USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 290 Section 63000R
Introduction to Medical Clowning
Units: 2
Term: Spring 2021
Day, Time: Wednesdays, 5-7:50pm

Location: [Zoom Link](#)

Instructor: Zachary Steel
Office: email Zach for Zoom Link
Office Hours: available by appointment
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Course Description

Clowning in hospitals and other healthcare settings is becoming an internationally established practice with research proving its efficacy with a variety of diverse populations. It provides children and adults alike with a sense of authority and control in a hospital environment that, by its nature, disempowers the patient. Medical Clowns have been shown to increase communication between the medical staff, children, and their caregivers; and to decrease tension and anxiety often resulting from physically intrusive procedures. They empower the patient by giving them control of the creative interaction in an environment where they otherwise might feel powerless. Play and laughter improves our quality of life, and medical clowning seeks, through a unique application of the discipline of the clown, to impact the children and the facilities that need it the most.

This course explores the practice of bringing clowns into places of healing (hospitals, trauma sites, etc.) for the purpose of improving the physical and mental well-being of those in need, and expanding their capacity for hope. Through the Zoom platform, we will be able to distill what it means for clowns to connect to their audience through play. We will explore environmental sensitivity, improvisation, active listening, and game play, all principles of clowning and all effective when engaging with a patient in a hospital. This course of study will prepare the student for clown interventions both remotely and in person. This course would be appropriate for artists who seek to utilize their talents for social change, for those entering the world of healthcare who seek to enhance their ability to engage with patients, or for anyone interested in exploring the healing powers of play.

Learning Objectives

- To understand the role of the clown in the healing process
- To develop a unique and personalized approach to clown/audience interaction based on play and improvisation.
- To implement the principles and methods of clowning in practical clown exercises
- To examine the efficacy of medical clowns from various international organizations

Prerequisite(s): n/a

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

All reading will be available as PDFs on Blackboard:
The Life Threatened Child and the Life Enhancing Clown by Donna Koller and Camilla Gryski
Still the Best Medicine: Even in a War Zone by Amnon Raviv
Drama therapy role theory as a context for understanding medical clowning by Pendzik

Description and Assessment of Assignments

-Reading responses will be turned in through Turnitin on Blackboard.
-There will be an asynchronous session (see schedule) where we will interact through the discussion board on blackboard.
-All other assessments will be based on in-class work.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Reading Response #1	100	10
Reading Response #2	100	10
Reading Response #3	100	10
Class Work (Performance)	100	30
Participation	100	15
Final	100	25
TOTAL	600	100
TOTAL		

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 turned in on Blackboard via Turnitin.

Grading Timeline
Grades will be posted within a week of the assignment's due date.

Additional Policies
- Please arrive promptly for class. Late arrivals disturb the learning of the whole class.
- There will be no unexcused absences. You are required to be in attendance for each class period unless you are attending class from a time zone where the class falls outside of the hours 7am-10pm. If that is the case, it is required that you watch the recording of the class (available on Blackboard) and keep up with all assignments and course materials.
- *No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between the student and the teacher or unless exceptional circumstances occur.*
- No social media posting about class.

Zoom etiquette:

- Please find as private and quiet a setting in your house as you possibly can. Keep in mind that as important as it is to not have any interruptions, it is also important to feel comfortable making sound and not be too concerned with disrupting others who are sharing a living/working space with you.
- Zoom camera should be on unless there is a specific reason for them to be turned off. Virtual backgrounds are ok.
- While we are in class, no applications should be in use on any device besides Zoom, unless otherwise instructed.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown
-This is subject to change based on the specific pace and needs of the class.
-All class recordings available on Blackboard.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 1/20	Class Introduction Basic Clown Exercises		
Week 2 1/27	Basic Clown Exercises		
Week 3 2/3	Clown Exercises: Pathos		
Week 4 2/10	Clown Exercises: Pathos		
Week 5 2/17	Reading Discussion Birth of the Clown	*The Life Threatened Child and the Life Enhancing* Clown by Donna Koller and Camilla Gryski (on blackboard)	***Due 2/17 @ 5pm: Reading Response #1*** *The Life Threatened Child and the Life Enhancing* Clown by Donna Koller and Camilla Gryski
Week 6 2/24	Clown Fashion Show		Bring in Clown clothes for costume.
Week 7 3/3	Hospital Room Initiations		
Week 8 3/10	Discussion Board: Asynchronous group thread responses to medical clown videos	*Link Video Playlist on Blackboard*	Discussion Board: Asynchronous group thread responses to medical clown videos
Week 9 3/17	Reading Discussion Sublime Moments	*Drama therapy role theory as a context for understanding medical clowning* by Pendzik	***Due 3/17 @ 5pm: Reading Response #2*** *Drama therapy role theory as a context for understanding medical clowning* by Pendzik
Week 10 3/24	Hospital Room Initiations		
Week 11 3/31	Hospital Room Initiations		
Week 12 4/7	**NO CLASS – WELLNESS DAY**		
Week 13 4/14	Reading Discussion Mock Hospital Visits	*Still the Best Medicine: Even in a War Zone* by Amnon Raviv (on blackboard)	***Due 4/14 @ 5pm: Reading Response #3*** *Still the Best Medicine: Even in a War Zone* by Amnon Raviv
Week 14 4/21	Mock Hospital Visits		

Week 15 4/28	Mock Hospital Visits		
FINAL 5/5	Mock Hospital Visits		Final Date: MAY 5th, 430pm-630pm

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.

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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://uscsa.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