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Description automatically generatedDIS 0000 Musical Theatre for Social Change**

Fall 2024

Time:

Room:

**Instructor:** Jesse Graham Galas, Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre

Office: Hayworth Fine Arts Center 307

Phone: (336) 841-9801 (e-mail is the best way to reach me)

E-mail: jgalas@highpoint.edu

Office Hours: MW 2:00pm – 4:00pm

TTH 2:00pm – 3:00pm

F 12:00pm – 1:00pm

or by Appointment (Blackboard Collaborate/Zoom available)

**Course Description**

This course explores the myriad ways that the American Musical reflects, challenges and inspires American culture sociologically from inception to the present day. The student will work solo and in groups to define and identify the musical’s influence on issues of social justice in American culture; specifically in gender, race/ethnicity, disability, class, and ideology. The students will achieve this objective through reading, discussion, viewing of selected musicals, and presentations, which will culminate in the creation of a pitch of their group musical reflecting social justice to the class.

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**Course Objective**

The objective of this course is to give each student an understanding of how the American musical has influenced not only their lives, but the lives of their community, and in so doing, to inspire a deeper empathy and awareness of the power of human artistic expression in themselves and others to shape a constantly shifting world view.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES and LIFE SKILLS LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

To foster a constructive team climate through polite communication, a positive and confident attitude, and helpfulness. *Teamwork, Speaking Persuasively*

* LO#1: Student will participate in verbal and written discussions of musicals through the lens of each issue of social justice.
* LO#2: Students will work together to present group projects on a facet of social justice.

To demonstrate emotional intelligence, a growth mindset, and resilience while addressing challenges and when facing new opportunities. *Resiliency and Growth Mindedness*

* LO#1: Students may find previously held theories on the social impact of the American musical to be outdated or incorrect and will learn to embrace constructive criticism that leads to growth.
* LO#2: Students will have exposure to musicals about a variety of what may be uncomfortable topics and will learn to balance both their lived experience and the lived experiences of their classmates.

To connect concepts, theories, and frameworks of fields of study to life experiences, drawn from a variety of contexts (e.g., family life, creative endeavors, civic participation, work experience). *Cultural Competence*

* LO#1: Students will connect how the basic structure of dramatic literature appears in their daily life and jargon.
* LO#2: Students will recognize how musicals as a whole have permeated American culture though a variety of examples and eras.

To adapt and apply skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies acquired in one situation or discipline to new situations or problems. *Interdisciplinary Problem Solving*

* LO#1: Students will draw from a variety of their lived experiences by creating an outline for a new musical that addresses an issue of social justice that is meaningful for them.
* LO#2: Students will work in groups to develop not only the central themes of the piece, but will flesh out main characters, song topics and the greater metaphors of the piece.

**Course Requirements**

**Required Texts:**

* **Musical Theatre and American Culture,** David Walsh and Len Platt. Praeger Publishers, 2003. ISBN: 0-275-98057-X

You may purchase these books at the [HPU Bookstore](https://highpoint.bncollege.com/) or through a 3rd party source, such as [Thriftbooks](https://www.thriftbooks.com/w/freeing-the-natural-voice_douglas-florian_kristin-linklater/253355/?resultid=7651e041-ff70-4918-8ce5-0ddd74126d2f#edition=4694710&idiq=10311660) or [Alibris](https://www.alibris.com/Freeing-the-Natural-Voice-Imagery-and-Art-in-the-Practice-of-Voice-and-Language-Kristin-Linklater/book/35499711?matches=29) or Amazon. **You will be using this book within the first week, so I highly recommend that you order it immediately**.

**Other Required Materials:**

* Computer/Internet access to view materials online or through Library Databases.
* Ticket “purchase” and attendance of one (1) Theatre Department production:

Tickets can be purchased at [HPU Box Office](https://www.highpoint.edu/theater/tickets/). Tickets are FREE to anyone with a Student ID.

