

# USC School of Dramatic Arts

**New Musical Theatre Workshop THTE 406**  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-2:50pm**  
**Location: MCC 112**

**Instructor: Oliver Mayer and Jenni Brandon**  
**Office: MCC #101C**  
**Office Hours : appointment or walk-in (call first).**  
**Contact Info: [omayer@usc.edu](mailto:omayer@usc.edu), 310 867 9192**  
**[Jenni@jennianderson.com](mailto:Jenni@jennianderson.com), 310 770 4365**

**Course Description:** Exploration of the process of collaboration for musical theatre through a series of structured writing exercises to create new works.

**Learning Objectives:** We will be creating the new musical *AMOUR FOU* together. Students are required to bring their open hearts and minds to each class. New music and writing will be arriving each week; Give your honest selves to the new material. Results are not as important as our process; our weekly and semester goals are formative more than summative – although we will have a midterm run-thru and a final presentation. Students have a greenlight to bring into the workshop their own specialties – dance, martial arts, other musical instruments, etc. – and we promise to keep an open mind on what works for the piece. By end of semester, students will have researched and played several roles – actor, dancer, musician, clown – and been an integral part in the creation of a new American musical which will, hopefully, have its world premiere at SDA in Fall 2023.

**Expectations:** This will be a safe space and a play space for you to create, and a sacred time for Jenni and Oliver as they build the piece.

**Technical Proficiency and Hardware/Software:** This is a low-stress classroom where we turn off cell phones. Laptops and iPads will be used occasionally for notetaking and presentations. We will have several guests on Zoom, and we will let you know beforehand.

**Required Readings and Supplementary Materials:** TBD. We will all be deepening our understanding of *AMOUR FOU's* history and mystery: the world of the 1890s, its mores and economic necessities as well as its art and entertainment, and how they compare to our own 21st century realities. Using informal presentations in each class we will be deepening our understanding of their histories and mysteries. We envision a combination of show and tell/listening lab/gossip sessions that give you agency to make discoveries,

**Description and Assessment of Assignments:** Assignments are designed to deepen the piece – both the history and mystery, then and now. We will be assigning work for all of us on the following themes: Art, Music, Clown, Avant Garde, Cabaret, Circus, Juggling, and High Wire. Each student will present research in a show and tell/gossip session, forming a bible of information and little-known facts on characters and the history/mystery of the epoch. We will grade on quality and quantity of research.

**Grading Breakdown and Assignment Rubrics:** We will give a weekly grade for each of three categories: Research, Music, and Movement. Research includes reading, discussion, participation in guest/master classes, and periodic presentation of fact-finding and other character investigations. Music includes both Jenni's new musical compositions as well as individual instrumentations (drum, guitar, accordion, etc.). Movement includes yoga, dance, martial arts, juggling, and character investigations.

**Additional Policies:** Each class will begin with yoga, movement, and breath work, followed by show and tell/gossip presentations, then rehearsals of new songs and scenes. **IMPORTANT:** We reserve the right to changing casting choices during the semester.

**Outcomes for the Actor:** Over the course of the workshop, students will acquire 1) Knowledge about the play development process; 2) An understanding of the roles and responsibilities of an actor during a play development process; 3) How to effectively communicate/collaborate with the creative team; 4) Identify the roles and responsibilities of each person in the room during the play development process; 5) The different types of rehearsal/reading process for play development; 6) How to apply the skills they have acquired during their training while collaborating with the creative team on a new musical; 7) Identify and practice the skills needed to collaborate on producing new original work.

**Guest Speakers/Artists:** We will be joined by experts on various subjects throughout the semester. Details and scheduling about individual guest are forthcoming.

**Class Schedule (subject to revision):**

<b>AMOUR FOU</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>
WEEK ONE 1/10	INTROS for everybody	READTHRU
WEEK TWO 1/17	ART presentations, Music	MUSIC presentations
WEEK THREE 1/24	CLOWN	AVANT GARDE
WEEK FOUR 1/31	CABARET	CIRCUS
WEEK FIVE 2/6	LOVE	SEXUALITY
WEEK SIX 2/13	JUGGLING	HIGH WIRE
WEEK SEVEN 2/20	MIDTERM RUNTHRU	RESPONSE
WEEK EIGHT 2/27	CLOWN	CIRCUS
WEEK NINE 3/7	DANCE	JUGGLING
WEEK TEN 3/14	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
WEEK ELEVEN 3/21	RUNTHRU	RUNTHRU
WEEK TWELVE 3/28	MEDITATION	INTENTION
WEEK THIRTEEN 4/4	ACT ONE	ACT TWO
WEEK FOURTEEN 4/11	ACT ONE	ACT TWO
WEEK FIFTEEN 4/18	RUNTHRU	RUNTHRU
WEEK SIXTEEN 4/25	PRESENTATION	PRESENTATION

**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 Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. 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/>. Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [sarc@usc.edu](http://sarc@usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

#### **Support Systems:**

**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: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.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. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

**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)

**Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710**

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

**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)

**USC**

**Libraries:** Need to do research but don't know where to start? Searching for a book, article, or data to support your argument? Not sure how to cite a source in your bibliography?

Ask a librarian! Research help is available: [jgaribay@usc.edu](mailto:jgaribay@usc.edu)

- In person and by phone, chat and email at Ask a Librarian
- Through research guides and FAQs
- By contacting your subject librarian