

Puppetry Performance Syllabus

Instructor: Daniel Dempsey

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Classroom: 60 Armstrong Hall (Black Box Studio Theater)

Class Hours: M-F 9a -11a, 1p -3p

Office B48 office phone 319-895-4367

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 3-4p, and by Appointment.

Objectives:

Understand and practice the fundamentals of puppetry technique and be able to analyze and evaluate their use in performance. Understand and practice the fundamentals of creating new works of puppet theater and be able to supportively critique your own work and others' Understand the fundamentals of Acting through Puppets and be able to apply your own acting practice toward puppetry. Course description Puppets are tools of performance, and this class is aimed at helping you learn how to use these tools, as well as hone your own abilities as a actor and performer. We will learn about several different kinds of puppets, however this class is focused on Direct Manipulation style Character puppets, as they offer a more direct analog to an actor's own training. In addition to learning to use the fundamental techniques of puppetry, we will learn about working collaboratively: within a puppet, on stage as an actor, and in development of new works of theater. Contrary to the stereotype of the puppeteer as an all-controlling master of everything beneath him, puppetry can be one of the most collaborative forms of theater. Because of this, we will learn to build trust in each other and ourselves, as we risk new ideas.

Methods of Teaching and expectations:

There are many methods of learning the art of puppetry, but none more valuable than playtime. In this class that playtime will be structured studio work in class, and self guided work outside of class. Keeping track of your learning experiences, difficulties, and successes, as well as your inspirations, ideas, and sketches will be of utmost importance, so you will be required to keep an artist's journal during your time in class. We will also have required reading materials and viewing of video material to learn from others' work, to challenge our ideas, and to inspire us as artists and makers. Finally, there will be a good amount of in-class discussion, so that we can help one another through the learning process, and inspire one another, as well as reflect on our observations and experiences. It cannot be stressed enough that Puppetry, like any art form, is deeply reliant on participation and engagement. I will quote Robert Smythe here from his puppetry course syllabus: "You must give yourself over wholeheartedly to the exercises at hand, without holding back. And you must be supportive of your fellow classmates as they do the work. Standing up in front of a class to perform is already difficult and trying to do so in front of a dismissive and unresponsive group is almost impossible. Ninety percent of puppetry is in the mind of the audience: let's all make sure we are committed to providing the support that makes that possible."

Grading

Attendance 25%

○ There's just no way to get around the importance of showing up, in this class or elsewhere. Three instances of tardiness (15 mins late or more) will be counted as a full absence. The first absence is counted and mentioned, the second absence requires that we make a plan together, the third absence is a failing grade.

Class Participation 15%

- In addition to showing up, you've got to bring something. we're going to make a community of artists in this class, and everyone brings something valuable to the table.

Written Assignments/Reflections / Required Reading/Viewing 25%

- This is college. let's be academics as well as artists.

Artist Journal 15%

- This is an essential skill to put into your artist practice. If you haven't begun yet, let this class help you start.

Performances 20%

- It's impossible to say whether one performer's work is objectively better than their peers', but it's easy to see when risks are taken, and easy to see improvement. We'll perform a lot in this class.

Required Reading:

Puppetry by Kenneth Gross

Additional Articles assigned on Moodle

Academic Honesty: Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading "Academic Honesty."

Accommodation Students who need accommodations for learning disabilities must provide documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose learning disabilities. For more information see cornellcollege.edu/disabilities/documentation/index.shtml Students requesting services may schedule a meeting with the disabilities services coordinator as early as possible to discuss their needs and develop an individualized accommodation plan. Ideally, this meeting would take place well before the start of classes. At the beginning of each course, the student must notify the instructor within the first three days of the term of any accommodations needed for the duration of the course.