

**CHIARTS THEATRE CONSERVATORY
MUSICAL THEATRE MAJOR COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
AUGUST 2016
ROB CHAMBERS, THEATRE DEPARTMENT HEAD**

The Musical Theatre Program is designed to train actors in a wide range of skills, techniques and experiences to provide a broad overview of theatrical performance, practice, history and literature. The overall arc of the program is to begin by establishing a foundation in the first year, moving into progressively more challenging work in years two and three, and finally exploring each student's unique artistic voice in the final year. The end goal is to provide a high level of instruction and experiences that prepare students for further study at the college level or entrance into the profession.

1st Year - Foundations

Acting I (2 semesters)

Students explore making strong choices and taking risks as individual performers and as an ensemble, using improvisation as a foundation in the first semester and story theatre in the second. The basics of character development, scenic construction, and dramatic agreement are explored using body, voice, and imagination to create fully realized and committed characters. Using techniques drawn from multiple theatrical backgrounds and pioneers, students heighten their connection to sensory life, environment and relationship in order to strengthen their creativity, imagination and understanding of human behavior. They develop skills related to scenic objectives, listening, impulse, problem solving, physical and verbal communication and given circumstances. They take the skills developed through improvisation in the first half of the year and apply them to text work in the second semester. Performance Requirements: Freshman Preview (Fall) and Musical Theatre Curtain Call (Spring).

Dance I (2 semesters)

An introduction to dance technique as it applies to Musical Theatre performance with a focus on proper body alignment, placement and conditioning, Musical Theatre dance vocabulary, and moving as part of an ensemble. Performance Requirements: Freshman Preview (Fall) and Musical Theatre Curtain Call (Spring).

Vocal Technique & Repertoire I (2 semesters)

In this progression of courses, students will lay a lifetime foundation of healthy vocal habits. The class covers exercises that introduce Alexander Technique/Body Mapping for singers developing posture and breath management, production of sound in the three vocal registers (head, middle voice, and chest), diction and International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), ear training for singers, sight reading with solfege, and musical expression. Students also study vocal literature to actively apply these concepts. Performance Requirements: Freshman Preview (Fall) and Musical Theatre Curtain Call (Spring).

Music Theory & Keyboard Fundamentals (2 semesters)*

This course introduces students to treble and bass clefs, rhythmic notation, simple meters, intervals, the construction of major and minor scales, key signatures, and triads. Aural recognition of these musical elements also is a significant component of this course. Students further develop their music theory skills through application on the piano.

Junior Choir (2 semesters)

This course is a performance-driven course for Vocal and Musical Theatre majors. Singing is invaluable for sharpening the inner ear and creating greater awareness of the body as an instrument. No prior singing ensemble experience is necessary and all students are guided in how to make music with their voices in a healthy way. Sessions include exercises on posture, breathing, singing in different registers of the voice, and diction, as well as exposure to a wide variety of choral repertoire. Performance Requirements: Large Vocal Ensemble Concerts (Fall and Spring).

2nd Year –Musical Theatre pre-1970s

Acting II (2 semesters)

This course introduces students to the work of Constantin Stanislavski and elements of dramatic text analysis including beats, objectives, tactics, obstacles, given circumstances and previous action to aid the student actor creating recognizable human behavior, action and theatrical worlds. They also work on dramaturgical research in order to fully understand the world of the play and the circumstances in which it was written and has been performed. The course also helps students to integrate acting technique and narrative through scenes, songs and dances of a musical through collaboration with the Vocal Techniques and Repertoire instructors using works from the musical theatre canon up through the 1960s. In each semester, the main text is an abridged version of a musical from that period. Performance Requirements: Winter Musical Theatre Showcase (Fall) and Musical Theatre Curtain Call (Spring).

Dance II (2 semesters)

A continuation of the previous year's study with an emphasis on increasing technical skills in jazz and ballet dance, and the application of these techniques to choreographed dance works from Musical Theatre repertoire up through the 1960s. Performance Requirements: Winter Musical Theatre Showcase (Fall) and Musical Theatre Curtain Call (Spring).

Vocal Technique & Repertoire II (2 semesters)

A continuation of the first year's study with the addition of repertoire from the Musical Theatre repertoire up through the 1960s. Students begin learning basic vocal pedagogy, including the structure of posture, breathing, laryngeal structure and articulation, and they continue music theory work introduced in the first year. Performance Requirements: Winter Musical Theatre Showcase (Fall) and Musical Theatre Curtain Call (Spring).

Scene Study I (2 semesters)

An acting class that focuses on non-musical theatre repertoire including monologues and scenes by a variety of playwrights. Students are introduced to dramatic text analysis including beats, objectives, tactics, obstacles, given circumstances, and left page analysis. Students are expected to incorporate the work they do in scene study into their regular acting class.

Musical Theatre History & Literature (2 semesters)*

This class is a survey of Western musical theatrical history, drama and practices from late 19th century through modern day. Students study the social, political, cultural and historical influences of each period to understand the context in which theatre was created. Likewise, they explore the means by which theatre was produced and practiced including theatre companies, acting styles, design and architecture. They also study the musical theatre literature of each period including a critical analysis of each text.

3rd Year – Contemporary Musical Theatre

Acting III (2 semesters)

Using the musical theatre canon post-1960s, the class focuses on refining acting choices when performing solo, in scene, or in song. As in the sophomore year, the class works with the students' Vocal Techniques and Repertoire and Dance instructors to approach all angles of the selected abridged version of a musical as the cornerstone of the repertoire. Students use the librettos and lyrics as springboards into character development and scenic arc, breaking down the beats of the work to put it back together as a more cohesive whole, and building upon the previous years to emphasize honesty, specificity and choice in their acting. Performance Requirements: Winter Musical Theatre Showcase (Fall) and Musical Theatre Curtain Call (Spring).

Dance III (2 semesters)

A continuation of the previous year's dance study with an emphasis on integrating techniques from other disciplines, and the application of these techniques on choreographed dance works from post-1960s Musical Theatre repertoire. Performance Requirements: Winter Musical Theatre Showcase (Fall) and Musical Theatre Curtain Call (Spring).

Vocal Technique and Repertoire III (2 semesters)

Further exploration of vocal music techniques including repertoire from the Musical Theatre repertoire post-1960s. Students continue to build and develop their music theory work and refine their vocal production. They begin to develop a portfolio of work that can be used in college and professional auditions. Performance Requirements: Winter Musical Theatre Showcase (Fall) and Musical Theatre Curtain Call (Spring).

Theatrical Stagecraft (1 semester)

Theatrical Stagecraft will provide students with an overview of the theatrical production process with an emphasis on exploring the various components and responsibilities associated with production, theatrical organizations and the fundamental skills required for serving on a stage crew (sets, lights, costumes, sound, props and make-up).

Theatrical Design (1 semester)

A continuation of the work begun in Theatrical Stagecraft, the emphasis of this course is on the various design elements of production (scenery, costumes, lighting, sound and props) and the process of creating a design based on a theatrical text.

Professional Development (2 semesters)*

Students explore the process of college research, selection, and preparation for college auditions as well as an introduction to entrance into the profession including an overview of the business of acting and audition preparation.

4th Year - Artistic Voice and the Future

Senior Project (2 semesters)

The creation and presentation of two senior showcases. In the Fall, students will present an Audition Showcase featuring monologues and songs to be used for college and professional auditions. Following that, students and instructor will devise an original one-act musical as a final ensemble project to be presented in the Spring. Performance Requirements: Senior Audition Showcase (Fall) and Senior Project (Spring).

Dance IV (2 semesters)

A continuation of the previous year's study with an integration of techniques from tap, contemporary, composition, and a high focus on college audition preparation.

Vocal Technique & Repertoire IV

Further exploration of vocal techniques and musical styles, with a focus on popular genres of the 20th century. In the first semester, additional work is done towards preparing college audition material; in the second semester, guidance is provided for the musical portion of Senior Project. Performance Requirements: Senior Audition Showcase (Fall) and Senior Project (Spring).

Acting IV (2 semesters)*

Advanced acting and the development of a cohesive personal technique is explored through acting theory, monologues, collaboration/solo performance, scene study and ensemble acting with an emphasis on using works by contemporary playwrights with unique artistic voices.

* Credit bearing course required for graduation.

Students must achieve at least a D in every Conservatory course every semester or they are in jeopardy of repeating the ENTIRE YEAR'S Conservatory sequence in the following year. This may result in not graduating on time.