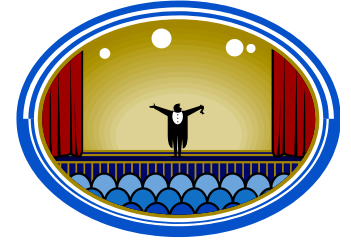


# The Golden Age of Musicals

## ASEM 2694



Winter 2013  
JMAC 114; T/TH 10:00-11:50 am

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Office Hours: T/TH 1:30-3:30 pm; by appt.

### Seminar Description:

This seminar explores the beginnings and development of mid-century canonical musical theatre in America and its relation to its surrounding social milieu by examining selected productions and their creators, as well as the genre's overall construct, content, character, cultural import, and contemporary relevance. The course will follow a chronological organization to assist you in following the development of musical theatre as it reached the pinnacle of its popularity during the "Golden Age" (1943-1964). Viewing videos of musical theatre works (most adapted to film), along with required readings, writing assignments (essays/response papers), in-class presentations, live performance attendance, and creative projects will provide a platform for studying and analyzing the history, development, import, and current manifestations of this particular art form.

In addition, through this ASEM course, you should learn to

- Demonstrate the ability to integrate and apply content from multiple perspectives to an appropriate intellectual topic or issue (musical theatre genre, practice, artists, history, and milieu)
- Write effectively, providing appropriate evidence and reasoning for assertions

### Required Purchases and Resources:

- Textbook = PDF version of **Backstage Pass** (preliminary edition manuscript) on *Blackboard* (if you desire hardcopy versions of reading assignments, you will need to print the material yourself)
- Ticket to one live professional musical performance. Prices vary widely, with a range of \$25 to \$75. The two production options are listed in the *Writing Toolbox* on *Blackboard*. Ask box offices about student discounts or "rush" ticket opportunities; theatre links are on *Blackboard*.
- Ticket to **Fiddler on the Roof** by the DU Theatre Department & Lamont School of Music, running 2/28, 3/1, 2, 8, 9, 10 – buy tickets at **Newman Center Box Office (303) 871-7720** or online ([www.newmantix.com](http://www.newmantix.com)). Ask about ushering opportunities for free tickets; there is a link to the box office on *Blackboard*.
- Core video viewings, streamed through CourseMedia

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS:

**1. ATTENDANCE:** Attendance will be taken every day and is 10% of your grade. If attendance is going to be a problem, please drop this class.

**2. PARTICIPATION / CITIZENRY:** Participation in this seminar is crucial. Responsible participation and good citizenry includes attentive viewing of video/media material and active listening to the lecture and your classmates; while timeliness is a sign of respect and courtesy to the entire class. **Further, if you are asked questions about assigned readings and viewings and cannot respond, it will affect your participation grade.** Following is the **10-point grading rubric** for participation/citizenry:

9-10	Actively participated, often contributed to discussions, on time, and courteous/attentive of others
8-9	Dutifully participated, semi-regularly contributed to discussions, on time, and courteous/attentive
7-8	Seldom participated, occasionally contributed to discussions, on time, and courteous/attentive
6-7	Participated and contributed only when absolutely required, on time, and courteous/attentive
0-6	Failed in regards to participation, contribution, promptness, and/or courtesy/attention

**3. POP QUIZZES:** All reading/viewing assignments are due by the date specified in the syllabus so that we may discuss them in class. To facilitate this, there will be **"reflection" pop quizzes** given periodically regarding the textbook material and/or musical scheduled for discussion. **DU's Fiddler on the Roof** will have a quiz as well. **TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE FOR QUIZ = 4**

**4. IN-SEMINAR PERFORMER PRESENTATIONS:** You will be required, **with a teammate**, to present a profile of a performer who originally starred in one of our core-viewing musicals (or you may choose another star performer who appeared on Broadway at the same time of the production). The presentation will occur on the day we discuss the specific musical and should last no more than **15 minutes**. It must **include a 1-page "outline" handout for each individual's contribution (that is, you must each supply an independent outline for your own material)**. The presentation (including the outline) will be graded individually for comprehensiveness and effectiveness at bringing the star to life. **This is not to be a Wikipedia recitation but should include original and creative research and findings!** The purpose of the presentation is to introduce the class to the iconic performers of the Golden Age, chronicle their careers, define their particular talents, pinpoint their historical significance, and raise interest and/or question as to their places in the musical theatre canon. You must make a valid argument as to why these performers mattered. **(10-point grade scale)**

