

THTR 290 Section 62830R
Introduction to Medical Clowning

Units: 2

Term: Fall 2021

Day, Time: Wednesdays, 5-7:50pm

Location: MCC 112

Instructor: Zachary Steel

Office: JEF 208

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 practical studio work, 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 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 – 1-2 page reflection on the reading assignment consisting of discoveries, revelations and connections to the work we do in class.

Clown Organization Report – 1-2 page report on research done on a specific organization currently practicing medical clown work.

Final – Mock hospital visits will be done in class, an opportunity to apply all the learned medical clown techniques and approaches.

-Reading Responses and Clown Organization Report will be turned in through Turnitin 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
Clown Org Report	100	10
Class Work (Performance)	100	20
Participation	100	15
Final	100	25
TOTAL	700	100

Grading Scale

Grading Scale for SDA:

Excellent: A (4) = 100-94 A- (3.7) = 93-90

Good: B+ (3.3) = 89-86 B (3) = 85-84 B- (2.7) = 83-80

Average: C+ (2.3) = 79-76 C (2) = 75-74 C- (1.7) = 73-70

Poor: D (.7-1.3) = 60's

Failing: F (0) = 59 and below

A = work of excellent quality; clear understanding of class material coupled with original and creative insight

B = good quality; class material has been understood clearly

C = average quality; class material generally understood, gaps in understanding remain

D = below average quality; identifiable gaps in the understanding of class material

F = inadequate work; gaps in completion of work, poor understanding of class material

Further Grading Notes:

When the GPA falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students whose attendance and participation in class have been excellent or good and toward the negative end of the scale for those with average or poor attendance and participation.

If your work in class is unsatisfactory, you will be warned before the deadline for dropping the course with a grade of W. I will be happy to discuss your work at any time.

Assignment Submission Policy

All written assignments will be turned in on Blackboard via Turnitin.

Grading Timeline

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

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC policy prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

SCampus Section 11.12(B)

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

Course evaluation

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. You should expect to receive an email update once the system has launched to provide your feedback on this course. In addition, you are always welcome to connect with with me as the instructor to offer any feedback on the course.

Additional Policies

- Please arrive promptly for class. Late arrivals disturb the learning of the whole class.
- There will be no unexcused absences. If you are not feeling well and can't make it to class, please let me know in advance.
- *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.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

This is subject to change based on the specific pace and needs of the class.

EDI @SDA: Professional Development/Mandatory EDI Training
 Wednesday, September 15, 2021

As part of our EDI initiatives and call to action, some workshops will be offered to faculty and staff and to students. Competencies that will be included: Anti-Racism (Faculty/Staff) and Equity Mindedness (Faculty/Staff), and then Theater Intimacy & Building Cultures of Consent (Students, Faculty/Staff). More details will follow. NOTE: All SDA classes will be cancelled to support involvement in this effort.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 8/25	Class Introduction Basic Clown Exercises		
Week 2 9/1	Basic Clown Exercises		
Week 3 9/8	Clown Games - Pathos		
Week 4 9/15	NO CLASS – Professional Development		
Week 5 9/22	Reading Discussion Birth of the Clown	<i>The Life Threatened Child and the Life Enhancing Clown</i> by Donna Koller and Camilla Gryski (on blackboard)	Due 2/17 @ 5pm: Reading Response #1 <i>The Life Threatened Child and the Life Enhancing Clown</i> by Donna Koller and Camilla Gryski

Week 6 9/29	Clown Fashion Show		Bring in clown clothes for costume.
Week 7 10/6	Medical Clown Video Response and Discussion Clown Games – Hospital Room Initiations	<i>Link Video Playlist on Blackboard</i>	
Week 8 10/13	International Clown Organizations Discussion Clown Games – Hospital Room Initiations		International Clown Organizations Report
Week 9 10/20	Reading Discussion Clown Roles	<i>Drama therapy role theory as a context for understanding medical clowning by Pendzik</i>	Due 3/17 @ 5pm: Reading Response #2 <i>Drama therapy role theory as a context for understanding medical clowning by Pendzik</i>
Week 10 10/27	Clown Roles		
Week 11 11/3	Mock Hospital Visits		
Week 12 11/10	NO CLASS – WELLNESS DAY		
Week 13 11/17	Reading Discussion Mock Hospital Visits	<i>Still the Best Medicine: Even in a War Zone by Amnon Raviv (on blackboard)</i>	Due 4/14 @ 5pm: Reading Response #3 <i>Still the Best Medicine: Even in a War Zone by Amnon Raviv</i>
Week 14 11/24	NO CLASS - Thanksgiving		
Week 15 12/1	Mock Hospital Visits		
FINAL 12/8	Mock Hospital Visits		Final Date: December 8th, 430pm- 630pm

SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SDA productions, ISPs and Extracurricular Activities* will not excuse you from any class work. There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above. Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

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.

Health and Participation in Class

You are expected to complete your Trojan Check screener daily and, as your instructor, I may ask you to show your daily screening in class. Your health and safety, and the health and safety of your peers, are my top priorities. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, or if you discover that you have been in close contact with others who have symptoms or who have tested positive, you must follow the instructions on Trojan Check. My hope is that if you are feeling ill or if you have been exposed to someone with the virus, you will stay home to protect others. I will ensure that you can continue to participate in class remotely so that your education is not disrupted.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, USC requires that face coverings (masks) be worn indoors including in classrooms. Face coverings must cover your nose and mouth and be worn throughout the class session. A mask with a valve is not considered an adequate face covering and should not be used, as it can expel exhaled air, increasing the risk to others. Eating or drinking during class is prohibited because of the risk posed by removing your mask for these activities. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in your being asked to leave the classroom immediately. Requests for accommodations related to the face covering and eating/drinking policies should be directed to the Office for Student Accessibility Services (<https://osas.usc.edu/>).

SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

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

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776

<https://osas.usc.edu>

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.