USC School of Dramatic Arts

Course ID and Title: 491: Theatre Organization & Management
Units: 4
Term—Fall 2024. Monday 1PM – 3:50 PM:

Location: MRF 206 (Montgomery Ross Fisher Building – School of Social Work)

Instructor: Mireya ("Murry") Hepner
Office Hours: by appointment
Contact Info: hepner@usc.edu.

Course Description
An examination of the principal components of theatrical management with an emphasis on not-for-profit institutional theatre practice. Business and production management, unions, marketing and sales, fundraising, budgeting, board of trustees and artistic staff roles will be addressed, as well as how they relate to the field of stage management. In this class, you will learn about many of the roles and responsibilities of theatre workers outside of the rehearsal hall and production team. Each week will focus on a different area or job focus.

Learning Objectives
Students will be able to compare non-profit and commercial theatre models and organizational structures and will learn to identify and discuss the various management job functions in the professional theatre.

Class projects center around putting students in the shoes of people who perform various functions within an organization. The goal is to develop an appreciation of the creativity and collaboration involved in the smooth running of a non-profit company.

Course Notes & Technology
Letter grades. Modules in Brightspace will include on-line videos, reading materials, assignments and quizzes. Students will need access to the internet to watch the various links and to access the assignments.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials
There is no Required Text for this class, but various reading materials, articles, videos, and case studies will be shared with students as part of each week's course work. They will all be found in that week's "Module" in Brightspace.

Optional Readings and Supplementary Materials
Some modules will include optional reading materials for more in-depth understanding of various topics.

Description and Assessment of Assignments
Every assignment will be graded by a specific rubric that is included in the assignment instructions for each week's module.

Participation
Participation in class discussions, and oral presentations of midterm and final projects are important to the success of the class.

Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool (assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Written Assignments	20	20
Quizzes	20	20
Class participation (discussions)	5	5
Mid Term Group Presentations	40	40
Final Report & Presentation	15	15
TOTAL	100	100

Grading Scale
Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

Letter grade	Corresponding numerical point range
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
As a general rule, written Assignments that are meant to be completed outside of our class time should be submitted by Monday at 9am, to give me time to read and comment on them before Monday's 1pm class. If they're emailed and not submitted through the Brightspace platform, please make sure you include your name and the date. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling count! If there isn't a written assignment due, there may be reading or a video to watch. Each module will come with instructions, and you should be prepared to discuss any of that material or content during class. Class begins promptly at 1 PM.   The Module for the following week's class will be posted on Mondays at the end of our class time.

Grading Timeline
- Quizzes will be graded immediately through Brightspace, except for ones with answers that need manual grading. Those will be graded before the following class.
- Other assignments will either have feedback in class or before the next class meeting date
- Feedback on Homework assignments and the Mid-Term Group Project will be given before the next class time, as long as assignments are turned in on time.
- Final assignment will be graded in the week following the final class.

Course Specific Policies
All of the assignments and quizzes are to help you understand the information covered in class and in the short videos you will watch at home, so it's important to do them in the week they are

assigned. 1 point will be deducted for every day a quiz is late, 2 points for other assignments, and 5 points will be deducted for late mid-term or final projects. Please talk to me if you're having trouble completing assignments on time.

You will need access to the internet to view various video links, and to access the reading materials and assignments on Brightspace.

Attendance

The goal is for everyone to be part of the discussion, so attendance is important to get the most out of the class, and 5% of the grade is for class participation. If you must be absent or need to leave early, please let me know. Assignments and reading materials will all be posted on Brightspace.

Classroom norms

- Civility and Respect should be a given
- Be present! Listen actively and attentively.
- Everyone should participate in the conversation. All voices are valuable.
- You can challenge one another In discussions but remember to do so respectfully.
- Make no assumptions about others
- Trust that people are always doing the best they can.
- Ask questions when you don't understand; don't assume you know what others are thinking, and your questions might help your classmates, too.
- Be mindful of taking up much more time than the others - and empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.

