



## THEA 1740

**Division:** Fine Arts

**Department:** Theater Arts

**Course:** THEA 1740

**Title:** Survey of Musical Theatre

**Catalog Description:**

This course explores the origins of musical theatre, its historical and cultural evolution, and its significance in the contemporary American theatre. Emphasis will be upon the collaboration among librettists, composers, lyricists, producers, directors, choreographers, and performing artists necessary to bring musical theatre to the stage.

**General Education Requirements:** Fine Arts

**Semesters Offered:** Fall, Spring

**Credit/Time Requirement:** Credit: 3; Lecture: 3; Lab: 0

**Clock/Hour Requirements:** 0

**Offered for Non-Credit:** No

**Prerequisites:** N/A

**Corequisites:** N/A

**Justification:**

As a comprehensive art form that combines literature, music, and dance, an understanding of the contribution each of these elements makes to musical theatre enhances their appreciation not only by students majoring in these respective disciplines but by the general education student as well. The influence of historical events and cultural dynamics on musical theatre and vice-versa is also worthy of examination by any major or general education student. This course is found in lower division course curricula in theatre programs nationwide including The University of Utah (Theatre 1740); BYU (TMA 300); and Weber State University (THEA CA1043) where it fulfills a Fine Arts general education requirement at all three institutions. At Snow College it fulfills a major requirement for theatre arts majors, meets FA General Education outcomes, and otherwise satisfies elective credit criteria.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

As a result of this course, using written and oral communication methods, students will be able to:

- trace the development of musical theatre from its origins in Greek drama, through Renaissance Opera, to Operetta, minstrelsy, revues, and culminating in the contemporary American musical
- identify the forces --cultural, political, social-- that have influenced the form, style and production of musical theatre from Greek drama to the present and, conversely, the influence musical theatre has had

upon cultural, political, and social mores over time

- recognize the individual and collective roles that libretto, lyrics, orchestration and choreography play in the crafting and production of musical theatre
- identify the distinguishing characteristics of opera, operetta, minstrelsy, the revue, musical comedy, and musical theatre
- identify the contributions major librettists, lyricists, composers, and choreographers have made to musical theatre
- describe the production practices and conventions unique to musical theatre.
- analyze and critique musical theatre in text and performance
- appreciate musical theatre from a sensory, intellectual, cultural, and personal point-of-view.

### **Content:**

This course will typically include lecture, class discussion, and written and oral interpretive feedback methods of the following subjects:

- The Greek Chorus and Music
- Nineteenth-Century and European Influences
- Operettas, *The Black Crook*, and George M. Cohan
- The Ziegfeld Follies, and Kern and Hammerstein
- George and Ira Gershwin
- Harlem Renaissance
- Early Revues and Tin Pan Alley/Songwriters of the 1930's
- Rodgers & Hart, and Well-Known Performers of the 1930's
- Patriotism, and Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Frank Loesser, Meredith Willson and Sherman Edwards
- Lerner & Loewe, and the Early Choreographers
- Rodgers & Hammerstein
- Politics on Broadway
- Leonard Bernstein, and Broadway's Classical Composers
- Film Musicals--Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, Arthur Freed Unit of MGM Studios
- Styne, Herman, and Merrill; Broadway Producers, and *A Chorus Line*
- Bock & Harnick, and Yiddish Influence on American Musicals
- Big Band Sounds on the Stage
- Broadway Performers, and Lesser-Known Creators of Musicals
- Rock Musicals
- Kander & Ebb, and Significant Choreographers
- Stephen Sondheim
- British, Disney, and Mega-Musicals
- Contemporary Musical Comedies and Musical Theatre
- Contemporary Revues and Broadway Revivals
- New works on Broadway.

### **General Education Outcomes:**

2) Write clearly, informatively, and persuasively.

Through a series of written essays, students will be required to evaluate selected libretti, reviews, and live and recorded productions of selected musicals. These responses are based on criteria that will be presented in class lectures, discussions, and text book reading. The essays will be read, graded, and written comments and suggestions given back to the students.

3) Speak effectively in a variety of contexts.

Students will be required to participate in formal, oral, and group presentations on selected topics in addition to their participation in regular class discussions. A question and answer session will follow each formal group presentation after which the presentations will be graded and written suggestions for improvement on subsequent presentations will be provided to the students.

5) Apply a cultural and historical awareness to a variety of phenomena.

The course will focus upon the process of historical change in twentieth century America from the late nineteenth century to the twenty-first, tracing the evolution of the modern American musical in its historical and cultural context. Additionally, the contemporary musical is heavily influenced by African, Latin, American, and Asian music and theatrical conventions and this melding of multi-cultural influences will be emphasized. Understanding musical theatre from a literary, musical, historical, and cultural point of view will result in refined and knowledgeable responses from both aesthetic and intellectual perspectives on the part of students who take this class and subsequently view and participate in musical theatre.

9) Respond with informed sensitivity to an artistic work or experience.

Students will be required to identify and critique in class discussion and through written essays the styles of dance, music, and acting and their artistic success and unified integration into selected musicals viewed in class and live musical theatre performances assigned outside of class.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

- Regular attendance at and contribution to class discussion (5% of total grade).
- Written critiques of libretti assigned and productions viewed (12% of total grade).
- One objective quiz per each unit of course content study (20% of total grade).
- Midterm examination: Objective assessment of the historical, cultural, and artistic influences upon the form and style of musical theatre through the early twentieth century (20% of total grade).
- Term paper: Research a major period, librettist, lyricist, or choreographer in musical theatre history (10% of total grade).
- Formal presentation (10% of total grade).
- Final examination: Objective assessment of the historical, cultural, and artistic influences upon the form and style of musical theatre from the early twentieth century (20% of total grade).
- Subsequent attendance at musical theatre, dance, and music concert productions 3% of total grade).

Percentage values are approximate.

**Representative Text and/or Supplies:**

- *Broadway: The American Musical* NY: Bullfinch Press, current edition (text and companion DVDs).

**Optimum Class Size: 30**

**Maximum Class Size: 50**

**Signatures:**

I hereby submit this course syllabus:

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Kim Christison, PhD, Professor

I hereby find this course consistent with the goals and resources of the Theater Arts Department:

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Kim Christison, PhD, Professor, Chair

I hereby find this course consistent with the goals and resources of the Fine Arts Division:

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Vance Larsen, MM, Associate Professor, Dean

I have discussed the need for library resources related to this class with the person submitting the syllabus:

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Lynn Anderson, MLIS, Technical Services Librarian (Main Campus)

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Michelle Olsen, MLS, Campus Librarian (Richfield Campus)