



# Dance for Musical Theatre

St. Catherine University  
THR 2310 / Spring 2014 / 4 credits  
T / TH – 8:00-9:40 AM, Fontbonne Hall Gym

<u>Professor</u>	<u>Contact Info</u>	<u>Office/Office Hrs</u>
Dr. Pamyla Stiehl	Email: <a href="mailto:pastiehl@stkate.edu">pastiehl@stkate.edu</a> 651-690-6681	Music Building 206 T / TH 3:30-5:00 by appointment

## COURSE OVERVIEW:

**DESCRIPTION:** A foundational course in techniques and styles of dance and choreography for musical theatre

**GOALS:** The goal of this course is to foster an appreciation of and familiarity with musical theatre dance – its various idioms, distinguishing characteristics, and historic periods – while learning basic dance technique and mastering different styles of dance performance. The course is developed around the learning of dance numbers from musical theatre that are representative of various periods, styles, and disciplines. In addition to technical training, students will learn and perform as a group approximately five choreographed Broadway show routines. Students will also acquire knowledge and analytical skills regarding the discipline of dance and musical theatre performance overall.

**OBJECTIVES:** Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Execute basic dance steps, techniques, and styles of movement, using them as building blocks to steadily progress to more difficult steps, styles, and dance combinations;
- Identify, execute and retain specific choreography, both in training (warm-ups and across-the-floor exercises) and in fully choreographed musical theatre dance routines;
- Identify and demonstrate performance and acting styles/techniques when executing theatrical dance routines;
- Create original choreography as part of a collaborative group when asked to contribute to routines;
- Chronicle, analyze and critique your own process, progress, and performance in a dance number, analytically journaling your learning/performing experience;
- Analyze and critique the art of musical theatre dance/choreography, writing a critical choreographic analysis of a specific musical's dance component.

**REQUIRED DRESS:** Dance shoes (preferably soft-soled jazz shoes) are the only acceptable footwear for class – not street shoes. You will need to have these shoes for every class. Throughout the semester, if you do not have your shoes for class, you will be docked points for the day. You will also be required to dress appropriately for class (dance or exercise attire). We will be moving and sweating – plan accordingly.

**ATTENDANCE:** Just a reminder – this is not only a dance technique class but also a performance class. Like performing in a show, if you miss a class, it is gone – you cannot "make it up." Further, as the course revolves around ensemble numbers, your absenteeism hurts the entire class. Each class is worth 5 points. With each absence, your grade will be affected. However, with official documentation (physician's note, court order, obituary with proof of travel, etc.), I will excuse the absence. With early notice, absences may also be excused for religious observances.

# COURSE REQUIREMENTS

## 1. ATTENDANCE, PREPARATION, and PARTICIPATION (APP)

Each class will count as five (5) points toward your final grade. You begin with 5 points for each class, but:

- 1 point *less than full participation -- attitude is key here; a willingness to "try" is all I ask*
- 1 point *no retention of material previously learned*
- 3 points *tardiness -- role will be taken promptly at 8:00 a.m.*
- 3 points *not wearing proper shoes/attire for class*
- 5 points *unprofessional behavior -- talking, horseplay, resistance, inattention, negativity, etc.*

You will receive an overall grade warning if your APP point deductions have become excessive per criteria listed above.

**TOTAL "APP" POINTS POSSIBLE = 140**

## 2. TWO WRITTEN EXERCISES

**1. Outside Musical -- Choreography/Dance Critique:** In addition to your studio work, you are to watch a dance-heavy musical theatre production outside of class (either a film version or live). Then, write a paper (**at least 3 pages**), analyzing and critiquing the show's choreography and dance. Address the movement vocabulary of the choreographer. Address the choreographic style, period, and degree of integration (i.e., does the dance further the plot, develop or reflect character, and reflect time/place? If not, why?). Address whether or not you felt the choreography was successful. Why or why not? Give specific examples and descriptions. **Due any time before APRIL 3 (Worth 20 pts)**

**2. Personal Performance Analysis:** For one of the group numbers (your choice), you must submit a written analysis of your own development, process, and execution. The paper must be **at least 3 pages** and should provide some answers to the following questions: Who am I (character, background, and personality/psychology) in the number? What do I want in this dance? How do I feel? Do my objectives change during the number? What is my relationship with the other dancers, the audience, the music, and the choreography? When and where do these relationships change? Does my focus shift at times? Why? Have I found varying dynamics? Where? How did all these things evolve during my rehearsal process? What were my challenges and/or victories as I learned and executed the number? Avoid generalities; be personal and specific! **Due any time before MAY 15 (Worth 20 pts)**

***Late written assignments will not be accepted -- no exceptions!***

*I strongly encourage you to make use of the Writing/Reading Center as you compose your papers. Tutors in the center can help you identify opportunities for improvement in your writing as well as assist you in clarifying your ideas and unique perspective on the subject. The Writing/Reading Center is located in the O'Neill Center for Academic Development in the lower level of the CDC.*

## 3. LIVE MUSICAL PRODUCTION ASSIGNMENT – SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK LIVE

You are required to attend *Schoolhouse Rock Live* at the O'Shaughnessy. Performances are Friday and Saturday nights, 4/11 and 4/12, at 7:00 p.m., and Sunday matinee, 4/13, at 2:00 p.m. Ticket price is \$7.00 with student ID. Reserve tickets by calling O'Shaughnessy Ticket Office **651-690-6700**. To complete assignment, you must 1) submit your **ticket stub or program** to me as proof of attendance, and 2) send me a **short email** with a few of your impressions of the show's choreography/dance. Your email must include impressions of BOTH acts to receive total points. **Due any time before APRIL 15 (10 points for proof of attendance and 10 points for email = total of 20 pts)**

## 4. CHOREOGRAPHY RETENTION QUIZZES

Each group number (4) will have a retention quiz on the last day of its work period. You will be notified prior to its date. The quiz will be performance-based and done as a group. It will NOT measure technical prowess but, instead, your retention of the choreography and the effort made in your performance of it. Each quiz is worth 4 points; if you miss one, it cannot be made up. The last retention quiz may be an overall warm-up, across-the floor, studio technique retention assessment. **(5 quizzes = total of 20 pts)**

## 5. FINAL EXAM / PERFORMANCE

The final exam will be an open class during which, after a warm-up, you will perform all routines learned throughout the semester. You may invite observers so that you have an audience. You will be graded on effort and positive contribution/participation on that day. **(Worth 40 pts)**

### Service Extra Credit – Theater Shop Hours

Our theatre shop can always use extra bodies and volunteer labor! Therefore, for every **ten hours** that you volunteer in the shop, **1 extra credit point** will be added to your final grade. **3 points is the maximum** you can earn during the semester and **each work period must be 2 hours minimum**. Shop hours are 1:00-4:30 M-F; and I will give you a sheet that you may use to log your hours and have them authorized by Troy Wilhelmson, our technical director and shop supervisor. Please let me know if you have interest and/or questions. This is a very fun way to get to know the behind-the-scenes workings of live theatre, as well as improve your grade!

Be forewarned that this is the only extra-credit option for this class. Additional or alternative extra-credit requests will not be granted; in fact, I will neither consider nor respond to such requests.

### Grading / Points Breakdown:

APP	140 pts
Outside Musical – Choreography/Dance Critique	20 pts
Live Musical Production Assignment (Schoolhouse Rock)	20 pts
Personal Performance Analysis	20 pts
Retention Quizzes	20 pts
Final Exam/Performance	<u>40 pts</u>
<b>TOTAL CLASS POINTS</b>	<b>260 pts</b>

### A FINAL NOTE REGARDING COURSE GRADES:

*I have a "NO LATE ASSIGNMENT" policy – no exceptions, do not ask . . . I also have a "NO MAKE UP" and "NO ADDITIONAL / EXCEPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS" policy. The syllabus, required assignments, and grading rubrics/criteria are set in stone. The grade you earned is the grade you will receive. After-the-fact requests for extra credit, alternate/additional assignments or grading reconsiderations will not receive a response from me, as you have been duly forewarned that your grade is solely determined by the assignments and criteria set forth in this syllabus.*

### Course Grade Scale :

A	94-100	4.0
A-	90-93	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	60-66	1.0
F	0-59	0.0

## OTHER CRITICAL COURSE POLICIES

### ACCOMODATIONS:

*St. Catherine University is committed to equal access for all and recognizes that disability is an aspect of diversity. The University's goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to the learning environment and accurate assessment of your achievement, please contact me and the Resources for Disabilities office as soon as possible. Access Consultants can be reached in the O'Neill Center at 651.690.6563 to discuss academic adjustments or accommodations.*

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

*St. Catherine University's mission provides for excellence in education through the search for truth and justice. According to the provisions of this mission, the University expects all students and faculty to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any act of academic dishonesty threatens the value of all scholastic endeavors. The complete document on academic integrity, including the process for implementation, may be found in the LeGuide, the student guide to policies, procedure and rules at St. Catherine University. Individuals who plagiarize will immediately fail the assignment. Plagiarism may also result in failure of the class or expulsion from the University.*

### NO TECH!:

*It goes without saying that cell-phone use, texting, etc., is taboo, and all such gadgets are to be left in backpacks, out of sight, for the duration of the class (you can use the mid-class break to "plug back in").*

## CLASS SCHEDULE / CALENDAR:

*I will most likely be emailing you regularly with updates, reminders, and general information. Feel free to email me regularly as well with questions, concerns, or to simply touch base and/or discuss an issue. I will do my best to answer within 24 hours.*

**Daily Schedule:** Typically, the first half of each class period will be spent in warm-ups and across-the-floor combinations/exercises, leaving the balance of the period devoted to learning the group number. I will take role at 8:00 a.m. sharp each day before warm-ups – **tardiness** will affect your grade. Technically, the class ends at 9:40, but I have allowed the last ten minutes of class to be used for warm-downs, changing clothes, etc. Following is a rough breakdown as to the group numbers that will be learned (subject to change) throughout the semester:

WEEKS 1 – 4                      "Too Darn Hot" (*Kiss Me, Kate*)

WEEKS 4 – 7                      "96,000" (*In the Heights*)

WEEK 8                              SPRING BREAK

WEEKS 9 – 11                      "All That Jazz" (*Chicago*)

**DUE April 3: Outside Musical -- Choreography/Dance Critique**

**DUE April 15: Live Musical Production Assignment (*Schoolhouse Rock 4/11-13*)**

WEEKS 11 – 14                      "Nicest Kids in Town" (*Hairspray*)

WEEKS 14 – 15                      T.B.A.

**DUE May 15: Personal Performance Analysis**

**MAY 15, THURSDAY, 8:00-9:40 A.M. – FINAL / PERFORMANCE**