

THEA 341: MASTER CLASS (Spring 2026)

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Office hours: By Appointment Only

The information presented in the syllabus is subject to change with adequate notification.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, students are guided in the process of expanding and refining their audition repertoire, particularly concerning monologue work. Students engage in research of contemporary playwrights and plays, paying particular attention to recent dramatic literature. Students' training in this class will concentrate on expanding their skills to find material that stimulates their creative voice and with which they can identify artistically. As an integral part of this process, students will present monologue work in class and receive coaching from the instructor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a part of your professional training:

- You will read several contemporary playwrights and plays seeking to discover innovative material that may help reveal your authentic self in an audition situation.
- You will participate collaboratively with your ensemble, introducing each other to new plays and playwrights via the Canvas discussion boards as well as one Group Presentation based on research of one contemporary playwright.
- You will expand your audition repertoire with three contemporary and one Shakespeare monologue, learning to stage them effectively and imaginatively.
- You will refine your technique concerning 1) the appropriateness of your audition material, 2) the ability to receive notes and implement them, and 3) the overall dynamism of your performance.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *King John* (William Shakespeare)
- *The Hot Wing King* (Katori Hall)
- *John Proctor is the Villain* (Kimberly Bellflower)
- *Benghal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* (Rajiv Joseph)
- Various scripts and research

ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECTS

- **Contribution to Learning:** Auditioning is not a mystery. It is a set of skills, the skills of a trained actor. This is an opportunity to practice and explore the craft of auditioning in the safety and security of the classroom. As talent is subjective, you will never be graded on it or on your expertise. Rather, it is your effort and commitment to all class and performance work that will be evaluated.

Acting class is a laboratory for exploration and discovery, and as such, we must all work to protect ourselves and our colleagues at our most vulnerable. Therefore, it's important for us to be respectful of each other's work and learn to clarify and reflect on our own technique.

All reading assignments are discussed either in class or on Canvas. Please take notes as you read and be prepared to share your thoughts and opinions with everyone. We are always respectful of our classmates' opinions, as we wish them to be respectful of ours.

- **Monologues:** You will prepare four (4) new monologues – one Shakespeare and three contemporary (chosen from the list at the back of the syllabus) – over the semester to add to your repertoire. All monologues must be fully memorized and rehearsed. You must be present on all your assigned performance days. Any make-up work will be at the instructor's discretion. Scripts and texts must be printed so that notes and adjustments may be written in the margins.
- **Script Reading:** Actors must be familiar with their theatrical canon and an integral part of your profession. As such, you must read four plays of your choosing from the list at the end of this syllabus (all are available at the department's virtual library) over the course of the semester and write of what you've read:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B5mmwiiNVYYoNzAyNTg0MGQtYmFiZC00N2QzLWFhY2ltZjlxYWkMDFhMDI0?resourcekey=0-PSINF9MH3FBjEbH4I7zW_Q. A summary with a thorough critique of the play and a brief bio of the playwright must be posted to the Discussion Board.
- **Verbal Feedback:** Acting class is a laboratory for exploration and discovery, and as such, we must all work to protect ourselves and our colleagues at our most vulnerable. Therefore, it's important for us to be respectful and critique each other's work objectively, and in doing so, learn to clarify and reflect on our own techniques. However, to limit your analysis of another's work to only praise is not particularly helpful. We will learn how to critique each other appropriately and beneficially, and (perhaps more importantly) we will learn to accept criticism (in all its forms) graciously and apply it to our work. If anyone ever feels personally attacked at any time in class, please speak with me immediately.
- **Group Project:** You will be divided into three groups and research one of three playwrights – Katori Hall, Kimberly Bellflower, or Rajiv Joseph – who's work we read as a class. You will create a colorful Powerpoint that focuses on their history, influences, and one specific play other than the one we study. You are encouraged to present your report with imagination and creativity: Create a game for the class to play. Stage a reading of a scene from your focus play. Put time and effort into this project, but most importantly, have fun.
- **Final:** To evaluate your skill and knowledge, you must prepare your repertoire book and present your three monologues for a final review by the instructor.

NOTE: If you are having difficulties finishing any assignment and come to me before it's due, I will try and work to accommodate you. However, if you come to me after the deadline, there is nothing I can do. So, please, be proactive.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

- I will do my best to return email from your official BSU address within 24 hours during business days and within 48 hours on the weekend.
- I'll make every effort to grade your assignments for class no later than within 10 business days of submission.
- Please feel free to email me at any time throughout the course if you have any questions or concerns about your performance in class.