Zoom etiquette

This class is meant to be in person, but if we ever switch to Zoom for any reason, the same rules apply for the in- person sessions in terms of attendance and participation. The expectation is that cameras be on, but of course talk to me if that is difficult.

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Policy for the use of AI Generators – not permitted
This course aims to develop creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated text, code, or other content is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies
USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. 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 relation to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. Distributing course material without the instructor's permission will be presumed to be an intentional act to facilitate or enable academic dishonestly and is strictly prohibited. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Course Evaluations
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 me as the instructor to offer any feedback on the course

Course Schedule

August 26 **Introduction and Overview**
In the first session, we'll discuss the overview of the class, goals, and expectations.

The organizational structures and "norms" we'll be discussing throughout the semester have been evolving since everything was upended in 2020. Believing that we should know where we've been before we can change, I hope you come to this class ready to learn about what was, question the status quo, and dream together about what the new theatre structures can be.

September 2 **Labor Day**. No class.

September 9 **Non-Profit vs. Commercial Producing models – plus Presenting**
We'll discuss different models of organizational structure for producing theatre.
 Learning Objectives:
1.Identify the difference between commercial and Non-Profit Theatre operating structures
2. Recognize various titles given to Managers in both systems.
We'll also be looking at alternative models and learning how to identify components of an Organizational chart

Sept. 16 **The Board of Directors in Non-Profit Theatre**
We'll do a deep dive into the role of the Board of Directors, the governance of a non-profit theatre, and the relationship between a board chair and staff leadership. We'll also discuss the relationship between Non-Profit and Commercial Theatre
Learning Objectives:
1.   Discuss & identify the role of the Board of Directors in a Non-Profit Theatre
2.   Discuss the relationship between Commercial and Non-profit theatres

September 23 More on Non-Profit Structure**,** plus Mission and Season Planning (part 1)
In this session we'll continue our dive into how a Non-Profit functions, and then start to identify the elements of a successful mission statement. We'll also begin a discussion on how the theatre's mission is directly related not only to season planning for productions, but for every aspect of the theatre's activities and programs.
Learning Objectives:
 1.Identifying elements of a Mission Statement
2. Identifying how Programming and Organizational Choices relate to the Mission

September 30   Mission plus Season Planning (part 2)
Continuing the discussion from the previous class about how Mission guides decision making in all aspects of the organization
Additional Learning Objectives:

3. Identifying other roles and responsibilities of the Artistic Staff of a non-profit theatre

October 7   **The Budget**
The goal of this session is to understand the different types of budgets used by non-profit and commercial theatre productions, and to get a general understanding on what elements to think about when projecting expenses and revenue in a budget.
Learning Objectives:
1. Identify and compare the different types of budgets used in Commercial and Non-Profit Theatres
2. Give Examples of items that are included in different types of theatre budgets
3. Complete a sample expense production budget template for a specific play

October 14   **Fundraising**
In this class we'll be looking at "unearned" or "contributed" income as part of the revenue side of a non-profit company
Learning Objectives:
1. Give Examples of different ways non-profits bring in gifts or "unearned income"
2. Demonstrate understanding of what's needed for a successful grant proposal

October 21   **Marketing and Audience Development.**
We'll take what we've learned about mission and fundraising as a basis for selling our show. What tools do we need to learn about who we want to come to see our production, and how we get them there? In this session we'll identify various Marketing tools but also the philosophy behind "selling" the show.
Learning Objectives:
1. Identify differences between Marketing and Audience Engagement/Development
2. Identify different marketing tools
3. Identify audience engagement tools

October 28   **Group project presentation: Your dream theatre company**
The class will be broken into small groups to do this assignment, which is based on all of the classes up until now. In this session each group will present their project to the group. (Groups will be assigned during the class about Mission Statements, to allow for plenty of time to complete this project)

You're tasked with dreaming up a theatre company.
Each group will:
1. Write a clear mission statement that describes the essence of your new organization.
2. Give a brief description of what need your company is filling, or what makes it different from others.

