THEATER 110 – History of American Musical Theater  (5 units)
Dr. David Gorshein
UCLA Theater Department

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Class Website:  https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/191A-THEATER110-1

**Course Description**
This course surveys the history of the American musical, by examining its early roots in various performance forms, and its evolution throughout the twentieth century. By contextualizing the “Golden Age” history of the Broadway musical in terms of its global reach today, the course offers a fresh take on pivotal shifts in the American theater.

This class centers around a series of video lectures that were recorded by beloved former Theater professor Gary Gardner. Professor Gardner passed away in 2013, but we are delighted that his passion for the theater, his wit, his vast knowledge and his love of teaching can live on in this class. David Gorshein from the UCLA Theater Department will lead the summer online course.

This class is fully asynchronous. Students do not need to be online at a specific time or report to a physical location for any portion of the class.

**How Class Works**
Students watch lectures via web browser, and two lectures are assigned each week. Lecture videos are available from the first day of class and can be watched and re-watched at any time throughout the course. Mandatory reading assignments and optional screenings accompany all lectures. A midterm paper and a final paper determine the final grade.

Dr. Gorshein will also post video messages throughout the class.

**Readings and Screenings**
Reading assignments accompany the lectures and include primary historical sources and secondary articles and chapters. These will be available through the Class Website. No textbook purchase is required.
Recommended films can be streamed at low resolution from the Class Website. Films chosen for assignments or papers should be viewed at full quality on DVD or via web services such as iTunes or Netflix.

**Assignments and Grade Breakdown**
Your grade will be based on the following assignments:

- *Midterm paper, 1000-1250 words* 40%
- *Final paper, 1500-2000 words* 60%

Papers will be submitted to Turnitin via the course website. Grades will be posted on the MyUCLA Gradebook one week after each assignment is due.

There will be an extra credit opportunity to share a video of you performing for our class. The video must be uploaded by the end of Week 5. The extra credit will count for up to 2% additional points on your final grade. You must also comment on two of your fellow students’ performances to receive the extra credit. See the course website for instructions.

**Late Policy:** Please note that each paper is due not only on a particular day but by a particular time. Late papers will be marked down half a letter grade (5 points). Papers submitted more than 24 hours late will be docked 10 points, and papers submitted more than 48 hours late will NOT be accepted, except in case of documented illness or emergency.

**Academic Integrity**
Any written assignment must be solely the work of the student who turns it in. Compiling a written assignment by pasting together extracts from websites is unacceptable and is a form of plagiarism. **EVERY PAPER MUST BE SUBMITTED THROUGH TURNITIN.** The course website explains how to do this.

UCLA’s policies on academic integrity and student conduct may be found at: [http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Student-Conduct-Code](http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Student-Conduct-Code)

Submissions are screened for improper citations and potential plagiarism. Quotes or ideas paraphrased from other work must be properly cited.

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**
Students needing academic accommodations based on a disability should contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310) 825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible, students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information visit [www.caee.ucla.edu](http://www.caee.ucla.edu). Disability accommodations needs should be communicated to the instructor and/or Teaching Assistant before assignments are due unless there are extenuating circumstances. These policies apply to both matriculated UCLA students and visitors in Summer Session.
SCHEDULE

Week One

Lesson 1: Setting the Stage

Readings:

Profile of George M. Cohan, Parts I and II, New Yorker, 1934


Recommended Viewing:

Yankee Doodle Dandee, 1942, Directed by Michael Curtiz

Lesson 2: The Roots of Musical Theater

Readings:


Sullivan, “Shuffle Along’ and the Lost History of Black Performance in America”

Recommended Viewing:

The Great Ziegfeld, 1936, Directed by Robert Z. Leonard

Till The Clouds Roll By, 1946, Directed by George Sidney, Richard Whorf

Behind the Scenes at Shuffle Along, 2015, CBS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUjbZ0KO4SE

Week Two

Lesson 3: What Made the Twenties Roar

Readings:

Miller, “I Want to Be Happy: The 1920s,” Strike up the Band

Decker, "Do you Want to Hear a Mammy Song?": A Historiography of Show Boat,” Contemporary Theatre Review, 2009
No No, Nanette, New Yorker, 1971

Recommended Viewing:

Showboat, 1951, Directed by George Sidney

Lesson 4: The Gershwins

Readings:


Recommended Viewing:

Suzan-Lori Parks on Porgy and Bess, NY Times video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uKy22g7oZc

Rhapsody in Blue, 1945, Directed by Irving Rapper

Week Three

Lesson 5: Porter’s Dirty Songs and Rodgers & Hart

Readings:


Rodgers and Hart Profile Part I, New Yorker, 1938

Rodgers and Hart Profile Part II, New Yorker, 1938

Recommended Viewing:

Words and Music, 1948, Directed by Norman Taurog

De-Lovely! 2004, Directed by Irwin Winkler

Lesson 6: Rodgers & Hammerstein!

Readings:
Hunter, “Blitzstein’s ‘The Cradle Will Rock’ as a Document of America, 1937”

Purdum, “Prologue: All They Cared About Was the Show,” Something Wonderful, 2018

Agnes de Mille Profile, New Yorker, 1946

Recommended Viewing:

Oklahoma! 1955, Directed by Fred Zinnemann

Cradle Will Rock, 1999, Directed by Tim Robbins

Cinderella, 1997, Directed by Robert Iscove

**Week Four**

Midterm paper due Monday of Week 4 at 6 pm.

**Lesson 7: The 1940s**

Readings:

On The Town Review, New York Times, 1944


South Pacific Review, New York Times, 1949

Purdum, “Enchanted Evening,” Something Wonderful, 2018

Recommended Viewing:

South Pacific (1958)

*Allegiance: The Trek to Broadway*

**Lesson 8: The Early 1950s**

Readings:


The King and I Review, New York Times, 1951


Recommended Viewing:

Damn Yankees, 1958, Directed by George Abbott & Stanley Donen


Week Five

Lesson 9: The Golden Age

Readings:

Hanson, “Oliver Smith’s Scenic Choreography,” 2009


Conversations With Sondheim, New York Times, 2000

Recommended Viewing:

Gypsy, 2015, Directed by Jonathan Kent

Long Story Short, 2009, Directed by Christine Choy (available via Alexander Street)

Lesson 10: The 1960s

Readings:


Recommended Viewing:
Hair, 1979, Directed by Miloš Forman

Carol Channing: Larger than Life, 2012, Directed by Dori Berinstein

Week Six

Lesson 11: Changing the American Musical

Readings:

Wolf, “The 1970s: ‘Everything was Beautiful at the Ballet,’” Changed for Good, 2011

Jacobs, “Sondheim and the City: In a Rethought ‘Company,’ a Woman Wavers,” New York Times, 2018


Recommended Viewing:

Six by Sondheim, 2013, Directed by James Lapine

Every Little Step, 2008, Directed by James Stern

Company West End trailer
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O681zACSYT0

Lesson 12: What Happens Now?

Readings:


Ragtime Review, Los Angeles Times, 2019

Recommended Viewing:
*Hamilton’s America*, 2016, Directed by Alex Horwitz

*Rent: Filmed Live on Broadway*, 2008, Directed by Michael Warren

*Broadway Idiot*, 2013, Directed by Doug Hamilton

Final paper due Friday of Week 6 at 6 pm.