UNIVERSITY and DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Ball State University is committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's [Disability Services](#) office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

ATTENDANCE

- As this class meets 1 day per week, students are permitted, according to university policy, **1 unexcused absence** for the semester. Your second unexcused absence will result in a 10% grade deduction for the semester. No exceptions. Every subsequent unexcused absence will be an additional 10% deduction. When you reach your 6th absence, it is no longer possible to achieve the course learning outcomes. There are two options at this point: 1. You will receive an "F" in the course. 2. You may request an Incomplete in the course. To do this, you must provide paperwork regarding hospitalization, extensive illness, recurring absences due to mental health issues as documented by a letter from Disability Services, or other documented issue that has caused your excessive absences. If your documentation is approved, your GPA will NOT be impacted and will be required to complete the coursework in a future semester. Those details will be worked out on an individual basis.
- The ONLY excused absences are religious holidays; death in the family (number of days per University handbook), pregnancy, jury duty, active military duty; and an EXTENDED and DOCUMENTED absence related to illness or health issues (mono, broken leg, pneumonia, etc.). **For all EXTENDED illness related absences, students MUST produce a note from their medical professional.**
- **NOTE: The university is no longer processing and/or vetting excused absences for COVID, just as an absence for the flu, cold, etc. would not be excused.**
- In addition to being in class, students are required to be there on time. **Tardiness is not acceptable.** Class starts on the hour, and **three (3) instances of lateness will add up to one unexcused absence.** NOTE: If an emergency happens and you must be absent or tardy, you are responsible for contacting me by way of our GroupMe chat as soon as possible.
- I check my email twice a day: in the morning and in the evening. If you are running late, please do not email me. I will not see it if you try and email me during the day. Instead, text the class by way of our GroupMe thread immediately. Do not wait until class has already started to get in touch. Give me your ETA, and then stick to that time. If you accrue more than 3 late excuses, they will be registered in my attendance book as one absence.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty – both intentional and unintentional – is an offense that the university takes very seriously, as do I. It is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to know what constitutes academic dishonesty. The university, the department, and I have provided numerous resources to help you with this. If you want to check something with me personally, don't hesitate. Just don't say, after the fact, "I didn't know that counted as plagiarism." That's unacceptable.

MINIMUM GRADE POLICY

The lowest acceptable grade in a course for credit toward a major or minor in Theatre or Dance is C. Any student receiving a C- or lower must retake the course to receive credit towards a major or minor in the department.

TACTILE/PHYSICAL INTERACTION TEACHING STATEMENT

Studio theatre courses often require the instructor to touch or be in close physical proximity to students to adjust/align the body and guide the student on how to best execute the material. I will always verbally request student consent before touching anyone. If, for whatever reason, being touched or physically adjusted is not part of a student's learning process or makes them uncomfortable, please let me know as soon as possible so that

accommodations can be made. If a student is uncomfortable speaking with me, contact the departmental Associate Chair, Tyler Smith (tasmith2@bsu.edu).

COURSE EVALUATIONS

You are expected to complete a course evaluation prior to the final class session. These evaluations are essential to the development of the acting curriculum and are required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for Belmont to maintain its accreditation and, therefore, the value of everyone's degrees.

GRADING

Recorded grades will be uploaded online.

Grading Breakdown:

Monologues	50%
Class Participation	15%
Group Presentations	25%
<u>Play reading & Reporting</u>	<u>10%</u>
	100%

Grading Scale:

A: 94-100%	A-: 90-93	
B+: 87-89	B: 84-86	B-: 80-83
C+: 77-79	C: 74-76	C-: 70-73
D+: 67-69	D: 64-66	D-: 60-63

Earn the Grade You Want

A: All assignments are completed on time. Each demonstrates thoughtfulness with attention to detail.

B: All assignments are completed on time. Each demonstrates thoughtfulness.

C: All assignments are completed on time.

D: An attempt was made to finish the work.

F: No work was turned in.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

JANUARY

Monday, 5: Course Introduction

- Introductions
 - Syllabus, course design, and expectations
- Divide into three groups and be assigned a playwright to research. You will be asked to present your findings to the class. Imagination and creativity is encouraged.
- William Shakespeare in Context

HOMEWORK DUE: January 12

- Read **Acts 1-3 of *King John* by William Shakespeare** (The New Oxford Shakespeare) – available on Canvas – and be prepared to discuss it with the class.
- Read “The Elizabethans” – also available on Canvas – and be prepared to discuss it in class.

Monday, 12: Discuss **Acts 1-3 of *King John* by William Shakespeare** with the class.