**3. RESPONSE PAPER:** You are required to write a personal response in essay form to a core viewing. You will choose one to watch early – *Show Boat* and *Crazy for You* are not options, OR you may choose a supplemental video option listed in Writing Toolbox. The paper should be **3-4 pages** in length. You will be **required to rewrite the essay**, based on feedback received. **(10-point grade scale)**

**Response Paper Deadline = January 31**



See [Writing Toolbox on Blackboard](#) for details/prompt/grading rubric.

**4. LIVE PERFORMANCE CRITIQUE/ESSAY:** You are required to write one critical essay (**4-5 pages**) -- an analysis of a live professional musical theatre production (options listed on *Blackboard*). You are **required to rewrite this critique**, based on feedback received. **(10-point grade scale)**

**Live Performance Essay Deadline = February 14**



See [Writing Toolbox on Blackboard](#) for a list of suitable local productions and details/prompt/grading rubric.

**5. INVENTED DIALOGUES:** You must write an illustrative **2-page** conversation and/or argument between two of the real-life artists addressed in this seminar, taking into account their personalities, philosophies, life histories, contributions, aesthetics, and surrounding historical/contextual milieus. Characters do not need to be contemporaries (more fun if they are not). You may use either or both of these levels of invention: 1) select and weave quotes from primary sources and/or 2) invent reasonable quotes that fit characters and context. If using primary-source quotes, you do not need to formally cite the sources. Grade is based on effort and attempt at creativity and dramatic effectiveness (does the material really read as a "scene"). Please bring **two copies** to class. **(10-point grade scale)**

**Invented Dialogue Deadline = March 5**

**6. CREATE A MUSICAL:** This creative assignment will provide the opportunity for you to envision/create your own musical on paper. You can choose to create a jukebox musical/revue, movie musical, integrated book musical, or dansical/dance revue. Your description of this musical must be at least **2-3 full pages in length**. You must also incorporate **supplementary audio or visual materials**. We will share these projects with one another during our final exam period. (10-point grade scale)

**“Create a Musical” Deadline = March 14 (final project)**



See [“Create a Musical” on Blackboard](#) for detailed prompt.

### **Seminar Grading Breakdown:**

Attendance	10%
Participation (10-pt. grade scale)	10%
Pop Quizzes (4-pt. grade scale)	10%
In-Class Essay Workshop – <u>Crazy for You</u> (4-pt. grade scale)	5%
Seminar Presentation (10-pt. grade scale)	10%
Invented Dialogue (10-pt. grade scale)	10%
Live Performance Essay (10-pt. grade scale)	15%
Response Paper (10-pt. grade scale)	15%
“Create a Musical” Assignment (10-pt. grade scale)	15%

**\*\* Final grade for Live Performance Essay and Response Paper is based on rewrite \*\***

## **OTHER CRITICAL COURSE POLICIES**

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Any student who feels (s)he may need an accommodation (e.g., a note-taker) based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the **Disability Services Program (DSP)** located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Ruffatto Hall (1999 E. Evans Ave.) to coordinate reasonable accommodations for documented disabilities / medical issues. For more information, you can visit [www.du.edu/disability/dsp](http://www.du.edu/disability/dsp) or you can call the DSP at 303-871-2278 /2372 /7432.

**LECTURE GADGET “BAN”:** Thanks to some of your less well-behaved cohorts in other classes, I’m afraid I’ve instated a **“ban” on laptop computer use during lectures** (because checking Facebook, surfing gossip sites, etc., is NOT acceptable class behavior at any time). It is crucial to the success of the course that you stay engaged during class, not clicking on a keyboard or buried in a laptop. Please check with me if you feel you need an exception to this rule. Rest assured, **my PowerPoint slides are posted on Blackboard and can be used as study guides. You will also want to print them out beforehand, bring them to class, and use them to take notes.** Further, you may use your laptops for in-class assignments or project work. On a similar note, it goes without saying that cell-phone use, texting, etc., is also taboo, and that I reserve the right to confiscate your technology for the duration of class if you use it.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** As you know, plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses—and ones that I will prosecute pursuant to all University of Denver sanctions. ANY time you use another person’s words or ideas, you MUST give them full credit, citing them accordingly. I am also aware of the numerous websites offering downloadable papers or encyclopedic entries on theatrical styles/eras/artists, as well as all reviews written by local critics regarding professional Denver area productions. Save yourself the trouble: the written work in this course is tailored so that a general-purpose essay just won’t do, and I can spot a “fake” or cut-and-paste job all too well (and use Google to track it down). Using your classmates’ work (with or without their permission) is, of course, also taboo, as is asking for a former student’s work to copy *en toto* or borrow any part thereof. Do your own work, and I’ll be happy to help out in any way that I can. Please do NOT join the sadly growing ranks of students who have been suspended/expelled for plagiarism or trying to cheat. If you are unsure as to what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please ask me and I will get you up to speed.

**CIVILITY AND TOLERANCE:** If not already familiar with DU’s Code of Student Conduct, please review it at (<http://www.du.edu/ccs/code.html>). All codes of conduct are to be upheld in this class. **In addition, side-talking, sleeping, and other basic displays of rudeness in class will be noted in your “Participation” grade, and I reserve the right to ask you to leave class.**

### **DU’s WRITING AND RESEARCH CENTERS:**

I also encourage you to take advantage of the DU Writing and Research Center’s services, benefiting writers at all skill levels. Here, you can ask about everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. One-on-one consultations are also available on a drop-in basis or by appointment. For information on the Writing Program or to make an appointment, call them at 303-871-7431 or visit [www.du.edu/writing/wrc.htm](http://www.du.edu/writing/wrc.htm).

## CORE VIEWINGS:



In addition to your assigned readings, you will be responsible for watching videos of the following musicals. There are several ways to view the videos:

**1. Streaming Video:** I have included this course in the DU CourseMedia System, enabling me to upload assigned movies. Just go to <https://coursemedia.du.edu/>, sign in with ID and passcode; then look for the "Musicals – Core Viewings" gallery in our Golden Age of Musicals course site. (You may be asked to agree to a © agreement the first time you sign on.) Click on the film thumbnail and it will begin streaming. I will also provide a link on Blackboard. NOTE: To watch streaming videos, you will need an Ethernet or broadband connection.

**2. In-Class:** We will view a couple of the videos together in class (due to time limitations, you will most likely have to watch the end of the video outside of class).

**3. Rental, Library, or other Online Sites:** Most of these videos are available in various video shops around town or can be ordered through Netflix. Some can be found on various sites online (for example, the 1936 *Show Boat* is available in 18 parts on YouTube.)

**\*\* NOTE: There are other versions of some musicals -- please view the specific version indicated. \*\***

<u>MUSICALS</u>	<u>VERSION INFO</u>
1927 <i>Show Boat</i>	(1936 film, 110 min.)
1943 <i>Oklahoma!</i>	1999 version (Royal National Theatre w/Hugh Jackman)
1992 <i>Crazy for You</i>	1999 PBS <i>Great Performances</i> television broadcast
1946 <i>Annie Get Your Gun</i>	(with Mary Martin; 106 min.)
1948 <i>Kiss Me, Kate</i>	2003 stage revival (147 min.)
1950 <i>Guys and Dolls</i>	(150 min.)
1956 <i>My Fair Lady</i>	(170 min.)
1957 <i>West Side Story</i>	(150 min.)
1959 <i>Gypsy</i>	(Bette Midler version)
1964 <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i>	(3 hours)

# ASSIGNMENTS / CLASS SCHEDULE

Remember to visit **Blackboard** throughout the week for new and/or updated announcements and information. I will also be emailing you with any updates, reminders, and/or info I deem necessary or simply useful. Also, reading/viewing assignments are due by the start of class on the date by which they are listed and will serve as the material for that day's potential pop quiz. **NOTE: I do not accept late assignments – don't even ask . . .**

- Tues 1/8      Introduction  
Musical Theatre Overview: Terms, Components, and Construct
- Thurs 1/10      Musical Theatre Antecedents  
Have read BACKSTAGE Chap 3, pp. 1-4  
Have read "Victor Herbert" (BACKSTAGE "Antecedents," pp. 14-17)
- Tues 1/15      Have read "George M. Cohan" and "Florenz Ziegfeld" (BACKSTAGE Chap 3, pp. 5-9 and 13-17)
- Thurs 1/17      Have read "Bert Williams" and "Jerome Kern" (BACKSTAGE Chap 3, pp. 21-23 and 29-33)
- Tues 1/22      Have read "Oscar Hammerstein II" (BACKSTAGE Chap 3, pp. 38-41)  
In-class partial viewing of Show Boat (to be completed independently)
- Thurs 1/24      Show Boat -- Discuss  
Have read "George and Ira Gershwin" (BACKSTAGE Chap 4, pp.58-64)
- Tues 1/29      Have viewed VIDEO of Crazy for You (ref: 1/31 workshop) – Discuss / Actor Presentation  
Have read "Rodgers and Hart" (BACKSTAGE Chap 4, pp. 91-96)
- Thurs 1/31      **RESPONSE PAPER DUE – No late papers accepted**  
Have read "Rodgers and Hammerstein" (BACKSTAGE Chap 5, pp. 109-117)
- Tues 2/5      Have viewed VIDEO of Oklahoma! – Discuss / Actor Presentation  
Have read "Agnes de Mille" (BACKSTAGE Chap 5, pp.125-128)  
\*\*\* In-Class Workshop of "Live Performance Critique" for Crazy for You \*\*\*  
**For this assignment (4-point grade scale), you must bring to class:**  
**1) A polished opening paragraph, as if you were writing your Live Performance Essay/Critique on the Crazy for You viewing, but addressing only the ACTING component**  
**2) List of three detailed examples from the production that you would use in your essay in order to illustrate/prove your thesis**
- Thurs 2/7      Have read "Irving Berlin" (BACKSTAGE Chap 4, pp.70-77)
- Tues 2/12      In-class viewing of Annie Get Your Gun
- Thurs 2/14      **LIVE PERFORMANCE ESSAY DUE – No late papers accepted**  
Annie Get Your Gun – Discuss  
Have read "Cole Porter" (BACKSTAGE "Cole Porter" pp. 1-8)
- Tues 2/19      Have viewed VIDEO of Kiss Me, Kate – Discuss / Actor Presentation  
Have read "Lerner and Loewe" (BACKSTAGE Chap 5, pp. 135-142)
- Thurs 2/21      Have viewed VIDEO of My Fair Lady – Discuss / Actor Presentation  
Have read "Jerome Robbins" (BACKSTAGE Chap 5, pp.160-166)
- Tues 2/26      Have read "Leonard Bernstein" (BACKSTAGE Chap 5, pp. 173-178)  
Have read "Comden and Green" (BACKSTAGE Chap 5, pp.184-192)
- Thurs 2/28      Have viewed VIDEO of West Side Story – Discuss / Actor Presentation  
Have read "Frank Loesser" (BACKSTAGE Chap 5, pp. 197-203)

**REMINDER: Thurs 2/28 Fiddler on the Roof opens (runs until 3/10 – get your tickets!)**

Tues 3/5      **INVENTED DIALOGUE DUE (bring two copies to class) – no late papers accepted**  
Have viewed VIDEO of Guys and Dolls – Discuss / Actor Presentation  
Have read "Jule Styne" (BACKSTAGE Chap 5, pp. 211-217)

Thurs 3/7      Have viewed VIDEO of Gypsy – Discuss / Actor Presentation  
In-class work on "Create a Musical" projects

Tues 3/12      Fiddler (DU production) QUIZ  
Have read "Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick" (BACKSTAGE Chap 5, pp. 224-228)  
Have viewed VIDEO of Fiddler on the Roof – Discuss / Actor Presentation

**FINAL EXAM – Thurs 3/14; 10:00-11:50**  
**Present and Turn in "Create a Musical" projects**