* Additional materials will be provided via Blackboard.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

**Participation/Discussion** (20 pts per class)You are working to develop our stated values of preparation, presence, and respectful, engaged collaboration. Your participation/ discussion grade consists of how well you practice these values within the classroom community. There will be reading/viewing assignments in this class, and in order to contribute, you must read/view the materials. You will have the opportunity to participate in discussions either orally or in written form.

*Critical Thinking, Speaking Persuasively, Cultural Competence, Resiliency and Growth Mindset*

**Quizzes** (6 @ 50pts)Each quiz will assess your comprehension of each facet of social justice (race, gender, class, disability and ideology), how it is presented in the musicals we will be studying, why it was presented in such a way and what the authors hoped to achieve. *Critical Thinking, Writing Persuasively, Cultural Competence, Resiliency and Growth Mindset*

**Midterm: Oral Presentation** (1 @ 100 pts) For your midterm, you will present a PowerPoint on a musical of your choice that best expressed the facet of social justice about which you are most activated. This oral presentation will need to cover: a brief contextualized history of the musical and its creators; your thesis as to the social justice aspect to which the musical is referring; the greater metaphors at play; visual and aural examples from the musical defending your thesis, and how you think this musical has impacted your lived experience and American culture as a whole.

*Speaking Persuasively, Writing Persuasively, Coachability*

**Performance Response Paper: Voice** (1 @ 100 pts) In this paper, you will choose one of the Departmental Theatre Productions and analyze this play from the lens of an issue of social justice. You will address how the issue of social justice has manifested in the musical, cite visual and aural examples of your choices, including metaphors, and conclude with the effectiveness of the piece in achieving the author’s intentions.

*Writing Persuasively*

**Final Exam: New Musical Pitch** (1 @ 200 pts)For your Final Exam, you will work together in groups to create a pitch for a new musical that deals with the social justice issue you find most activating. The pitch will include the major themes for the show, basic dramatic structure of the piece, characters needed and the justification for same, songs and/or dance needed, greater metaphors throughout, and the effect you hope your new musical will have on your community and American culture at large.

*Critical Thinking, Speaking Persuasively, Cultural Competence, Interdisciplinary Problem Solving, Resiliency and Growth Mindset*

**COURSE VALUES:**

* **Curiosity –** You have taken responsibility for your own education by coming to this class. You’re here to learn new things. The learning process asks you to try things you do not yet fully understand. Have the courage to try, have the courage to fail.
* **Professionalism –** We value preparation and timeliness. We show up every day, on time, ready to work. We engage in necessary preparation to be fully ready for the work.
* **Presence –** We strive to be fully present in the classroom. Presence leads to openness which provides a starting point for vulnerability. Laptops and phones may be used only in connection with class assignments. When attention wanders, we will work to regain focus.
* **Empathy –** We are here to look at the world through the eyes of another. We are here to allow ourselves to value other perspectives. Play scripts contain the necessary potential to shock and provoke strong reactions. We respect ideas that conflict with our own. We know that the best work often requires courage and vulnerability.
* **Community –** We will work together and support one another at all times.

**GRADES:**

This class is based on the accumulation of points, not percentages. Every point you earn contributes to a final score. Any time you wish to know your grade, you simply move the decimal point. For example: If you currently have 789 points, then you have a 78.9 or a C.

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| **Grade Item**  Class Participation/Discussion (20pts per class) | **Points Possible**  300 points |
| Performance Response Paper (1 paper) | 100 points |
| Quizzes (6 @ 50pts) | 300 points |
| Midterm: Oral Presentation (Solo project) | 100 points |
| Final Exam: New Musical Pitch (Group project) | 200 points |
| **TOTAL** | **1000 points** |
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A = 900-1000 / B = 800-899 / C = 700-799 / D = 600-699 / F = 599 and below

**BREAKDOWN OF LETTER GRADES**

A – *Excellent*. Always well prepared; extensive outside preparation. Actively pursues improvement and highly self-motivated. Significant growth in skills and knowledge during semester. Active contributor to class community. Punctual, always mentally present.