- Read scenes aloud in class.

HOMEWORK DUE: January 19: Post the report for your first independently read play to Canvas by **Sunday, January 25 at 11:59 PM**

- Choose 1 one-minute monologue from Shakespeare to present to the class. This is best done by keeping to 14 to 16 verse lines. Editing may be necessary.

Monday, 19: MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY/NO CLASSES

HOMEWORK DUE: January 26

- Read **Acts 4 & 5 of *King John* by William Shakespeare** and be prepared to discuss it with the class.
- Prepare your one-minute monologue from Shakespeare to present to the class. Please be fully memorized.

Monday, 26: Discuss **Acts 4 & 5 of *King John* by William Shakespeare** with the class.

- Read scenes aloud in class.
- Time permitting, we will see as many one-minute Shakespeare monologues for class.

FEBRUARY

HOMEWORK DUE: February 2

- Prepare your Shakespeare monologues for class.

Monday, 2: Present your Shakespeare monologues for class.

HOMEWORK DUE: February 9

- Group 1: prepare to make your 20-minute presentation on **playwright Katori Hall**.
- Using your notes, prepare your Shakespeare monologue for a final grade.

Monday, 9: Group 1 gives its 20-minute presentation on **playwright Katori Hall** to the class. Creativity and imagination are encouraged in your presentation.

- Present your Shakespeare monologues for a grade.

HOMEWORK DUE: February 16

- Read *The Hot Wing King* by Katori Hall and prepared to discuss it in class.
- Group 2 meet to plan and research your presentation.
- Choose your second monologue from a contemporary play listed at the back of the syllabus.

Monday, 19: Discuss *The Hot Wing King* by Katori Hall with the class.

- Read scenes aloud in class.

HOMEWORK DUE: February 23

- Prepare your second monologue to present to the class. It must be memorized.
- Post the report for your second independently read play to Canvas by **Sunday, February 22 at 11:59 PM**
- Group 2 continue to plan your presentation

Wednesday, 26: Present your second monologues to the class.

MARCH

SPRING BREAK/NO CLASS

March 2-6, 2026

HOMEWORK (March 9)

- Using your notes from class, prepare your second monologue for performance.
- Group 2 meet to plan your presentation.

Monday, 9: Present your second monologues to the class.

HOMEWORK DUE: March 16

- Group 2: prepare to make your 20-minute presentation on **playwright Kimberly Bellflower** to the class.
- Group 3 meet to plan and research your presentation.
- Using your notes, prepare your second monologue for its final grade.

Monday, 23: Group 2 gives its presentation on **playwright Kimberly Bellflower** to the class. Creativity and imagination are encouraged in your presentation.

- Present your second monologues for a grade.

HOMEWORK DUE: March 30

- Read *John Proctor is the Villain* by Kimberly Bellflower and be prepared to discuss it in class.
- Choose your third one-minute monologue from the list at the back of the syllabus.
- Post your third independently read contemporary play to Canvas by **Sunday, March 29 at 11:59 PM**
- Group 3 meet to plan and research your presentation

Monday, 30: Discuss *John Proctor is the Villain* by Kimberly Bellflower with the class.

- Read scenes aloud in class.

HOMEWORK DUE: April 6

- Prepare your third contemporary monologue for class. It must be memorized.

Monday, 6:

- Present your third contemporary monologues to the class.

HOMEWORK (April 9)

- Group 3: prepare to make you 20-minute presentation on **playwright Rajiv Joseph** to the class.
- Using your notes, continue working on your monologue for class.

Monday, 13: Group 3 gives its 20-minute presentation on **playwright Rajiv Joseph** to the class. Creativity and imagination are encouraged in your presentation.

- Present your third monologues to the class.

HOMEWORK (April 16)

- Read *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* by Rajiv Joseph and be prepared to discuss it with the class.
- Using your notes, continue working on your third monologue for class.

Monday, 20: Discuss *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* by Rajiv Joseph with the class.

- Read scenes aloud in class.

HOMEWORK DUE: April 27

- Prepare for your third monologue for its final grade.
- Post the report for your fourth independently read contemporary play to Canvas by **Sunday, April 22 at 11:59 PM**

Monday, 27: Present your third monologue for a grade.

END OF CLASSES and SUMMER BREAK

PLAYS TO READ

1. A Behanding in Spokane (Martin McDonagh)
2. A Doll's House, Part 2 (Lucas Hnath)
3. A Strange Loop (Michael R. Jackson)
4. An Octoroon (Branden Jacob-Jenkins)
5. Anon(ymous) (Naomi Iizuka)
6. Appropriate (Branden Jacob-Jenkins)
7. As It Is In Heaven (Arlene Hutton)
8. August: Osage Country (Tracey Letts)
9. Barbecue (Robert O'Hara)
10. Becky Shaw (Gina Gionfriddo)

11. Between Riverside and Crazy (Stephen Adly Gurgis)
12. BFF (Anna Zeigler)
13. Blackbird (David Harrower)
14. Blood at the Root (Dominique Morisseau)
15. Bug (Tracey Letts)
16. By the Way, Meet Vera Stark (Lynn Nottage)
17. Cambodian Rock Band (Lauren Yee)
18. Chimerica (Lucy Kirkwood)
19. Choir Boy (Tarell Alvin McCraney)
20. Clybourne Park (Bruce Norris)
21. Clyde's (Lynn Nottage)
22. Collective Rage: A Play in 5 Betties (Jen Silverman)
23. Columbinus (Stephen Karam)
24. Constellations (Nick Payne)
25. Crumbs From the Table of Joy (Lynn Nottage)
26. Detroit '67 (Dominique Morisseau)
27. Disgraced (Ayad Akhtar)
28. District Merchants (adapted by Aaron Posner from William Shakespeare)
29. Doubt (John Patrick Shanley)
30. Eliot, A Soldier's Fugue (Quiara Alegria Hudes)
31. Emotional Creature (Eve Ensler)
32. Enron (Lucy Prebble)
33. Eurydice (Sarah Ruhl)
34. Father Comes Home From the Wars (Suzan-Lori Parks)
35. God of Vengeance (Donald Margulies)
36. Good People (David Lindsay-Abaire)
37. Guards of the Raj (Rajiv Joseph)
38. Hangmen (Martin McDonagh)
39. Heroes of the Fourth Turning (Will Arbery)
40. Holler River (Caridad Svich)
41. I Am My Own Wife (Doug Wright)
42. In the Continuum (Danai Gurira and Nikkole Salter)
43. In the Red and Brown Water (Tarell Alvin McCraney)
44. Jitney (August Wilson)
45. Leopoldstadt (Tom Stoppard)
46. Life Sucks (adapted by Aaron Posner from Anton Chekhov)
47. Lungs (Duncan MacMillan)
48. Men on Boats (Jaclyn Backhaus)
49. Merry Wives (adapted by Jocelyn Bioh from William Shakespeare)
50. Middletown (Will Eno)
51. Miss Bennett (Lauren Gunderson)
52. Moscow Moscow Moscow Moscow Moscow Moscow (adapted by Halley Ffeiffer from Anton Chekhov)
53. My Name is Rachel Corrie (Alan Rickman and Katharine Viner)
54. Oedipus El Rey (Luis Alfaro)
55. Ohio State Murders (Adrienne Kennedy)
56. Plano (Will Arbery)
57. Red Bike (Caridad Svich)

58. Rapture, Blister, Burn (Gina Gionfriddo)
59. Roe (Lisa Loomer)
60. Ruined (Lynn Nottage)
61. Seminar (Teresa Rebeck)
62. Skeleton Crew! (Dominique Morisseau)
63. Speech & Debate (Stephen Karam)
64. Superior Donuts (Tracey Letts)
65. Swing State (Rebecca Gilman)
66. The Aliens (Annie Baker)
67. The America Play (Suzan-Lori Parks)
68. The Book of Will (Lauren Gunderson)
69. The Brothers Size (Tarell Alvin McCraney)
70. The Christians (Lucas Hnath)
71. The Collaboration (Anthony McCarten)
72. The Effect (Lucy Prebble)
73. The Ferryman (Jez Butterworth)
74. The Great God Pan (Amy Herzog)
75. The Happiest Song Plays Last (Quiara Alegría Hudes)
76. The Humans (Stephen Karam)
77. The Inheritance, Pt. 1 and Pt. 2 (Matthew Lopez)
78. The Lehman Trilogy (Stefano Massini)
79. The Normal Heart (Larry Kramer)
80. The Pain & the Itch (Bruce Norris)
81. The Piano Lesson (August Wilson)
82. The Revolutionists (Lauren Gunderson)
83. The Thanksgiving Play (Larissa FastHorse)
84. Topdog Underdog (Suzan-Lori Parks)
85. Vietgone (Qui Nguyen)
86. Wasted (Kate Tempest)
87. Water by the Spoonful (Quiara Alegría Hudes)
88. Yellow Face (David Hwang)