3. Demonstrate what type of programming you'll choose based on your mission.
4. Describe the process of selecting your first season, with at least 2 examples of plays or programming under consideration.
5. Make a list of budget line items you might include for one of the plays in your season.
6. Use your company's mission, and the description of why it is needed, to write a brief (one-page or less) fundraising appeal to a potential individual donor.
7. Pick a target audience and give a brief description of what messaging and method you'll use to reach them.

Be prepared to present your ideas in front of the class, and also to submit a written copy. The written documents should include a few paragraphs describing the process you went through to craft the final mission statement. Early draft ideas can absolutely be included.

Presentations will be graded on how well your budget items, play selections, and other documents match your mission statement, and how you present them to your classmates. Be prepared to answer questions from your classmates.

Nov.4   **Box Office, FOH and Earned Income**
We'll talk about various types of earned income for a theatre, and identify the roles and responsibilities of the House Manager and the Front of House Staff,
Learning Objectives:
1. Give Examples of different types of earned income for a theatre
2. Identify the role of the House Manager, FOH staff and others who deal with customers (Audience members)
3. Identify best practices for successful Customer Service

November 11   Veteran's Day – no class

November 18   Theatre Unions & Associations
In this class we'll talk about the concept of collective bargaining, learn about various Theatrical Unions and who they serve, as well as some organizations who serve Theatre Organizations.
 Learning Objectives:
1. Be able to identify various Theatre Unions and who they serve
2. Be able to identify some of the collective bargaining organizations that negotiate with the unions
3. Be able to identify some of the theatre field's service organizations

November 25   Arts Advocacy
We'll learn about how artists and arts organizations can advocate for funding and policy changes from government agencies, and some of the organizations who do that work on behalf of the creative community.

Dec 2   **Management Reflections – last class**

We'll look at some of the issues that have come into focus as theatre companies grapple with the new reality of what it means to run a theatre company today. We'll read some articles and discuss issues such as scheduling, programming and staffing challenges. Come prepared for conversation.

Dec 9   **No class – finals prep**

<u>Wednesday, December 18 11am – 1pm</u>

Final presentation (NOTE this is a different day than our normal meeting day)
The final will be a thought/research piece about the future of theatre as you see it. Find a theatre company whose mission interests you, and interview a management or artistic leader, asking questions about challenges they've faced and what they envision for their company in the future. We'll be coming up with sample questions as a group as part of the Management Reflections modules to help you get started.

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.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theatre Consent Culture Statement

Through our pluralistic approach of diverse pedagogies, methodologies, ideologies, and modalities of artistic expression, we invite(engage) and challenge students to expand their breadth and depth of knowledge, complexity, and range of the human experience. Even though we nurture, guide, and challenge our students to embrace the unknown or unfamiliar and step outside of their comfort zones through storytelling/art, we aim to practice effective strategies and offer tools to students mindful of their physical, psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. In alignment with professional and industry standards, we will integrate core principles and techniques of Intimacy in Theater and Building Cultures of Affirmative Consent. This will provide agency, offer resources and support to the teachers, students, directors, and staff to establish healthy boundaries of consent when working on material that is physically, intimately, or emotionally charged content in both the classroom and production.

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

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

Students and Disability Accommodations:
USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:
To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the Financial Aid Office webpage for undergraduate- and graduate-level SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:
Counseling and Mental Health - *(213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - *988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call*
The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - *(213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - *(213) 740-5086*
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) 740-2500*
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - *(213) 740-0776*
OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - *(213) 740-0411*
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - *(213) 740-2101*

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*
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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call*
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - *(213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)*
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - *(323) 442-2850 or* otfp@med.usc.edu
Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.