B – *Very Good*. Always prepared; notable outside preparation. Pursues improvement and self-motivated. Notable growth in skills and knowledge during semester. Usual contributor to class. Punctual and mentally present.

C – *Acceptable*. Sometimes prepared. Interested in improvement and sometimes self-motivated. Shows some growth in skills and knowledge during semester. Sometimes contributes to class. Usually punctual and mentally present.

D – *Needs Improvement*. Often not prepared. Shows little interest in improvement and is rarely self-motivated. Very little skill and knowledge growth during semester. Seldom contributes to class and has negative attitude. Sometimes late; some absences.

F – *Unacceptable*. Rarely prepared. Virtually no interest in self-improvement and not motivated. Virtually no growth in skills and knowledge. Does not contribute to class; negative attitude. Not punctual; multiple absences.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

* Per HPU policy, you get three absences (excused or unexcused) for free (without penalty). After those three absences (3 tardies = 1 absence), absences are counted against your participation/discussion grade at the penalty of 10 points per class. There is a penalty of 3 points for every tardy. You are tardy if you enter class after I finish taking roll. 3 Tardies = 1 Absence.
* An **excused** absence is one where you contact me BEFORE class begins to explain your absence, and I let you make up the work. An **unexcused** absence is one where you DO NOT contact me before class begins, and I do not have to let you make up the work.
* **LATE WORK:** Late work will be accepted at a penalty of 5 points off the top for every 24 hour period.
* Students will be evaluated on both their individual and partner responsibilities and will be held accountable for their work.
* **Communication is key.** I can’t help you if I don’t know what is going on. Make sure you reach out – I have office hours and am available by email.

*In order to get the most out of this course, students must take a personal interest in their own future. This course will ask you to adapt, to define, to risk, and to push yourself. Lackluster effort on these projects will affect not only your success in this course, but also likely your success beyond High Point University.*

**STUDENT EXPECTATION STATEMENT**

* Students are expected to log intoBlackboard **EVERY DAY** – you should keep a daily check on assignments, due dates, discussions, and correspondence.
* Students are expected to participate in class, read all assigned material, complete assignments, quizzes, and projects on time, view one department performance and complete a response paper, participate in discussions both in class and on Bb, and positively contribute to our class community.
* Students are expected to be open to new experiences, looking for new ideas and asking plenty of questions.
* Keep a class notebook, and keep it organized; there will be occasional handouts.
* NO GUM and No Food in class – Water is great.
* Please turn all cell phones to SILENT by the time I finish taking role.

**Class Environment**

It is vital to create a safe, productive working environment in the classroom. That starts with respect for yourself, your classmates and the teacher. If you are not speaking, you owe it to your classmates to concentrate on the work that’s happening in the classroom. You will also be expected to talk about your work, as well as your fellow classmates. We will discuss in class how to give feedback that is helpful and productive.

***NOTE***: Due to the nature of this class, there may be plays or scenes which may express adult, controversial, abusive, sexual, racial and/or irreverent themes as well as strong language which may be uncomfortable for you. Theatre, due to its psychological nature, will involve you in emotional situations. We will be working on digesting the difference between “triggering” language/situations and “activating” language/situations. Please make sure you communicate any concerns ASAP.

**Health Care, Counseling Services, Campus Safety**

**Student Health Services:** 1300 University Parkway. [(336) 841-4683](tel:+13368414683)

**Campus Safety**: 9111. Security can be contacted 24/7 at 9111 from any campus phone.

**Office of Counseling Services**: Slane Student Center, 3rd floor. [(336) 888-6352](tel:+13368886352)

**Fall Academic Calendar 2023**

* **August 20 – Opening Convocation**
* **August 21 – First Day of Classes**
* **August 25– Last Day for FREE Drop/Add**
* **September 22 – 24 – Fall Family Weekend**
* **October 9 - 13 – FALL BREAK**
* **October 20 – Last Day to Withdraw**
* **November 3 – 5 – Homecoming Weekend**
* **November 22 - 26 – Thanksgiving Break**
* **December 8 – Reading Day – NO CLASSES**
* **December 9 - 15 – Final Exams**
* **December 16 - Commencement**

**PROFESSIONALISM IN THE CLASSROOM**

Professional Behavior: High Point University students have a responsibility to uphold the University Honor Code, Conduct Code, and all other rules and processes as noted in the *Undergraduate Bulletin* and the *Student Guide to Campus Life*. These rules apply to the entirety of the campus, especially in academic spaces (e.g., classrooms, faculty offices). Students should be fully aware of these expectations at all times. Behaviors or methods of communications that hinder an “inclusive environment that encourages the exchange of ideas and the intellectual and creative development of faculty and students” (Mission of the School of Arts and Design) will be addressed immediately and tracked via Starfish. The degree of offense could include civility education, withdrawal from the class, or expulsion. The School of Arts and Design partners with the Office of Student Life in dealing with these concerns.

University Honor Code: All classes offered by the School of Arts and Design adhere to the policies and procedures regarding the university's Honor Code found in the High Point University *Student Guide to Campus Life*. You are responsible for being fully aware of the contents of this document. The professor will discuss the definitions of plagiarism as it relates to this particular course. When in doubt, always ask before submitting an assignment, project, exam, or any other product to be evaluated. Procedures, consequences, etc. may be found in the *Student Guide to Campus Life*.

1. Upon the first offense, the student will receive a grade of 0 on the assignment with no chance to re-do the assignment. An Honor Code Incident Report will be filed with the office of the Provost / Vice President for Academic Affairs.

2. Upon the second offence (including any other courses outside of your major) the student will automatically fail the class and a grade of FH recorded on the transcript. An Honor code Incident Report will be filed with the office of the Provost. The university has the authority to also suspend the student for the semester. With all second infractions, an educational citation workshop will be mandated.

3. For additional information on 3rd infractions, refer to the High Point University Student Guide to Campus Life.

Intellectual Property: Please note that all materials distributed in this course are the intellectual property of the professor. This includes exams, study guides, presentations, handouts, and assignment/project instructions. These materials are meant solely for the use of the students in this classroom. The posting or sharing of these materials is prohibited and considered a violation of the Honor Code.

Course Evaluations: All students are expected to complete course evaluations in the week preceding final exams. These evaluations, which are delivered online, are an important part of HPUs assessment program. They help faculty identify areas that need improvement and confirm to faculty what is working well. Your cooperation in completing them is greatly appreciated. You will receive information from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment near the end of the semester regarding the process of completing online evaluations.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion: High Point University considers a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as a core component of our mission and an essential ingredient to a holistic education in the liberal arts tradition. A liberal arts education develops critical thinkers, moving students from a fixed-mindset to a growth-mindset. This approach to learning prepares students for reflective action in an interdependent and diverse world. We not only understand and respect the unique talents and perspectives of all individuals, but we also embrace and utilize their contributions. Our breadth of inclusiveness creates a path by which all individuals can achieve their highest potential in an increasingly complex and pluralistic society.

We welcome and respect all students, faculty, and staff of all races, ethnicities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, sexual identities and gender expressions, abilities, classes, ages, and political ideas. We recognize that diversity also includes a range of geographic locations, communication styles, family makeup, educational background, military service, and other unique life experiences. To encourage diversity and inclusion we endorse dynamic curricula and research agendas—through the university’s core education as well as all fields of study, programming, and community engagement—that include a multiplicity of views and perspectives.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are not merely moral imperatives or societal goals, they can be a competitive advantage. Our continued success as a university rest in our collective ability to embrace a multitude of opinions, ideas, and beliefs so that we can effectively educate the next generation of leaders who are culturally responsive, knowledgeable, and globally engaged. Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion cultivates students’ desire for citizenship in complex global communities.

Emotional Support Animals:  Only service animals are permitted in academic spaces. ESA’s must be kept in the student’s residence and outside only to exercise and relieve themselves. ESA’s in training are also not permitted in spaces outside the owner’s residence hall.

**STUDENT RESOURCES**

Starfish: High Point University cares about your success! This course is part of a HPU initiative that utilizes Starfish Connect, a communication tool for students and faculty. Through Starfish, instructors, coaches, and advisors provide feedback to you about course progress by emailing you about your academic performance. The emails are designed to be helpful by identifying strategies that increase your success in courses. Be sure to open any emails you receive and follow the recommendations.

Your instructor, coach, or advisor may also recommend that you contact a specific campus resource, such as the Learning Lab or Counseling Center. If an instructor makes a referral, you may also be contacted directly by this campus service as a follow-­‐up.

Starfish also allows you to schedule appointments with various office[s](webextlink://s) [and](webextlink://and) individuals across campus and request help on a variety of topics.

Students with Disabilities: High Point University is committed to ensuring all students have equal access to all services and benefits at High Point University. If you are a student with a disability and require academic accommodations due to a diagnosed disability, you must register with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) and submit the appropriate documentation. Requests for accommodations should be made at the beginning of a course. Accommodations are not retroactive. Contact us at [oars@highpoint.edu](mailto:oars@highpoint.edu) or by telephone at 336-841-9026, for additional information. The Office of Accessibility Resource and Services is located on the 4th Floor of Smith Library.  Please note that accommodations are not retroactive.

HPU Writing Center: The Writing Center provides writing assistance for students at any level of study – from freshman to graduate – at any stage in the writing process, from invention through revision. Visit <http://www.highpoint.edu/academicservices/writing-center/> to learn more. Go to <https://highpoint.mywconline.com/> to make an appointment. Appointments can only be made through the online portal. Writing Center tutors do not proofread or edit students’ papers *for* them, but they do work *with* students to help them develop strategies for improving their writing in light of their respective assignments, instructors, and writing styles. For more information, contact Writing Center Director, Dr. Justin Cook at [jcook3@highpoint.edu](mailto:jcook3@highpoint.edu) or (336) 841-2841

As a faculty member, I support a safe, violence-free campus. If you or someone you know experiences stalking, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, or sex/gender-based discrimination please know, you are not alone. There are resources that can help:

Title IX Coordinator

<http://www.highpoint.edu/title-ix/>

336-841-9138

You can also report using the online complaint form.

<https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?HighPointUniv&layout_id=20>

*Confidential*

The Office of Counseling Services

<http://www.highpoint.edu/counseling/>

Business Hours: 336-888-6352

After Hours: 336-841-9 111 (Referred by Security)

**Deputy Title IX Coordinators**

Gwenn Noel  
Associate Vice President, Student Experience  
[gnoel@hghpoint.edu](mailto:gnoel@hghpoint.edu)  
336-841-9672  
337 Slane Center

April Wines  
Senior Woman Administrator/Associate Athletic Director  
[awines@highpoint.edu](mailto:awines@highpoint.edu)  
336-841-4645  
117 Witcher Athletic Center

Additional information can be found here: [HPU Title IX](https://www.highpoint.edu/title-ix/)

**FLEXIBILITY CLAUSE**

The instructor reserves the right to modify the course requirements and other related policies as circumstances may dictate. Even the professor can have an unanticipated emergency, and the university—or the community-at-large—may experience an emergency that requires changing the class schedule or requirements. If changes are necessary, you will be notified as soon as possible.

**REMOTE ACCESS**

This course is not available for long-term remote access.

Unless otherwise noted, face-to-face attendance in classes, laboratories, and studios is required. A student may attend approved classes remotely ONLY if\*:

* They are approved by the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS);
* They are isolated because they have been diagnosed with COVID-19;
* They are quarantined because they have been identified as a close contact to an individual diagnosed with COVID-19; or
* They are an international student who has received special permission for remote access because they are unable to enter the United States due to COVID-19 restrictions.

**The only stupid question is the one you don’t ask. YOU hold the keys to your future.**