL	500	100

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Assignment Submission Policy

All written assignments will be submitted on Blackboard via Turnitin by the due date listed on the weekly breakdown.

Grading Timeline

Grades will be posted within a week of the due date.

Additional Policies

Regular Weekly Attendance is the only way to get high points for "Participation," and "Class Work" in Clown class. This is an activity course, missing even one class will lower your participation grade. Arriving at the start of class ready to work is part of your participation grade. If you are to be absent, e-mail the instructor to verify the reason. Please inform the instructor immediately if you have **any injuries or any conditions** that might prevent you from participating fully in the class. No cell phone use in class unless instructed.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1	Class introduction In Class: The building blocks of Clown		
Week 2	In Class: The building blocks of Clown		

Week 3	In Class: The birth of the clown		
Week 4	In Class: Clown sensitivity		
Week 5	In Class: The Greatest Trick in the World		
Week 6	In Class: The Greatest Trick in the World		
Week 7	In Class: Peas in a Pod, Tit for Tat (status)	Reading to be completed: <i>Clowns: In Conversation and The Physical Comedy Handbook</i>	
Week 8	In Class: Entrances and Openings		
Week 9	In Class: Entrances and Openings		
Week 10	In Class: Clown Material		
Week 11	In Class: Clown Material	Reading to be completed: <i>Why Is That So Funny?</i>	
Week 12	In Class: Clown Shows		
Week 13	In Class: Clown Shows		
Week 14	In Class: Exits		
Week 15	In Class: Exits		DUE 4/30 @ 11pm: Clown Profile 1,000 word report on a performing artist who is significantly influenced by the principles of clown.
FINAL	Clown Extravaganza!		Date: Tuesday, May 12 th , 11am – 1pm

SDA PRODUCTIONS

SDA productions are courses and therefore do not supersede any other courses in which you are enrolled. When in an SDA production, students must not register for evening classes that conflict with regularly scheduled rehearsals. In short, being involved in an SDA production is a curricular assignment and must be treated as any other curricular assignment.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR COMMITMENTS AND ISPS

Should you choose to participate in any extra-curricular project, such as an Independent Student Production, the SDA administration and faculty will not make allowances or exceptions for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, home work that is required as preparation for class, or lack of participation in class resulting from your extra-curricular involvement.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

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 for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

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. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

Support Systems:

Campus Support & Intervention (CSI) – (213) 740-0411

Campus Support & Intervention is an office within Campus Wellbeing and Crisis Intervention. We are a team of professionals here to assist students, faculty, and staff in navigating complex issues. Whether you are here seeking support for yourself or someone else, we are available to help you problem solve, understand options, and connect with resources. <https://uscса.usc.edu>

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <https://titleix.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://titleix.usc.edu/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu