



## Course Syllabus: Musical Theatre Acting

College of Fine Arts

THEA 4233

Fall 2025; TR 9:30am-10:50am

### Contact Information

Instructor: Francisco Rendon

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### Course Description

Prerequisite(s): [THEA 1233](#) [THEA 1403](#) and [THEA 2113](#). Co-requisite(s): Students will study the work of musical theatre as an actor/singer, and use class techniques to develop as a performer through solos, duets, and scenework. Since this is a workshop course, students will prepare material for class presentation and critique. Both live and prerecorded accompaniment will be utilized. There will also be a focus on the audition process and repertoire.

This lecture/performance hybrid course provides students with a comprehensive introduction to the history, style, and practice of musical theatre acting. Through contextual lectures, student-led research presentations, and guided scene and song work, students will gain an understanding of how musical theatre has evolved from operetta and revue traditions to contemporary works on the modern stage. Class meetings will balance research and performance: Tuesdays focus on discussion, analysis, and viewing highlights from representative musicals of each era, while Thursdays emphasize practical application through workshop performance and peer feedback. Students will develop skills in integrating music, text, and character, and will refine their ability to give and receive constructive criticism in a collaborative environment. The course culminates in a community-based cabaret performance and a written final exam, allowing students to synthesize historical knowledge with practical performance experience. Assessment is based on participation, workshop performances, student research presentations with written components, the cabaret project, and a final written examination.

### Course Objectives

- **Develop** a broad understanding of the history and evolution of the American musical theatre canon, from operetta and revues to contemporary works.
- **Identify and practice** performance techniques appropriate to various eras and styles, with emphasis on the integration of music, text, and character.
- **Strengthen** skills in critical listening, analysis, and discussion through engagement with musical theatre texts, scores, and filmed performances.
- **Explore** approaches to storytelling in song, including vocal style, acting technique, movement, and ensemble work.
- **Engage** with the canon while discovering the unique potential of their own artistry as singing actors.
- **Examine** performance practices through the lens of notable theatre practitioners and composers, and connect these practices to broader cultural and historical contexts.
- **Integrate** research, rehearsal, and performance into clear, expressive, and authentic presentations, culminating in both in-class workshops and a public cabaret performance.

#### Textbook & Instructional Materials

- Texts and instructional materials to be provided by the instructor through D2L and MSU email.
- Recommended but NOT required texts:  
*Acting in Musical Theatre: A Comprehensive Guide*. 2nd ed. By Joe Deer and Rocco Dal Vera. Routledge, 2016.  
*Acting the Song: Performance Skills for the Musical Theatre*. 2nd ed. By Tracey Moore and Allison Bergman. Allworth Press, 2016.

#### Student Handbook

Refer to: MSU Student Handbook 2023-2024

[https://msutexas.edu/student-life/\\_assets/files/handbook.pdf](https://msutexas.edu/student-life/_assets/files/handbook.pdf)

#### Conduct Statement

Behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instruction will result in the instructor's removing the disruptive student(s) from the class, either temporarily or permanently (instructor drop), and receive a final lower grade, up to an F. In addition, and depending on the nature of the behavior or conduct, the student(s) may be subject to further disciplinary actions as per MSU policies.

### Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

The university policy and procedures for academic dishonesty are outlined in the current Student Handbook in Appendix E. No cheating, collusion, or plagiarism will be tolerated in this class. Any student engaging in an academic dishonesty act will be sanctioned appropriately.

### AI Policy

The MSU Student Handbook covers Academic Honesty under University Policies and Procedures. Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating, collusion, and plagiarism.

- Cheating is (1) the use of any unauthorized assistance, (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor, or (3) acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material.
- Plagiarism is the use of another person's published or unpublished work without full and clear acknowledgment.
- Collusion is collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit if the faculty member in charge does not authorize that collaboration.

Use of AI to assist in the completion of assignment will not be allowed or tolerated in this course.

### Student Privacy Statement

Federal law prohibits the instructor from releasing information about students to parties outside the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases the instructor will not discuss a student's academic progress or other matters with his/her parents without the proper release from students.

### Title IX Statement

#### Obligation to Report Sex Discrimination under State and Federal Law

Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University's Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting:

Laura Hetrick

Title IX Coordinator  
Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse  
940-397-4213  
laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu

You may also file an online report 24/7 at  
[https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MSUTexas&layout\\_id=6](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MSUTexas&layout_id=6)

Should you wish to visit with someone about your experience in confidence, you may contact the MSU Counseling Center at 940-397-4618. For more information on the University's policy on Title IX or sexual misconduct, please visit  
<https://msutexas.edu/titleix/>

### Pregnant and Parenting Students

To support the academic success of pregnant and parenting students and students with pregnancy related conditions, the University offers reasonable modifications based on the student's particular needs. Any student who is pregnant or parenting a child up to age 18 or has conditions related to pregnancy, may contact MSU's designated Pregnancy and Parenting Liaison to discuss support available through the University. The Liaison can be reached by emailing [ruby.garrett@msutexas.edu](mailto:ruby.garrett@msutexas.edu) or calling 940-397-4500. Should a student communicate with me that they are pregnant or have a pregnancy related condition or may need additional resources related to pregnancy or parenting, I will communicate that student's information to the Title IX Coordinator, who will work with the student and others, as needed, to ensure equal access to the University's education program or activity.

A pregnant student, a parenting student, or a student with pregnancy related conditions may be provided with supportive measures, based on the student's individualized needs, analogous to those provided to a student with a temporary medical condition, and provided such supportive measures do not fundamentally alter the nature of an education program or activity. Such supportive measures may include, but are not limited to:

#### *For pregnant students:*

- (1) Providing breaks during class to express breast milk, breastfeed, or attend to health needs associated with pregnancy or related conditions, including eating, drinking, or using the restroom;
- (2) Excusing intermittent absences to attend medical appointments;
- (3) Providing access to online or homebound education, including the providing of access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures (to the extent such materials, recordings are made available to any student with an excused absence);

- (4) Facilitating changes in schedule or course sequence, including extensions of time for coursework and rescheduling of tests and examinations and/or providing opportunity to make up missed assignments/assessments (such time extensions shall be applied in the same manner as the University grants and provides ADA/504 accommodations for additional time);
- (5) Allowing a student to sit or stand, or carry or keep water nearby;
- (6) Offering counseling;
- (7) Facilitating changes in physical space or supplies (for example, access to a larger desk or a footrest);
- (8) Allowing the student to maintain a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals or unborn children;
- (9) Providing elevator access;
- (10) Facilitating a voluntary leave of absence from the University if the student is in good academic standing at the time the student takes a leave of absence, and facilitating a return to the student's degree or certificate program without being required to reapply for admission if the student remains in good academic standing; or
- (11) Making other necessary changes to policies, practices, or procedures.

*For Parenting Students:*

- (1) Facilitating priority registration to the extent the University provides early registration for any other group of students; or
- (2) Facilitating a voluntary leave of absence from the University if the student is in good academic standing at the time the student takes a leave of absence, and facilitating a return to the student's degree or certificate program without being required to reapply for admission.

### Grading

Grades will be comprised of class participation (20%), workshop performances (15%), two student research presentations (20%), written presentation components (10%), a final community cabaret performance (20%), and a written final exam (15%). The student is allowed two absences per semester. Three late arrivals equal one absence. Any additional absences will result in a 10% reduction from the final grade. 90% or above=A, 80% or above =B, 70% or above=C, 60% or above=D and 59% or below=F.

Table 1: Percentages allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Percentage
Class Participation	20%
Workshop Performances	15%
Student Research Presentations	20%
Written Presentations	10%
Cabaret Performance	20%
Final Exam	15%
Total Percentage	100%

Table 2: Total percentage for final grade.

Grade	Percentage
A	90% or above
B	80%-89%
C	70%-79%
D	60%-69%
F	Less than 60%

#### Student Presentations

Twice during the semester, you will give a research presentation on one of the musicals we are studying. Your presentation will include both an oral delivery in class and a written component (2–3 pages, outline, or notes) turned in on the day you present. These presentations are designed to deepen your understanding of musical theatre history, strengthen your research and communication skills, and give you practice in leading class discussion. Together, the oral and written components of your two presentations will count as 30% of your final grade.

#### Cabaret “style” Performance

At the end of the semester, you will participate in a community-based cabaret performance. This capstone project allows you to apply the skills you have developed throughout the course—integrating research, rehearsal, and performance in a real-world setting. The cabaret emphasizes collaboration, professionalism, and audience engagement while giving you the opportunity to showcase your artistry outside the classroom. The cabaret performance will count as 20% of your final grade.

#### Final Exam

During finals week, you will complete a written exam covering the musicals and eras studied throughout the semester. The exam will focus on identifying similarities and differences in stylistic components of musical theatre, including but not limited to acting styles, musical styles, vocal styles, composition, and libretto writing. This exam is designed to measure your ability to synthesize

historical and performance knowledge into clear analysis. The final exam will count as 15% of your final grade.

#### MSU Productions and Extra Credit

Attend the MSU plays and musicals this semester *Blithe Spirit* and *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* Your ticket is free to both of these shows with your validated Midwestern Student ID. Seating may be limited for these productions, please ensure you reserve your tickets early. An analysis bonus paper analyzing the use of voice and diction in the production will be due within one week of the productions final performance. (an additional 5% will be added to your final grade) Papers are due within one week of the closing of the show. Must write papers for both shows to receive credit.

#### Late Work

Late work will be accepted with a letter grade deduction for each day it is late.

#### Make Up Work/Tests

Students with approved absences (school travel, doctors note) will be given one week to make up missed assignments and tests.

#### Important Dates

Last day to drop a class with 100% refund: September 8, 2025

Deadline to file for December graduation: September 22, 2025

Deadline to file for May graduation: October 6, 2025

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" November 24, 2025

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

#### Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

The use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program.

#### Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor. The student is allowed two absences per semester. Three late arrivals will equal one absence. Any additional absences will result in a 10% reduction from the final grade.

#### Sickness Policy

Your health and the wellbeing of the class are priorities. If you have a fever, please remain home until it has broken. If you test positive for COVID-19, follow the recommended quarantine period; upon returning, mask-wearing is strongly recommended for several days, though not required. For serious or ongoing

medical conditions, seek medical care and provide documentation so that I can best support your learning experience.

#### Weather Policy

In the event of a university closure due to weather, class may be moved to a virtual format (via Zoom, Teams, etc.) if a lecture or discussion was scheduled. If the missed class was a practicum day, it may be canceled. Updates will be communicated through D2L and university email.

#### Instructor Class Policies

##### Course Requirements

1. Participation: Active participation is expected in all class discussions, research presentations, viewings, and workshop performances. Your consistent engagement is essential for both your own growth and the collaborative nature of this course. Students should be prepared to contribute to dialogue around the historical and stylistic significance of each work.
2. Preparation and Practice: Students are expected to come prepared for all Thursday workshop sessions with memorized selections, scene work, or assignments as directed. Regular rehearsal outside of class is necessary to support in-class performance work.
3. Presentations and Written Components: Each student will complete two research presentations over the course of the semester. Presentations must include both an oral delivery and a written outline or mini-paper turned in on the day of the presentation.

#### General Notes

This class is an opportunity to step away from the outside world and fully engage in the study and practice of musical theatre performance. Devices may be used for notetaking or research, but please refrain from texting, browsing, or social media during class. Being present in the room allows you to connect fully with your peers, the material, and the work we are creating together.

Students should wear comfortable clothing and footwear suitable for movement, rehearsal, and performance work. On days when you are performing, dress in a way that supports your presentation while still allowing for freedom of movement.

No gum or food. Please always bring water to drink.



### Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

### Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

### Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

### College Policies

#### Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law.

#### Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

#### Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees

are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

#### Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

#### Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

#### Course Schedule:

Week	Tuesday (Lecture, Research, Viewing, Discussion)	Thursday (MT Workshop)
Week 1 Aug 26 & 28	Course Introduction: syllabus overview, historical eras, Introduction & Analyzing Musical Theatre Across Eras	Etiquette & Feedback: professional conduct, peer critique. Students perform 30–60 sec. selection (masterclass).
Week 2 Sept 2 & 4	Pre-1939 (Instructor Presentation): Operetta & Revues. Context and text/score examples.	Workshop — early MT style, revue performance, operetta vocal/acting choices.
Week 3 Sept 9 & 11	Pre-1939 (Instructor Presentation): Show Boat and the rise of integrated musicals.	Workshop — perform/showcase early MT excerpts, explore story-song integration.
Week 4 Sept 16 & 18	Golden Age (Student Presentation): Oklahoma!	Workshop — Golden Age acting style, integration of music, dance, and narrative.
Week 5 Sept 23 & 25	Golden Age (Student Presentation): West Side Story	Workshop — movement-driven acting, heightened conflict, ensemble work.
Week 6 Sept 30 & Oct 2	Post-Golden Age (Student Presentation): Cabaret	Workshop — Brechtian style, breaking 4th wall, commentary vs. character.
Week 7 Oct 7 & 9	Post-Golden Age (Student Presentation): Hair	Workshop — rock vocal style, ensemble storytelling, counterculture themes.
Week 8 Oct 14 & 16	“Mega-musicals” (Student Presentation): Les Misérables	Workshop — sung-through acting, epic scale, ensemble arc.
Week 9 Oct 21 & 23	“Mega-musicals” (Student Presentation): Phantom of the Opera	Workshop — melodrama, romantic style, spectacle vs. intimacy.

Week	Tuesday (Lecture, Research, Viewing, Discussion)	Thursday (MT Workshop)
Week 10 Oct 28 & 30	Disney & New Renaissance (Student Presentation): The Lion King	Workshop — physical theatre, ritual, stylized ensemble work.
Week 11 Nov 4 & 6	Disney & New Renaissance (Student Presentation): Rent	Workshop — realism, contemporary acting style, conversational singing.
Week 12 Nov 11 & 13	Contemporary (Student Presentation): Wicked	Workshop — modern vocal technique (belt/mix), archetypes, friendship narratives.
Week 13 Nov 18 & 20	Contemporary (Student Presentation): Hamilton	Workshop — rap diction, rhythm, ensemble synergy, casting and storytelling.
Week 14 Nov 25	Cabaret Unit Begins: Intro to cabaret history, brainstorm themes, finalize song choices.	<b>No class – Thanksgiving</b>
Week 15 Dec 2 & 4	Cabaret Rehearsal & Final Exam Review	Cabaret Performance – Date, Time, Location - TBD (community venue).
Finals Week Dec 9	<i>Final Written Exam</i> (Tues, 8:00AM to 10:00AM)	<i>HAVE A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY!</i>

#### Important Dates

Assignment Due	Date	Percentage of Final Grade
"Cabaret" Style Performance	TBD	20%
Final Exam (Written)	Tuesday, December 9 <sup>th</sup> 2025 – 8AM-10AM	15%