

# USC School of Dramatic Arts

**THTR 423: Magic**  
**Units: 2**  
**Spring 2020 — Friday**  
**63111 2:00 pm-4:50 pm**

**Location:** VPD 107

**Instructor:** Christopher Bange  
**Office:** By Appointment  
**Office Hours:** By Appointment  
**Contact Info:** cchange@usc.edu

**Teaching Assistant:** No Assistant

## Course Description

This is a performance class. Whether you are a performance major or not, you will be expected to perform magic in front of people. You will be expected to learn and perform Close-up Magic, Stand-up Magic, and Stage Magic. Your performance will be expected to be highly theatrical as you will perform it from the point of view of either yourself, a character, or as part of a duo or trio ensemble. There will also be a focus on the history of magic from earliest historical representations of magic to present day.

## Learning Objectives

1. To learn the Skill of Magic!- Students will gain familiarity and ability with a variety of magic tricks including: cards, coins, sponge balls, and other objects.
2. To present the Skill of Magic in the context of a character, presentation, and/or scenario. These scenarios will be solo, duo, or trios of performers and could be in a dramatic or comedic structure.
3. To learn about the History of Magic. We will be studying the book, *The Illustrated History of Magic* (updated Edition) by Milbourne Christopher. You will be creating group presentations of certain chapters in front of the group about the different forms of magic, performers, and other historical aspects of the craft of magic.
4. To be able to risk looking foolish in front of others. Learning the Skill of Magic is hard. Learning to present magic in an authentic way is even harder. We will fail in front of each other a lot this semester. “*Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.*”-Samuel Beckett-
5. To Keep the Mystery Alive- A lot about the art form of magic has to do with surprising the audience. So to being able to *Keep the Secret* of the magic illusion from your audience, friends, family, and sometimes your classmates is imperative. As a professional magician I take this very seriously because it is the code I live by. If I become aware of the exposure of a trick or technique to someone who is not in the class or even sometimes to people who are in the class, your grade will drop one full letter grade.

**Prerequisite(s):** none

**Co-Requisite(s):** none

**Concurrent Enrollment:** none

**Recommended Preparation:** Start to think about what made you feel like magic was real when you were a little kid.

### **Course Notes**

N/A

### **Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required**

N/A

### **Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

Required: *The Illustrated History of Magic (Updated Edition)* by Milbourne and Maurine Christopher

#### **Required supplementary materials include:**

1. 2 decks of Bicycle playing cards (1 red, 1 blue, you can buy a pack of twelve from Costco and split the cost with your classmates.)
2. Magicians close-up pad: go for the large size; they are usually 12x16. (You can find super cheap ones on eBay just shop around).
3. Four half dollars or silver dollars. (They don't have to be real silver dollars) They should not cost much more than the face value of the coin. (Go to any coin shop- Eisenhower silver dollar should be around \$1.25.)
4. Sponge balls, a 6-inch silk scarf, vanishing apparatus, pencils, rubber bands and other articles I will try to buy bulk for the class so that you will pay as little as possible for this: the price will be TBA.
5. A small case or bag to keep all of your mysterious apparatus in.

### **Description and Assessment of Assignments**

1. Each class will be split into three sections: Performance, Magic History, and Magic Tricks. At the beginning of every class there will be a Performance Warm up that will be accounted for in your final grade.
2. Most weeks (with some exceptions), one to three magic tricks will be taught in class. They will then be rehearsed over the following week.
3. Practice Reports: You will be expected to practice four times a week for at least 20 mins each session. You will fill out the details of the progress report (dates/times/what you did) and turn it in before class on Friday on Blackboard.
4. Each week you will be expected to read 1-2 chapters of the book: *The Illustrated History of Magic* followed by in class discussions. I will assign other reading throughout the semester as well, which will be made available through PDFs in the content section of Blackboard.
5. There will be a field trip to a magic shop located inside of Westminster Lanes Bowling Alley.

#### **Magic Galore and More**

**714 Westminster Blvd, Westminster, CA 92683**

**714-891-648**

6. Performance Assignments: There will be four performance assignments/presentations: Solo, Duo/Trio, Group History Presentation, and The Final (which will be a performance).

## Grading Breakdown

Including the above detailed assignments, students will be graded overall as follows.

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Participation	15	15
Practice Report	15	15
Warm up	15	15
Assignment 1	15	15
Assignment 2	15	15
Historical Magic Presentation	10	10
Final Performance	15	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## Grading Scale (Example)

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

## Performance Assignment Rubrics

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Point of View/Character	20	20
Fun	20	20
Theatricality	20	20
Was it Magical?	20	20
Magic Technique	20	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## Assignment Submission Policy

You must be in class during the scheduled performances.

## Grading Timeline

Grades will be posted within a few weeks of the assignment. You can always ask me about before or after class.

### Additional Policies

Attire: You will need to be able to move around during the performance exercises. Baggy or stretchy pants. Also during the magic instruction part you will need to have pockets, either pants or a suit jacket. If skirts are worn, please wear leggings that are not see through: you will probably be rolling on the ground as some points.

### Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	<b>Topics/Daily Activities</b>	<b>Readings and Homework</b>	<b>Deliverable/ Due Dates</b>
<b>Week 1</b> Jan. 17	Warm-up Review Syllabus Course Overview Learn Tricks	Read Chapters 1 and 2 to be discussed next week.	
<b>Week 2</b> Jan. 24	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks	Read Chapters 3 and 4 to be discussed next week.	
<b>Week 3</b> Jan. 31	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks	Read Chapters 5 and 6 to be discussed next week.	
<b>Week 4</b> Feb. 7	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks	Read Chapters 7 and 8 to be discussed next week.	
<b>Week 5</b> Feb. 14	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks	Read Chapters 9 and 10 to be discussed next week.	
<b>Week 6</b> Feb. 21	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks	Read Chapters 11 and 12 to be discussed next week.	<b>First Performance Assignment</b>
<b>Week 7</b> Feb. 28	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks	Read Chapters 13 and 14 to be discussed next week.	

<b>Week 8</b> Mar. 6	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks	Read Chapters 15 and 16 to be discussed next week.	
<b>Week 9</b> Mar. 13	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks	Read Chapters 17 and 18 to be discussed after Spring Break.	
	Spring Break!	Spring Break!	Spring Break!
<b>Week 10</b> Mar. 27	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks	Read Chapters 19 and 20 to be discussed next week.	
<b>Week 11</b> April 3	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks	Read Chapters 21 and 22 to be discussed next week.	
<b>Week 12</b> April 10	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks	Read Chapters 23 and 24 to be discussed next week.	Performance Assignment 2
<b>Week 13</b> April 17	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks		History Presentation
<b>Week 14</b> April 24	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks		Final Show Prep
<b>Week 15</b> May. 1	Warm-up Performance Exercises Book Discussion Learn Tricks		Final Show Prep
<b>FINAL</b> TBA			Final Show

## 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu)