

Defining the Performing Artist

Kristin Kusanovich

Thtr 9 - Winter 2009

Office MDF 223

M/W/F 2:15 - 3:20 pm

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Mayer 231

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2 units

Office

hours: Fri 3:30-4:30 & by appt.

(This course is a part of the Vocation Pathway in the New Core beginning Fall 2009)

Syllabus

Course Objectives:

To illuminate, explore, understand and develop strategies for managing the psychological and practical challenges faced by performing artists. To deepen the analytical, intuitive and creative capacities needed to pursue a passion in the arts. To help each student enliven his/her respect and commitment to a balanced life in the arts, while maintaining a realistic picture of the dedication, resilience, sacrifices and mastery that will be required of him/her. To interact with a wide variety of arts professionals who can share their experience and wisdom. To understand and experience the dynamics of a cohesive ensemble that works together in order to accomplish the above goals and any goal in an arts-related career. To think about, act on and judge opportunities in terms of vocation rather than just career moves.

Methods & Class Format:

The methods used in the course will include lecture, discussion, continuums, serial testimony, role playing, ensemble building, journaling, questioning, peer teaching, reflection, reading, listening, viewing, moving, making things.

Monday and Wednesday classes will introduce new content via lecture and guest visits from artists speaking on a range of topics relevant to the art and the business of the arts. Friday classes will provide an opportunity to expand on the week's topics and explore personal issues, creative techniques, philosophies and projects that are critical for today's young artist. Outside of class activities include participating in or attending Department theatre and dance performances and special events throughout quarter, reading/research as assigned and journaling.

Assignments & Activities:

#1 Tharpe Assignments

The Creative Habit, by Twila Tharpe

Weekly journal entries on Tharpe's highly structured creative processes,

exercises undertaken, reflections on exercises, and critical analysis of the ongoing artistic work the student is in process with during the course. These assignments develop courage in their exploration of their own arts, whether they are actors, dancers, singers, musicians, directors, writers, choreographers or designers. Weekly reflections put them in the "habit" of seeing their own work with more objectivity, and evaluating the quality of their interactions with the art itself. Students learn to recognize when they are in a "rut" or the much preferred "groove," two states Tharpe beautifully names and delineates in detail. These moments of recognition are key to the vocational discernment of artists.

#2 Byock Assignment

The Four Things that Matter Most, by Ira Byock, M.D.

.Byock's chapter on Thank Yous makes a profound connection between the action of thanking another, with the concomitant rebalancing of one's path/journey that this provides.

#3 Adair Assignment

How to Find Your Vocation: A Guide to Discovering the Work You Love, by John Adair

Class is assigned to read and present on specific chapters of Adair's text. Then, in both a written paper and oral presentation, students will draw on the major concepts of this text ('intuition', 'hindsight', 'inner compass' and 'depth mind') and analyze how one of these factors has led or is currently leading the decision-making process for them. Then, in small groups, students will generate theoretical applications, as they work together to envision future situations connected to career opportunities in which these same practices could be applied. All of this is done with faculty guidance/facilitation.

#4 ASTEP - Artists Striving to End Poverty Residency

JAI Winter Quarter Guest Artists/Directors Cindy and Mauricio Salgado will be on campus for a week to work with Thtr 9 students on the following topics:

February 23

Vocation: Career + Community

Vocation and calling, conducting a career, or not conducting, keeping an eye on community, role of spirituality and faith journey, mission, examples of differently motivated work in the arts and community.

February 25

Relationships & The Red Shoes

Personal relationships, when to take the Red Shoes off, partners, family, friends.

Career as the proverbial, demonic and runaway ballet shoes that won't quit, and also the only path to the real or the truth in art. The All-or-nothing-at-all question

Likely Challenges and Best (Promising) Practices for sustaining healthy and enlivening relationships while in the arts.

Friday, February 27

Conversations and Reflections on the work of ASTEP with a focus on local models

Summing up ASTEP's work, it's scope and methods with the focus on inspiring local activity. Perhaps a brainstorm on how each student can take one concept from the week's residency and put it into action in their community. Finishing with reflection on the residency week.

#5 Five and Dime Collage Project: The 5 or 10 year plan

The assembling of a 2-D or 3-D creative project (limited to a 12" square sized base or cube) using only found materials that organizes and spatially expresses one's current artistic identity and looks ahead five to ten years to how one's vocational vision might be fulfilled. Each student gives a guided tour of their artwork, and explains the rationale for their choices (inclusions and exclusions) and why certain ideas, hopes, plans, callings figure more prominently than others. Group discussion and journaling assignments serve as follow-up to this culminating activity in week #10.

#6 Performances

Students must journal on five out of the following six shows. If working on a show, journal entry will be from that perspective, on the creative process and what the show meant to you. If attending the show, tickets/.reservations are responsibility of student. Journal on all aspects of the performance experience and relate it to some concept from class or readings. Beginning, middle and end of experience must be included. Permission for exceptions to 5 entries must be sought by Jan 12.

Jan 15 & 16	Thurs & Fri	8pm	CHARISMA	Fess Parker Studio Theatre
Jan 16	Fri	8pm	JAZZ HAS A DREAM	Recital Hall
Feb 5-8	Thurs-Sun(2pm)	8pm	IMAGES	Louis B. Mayer Theatre
Feb 14-15	Sat & Sun	2pm	ONE ACT FESTIVAL	Fess Parker Studio Theatre
Feb 17, 18 & 20	Tue, Wed & Fri	8pm	CLARE OF ASSISI	Mission Church
Feb 27-Mar7	Wed-Sun(2pm)	8pm	OVER THE MOUNTAIN	Mayer Theatre

#7 Professional On-Line Portfolio

Students will develop a professional portfolio and resume on-line for use in seeking work and networking.

Text:

Tharp, Twila, *The Creative Habit.*

Eres Articles:

Adair, John, *How to Find Your Vocation: A Guide to Discovering the Work You Love.* (selections)

Byock, Ira, M.D., *The Four Things That Matter Most.* (selections)

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Grading:

Assessment is based on class participation and preparedness [40%], reading/assignments #1 - #4, Performance Attendance, journals [50%] and creative projects (assignment #5 above) [10%]. On-time attendance, preparation, focused engagement and thoughtful participation weigh heavily in grading. Unexcused absences and tardiness will affect your final grade. Please contact me through email or phone whenever possible about an upcoming absence. Additional readings/assignments for Thtr 9 may be provided throughout quarter. Journals, which serve the purpose of being a repository of your reflections on the course questions, will be collected randomly and graded throughout the quarter. Specific entry topics or reading assignments to journal on will provide guidance, but your own ideas and initiation of topics in your journal will be expected as well. . The system of grading journals will be as follows, on a scale of 0-5: 0=Nothing turned in, 1=Name, 2=Minimal entry, 3=Some content, 4=Good content, 5=Thoughtful and multifaceted content.

The final projects consist of research project and a 2-D or 3-D creative project around artistic identity and vocational vision for the next five to ten years.

Student Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of Thtr 9, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate a clear understanding of the various approaches to careers in the arts, and how to pursue opportunities at different stages of their artistic path.
2. identify warning signs and take proactive or reactive steps to improve emotional, psychological, health, relationship and financial imbalances that many artists face on a regular basis.
3. create a personal process that is applicable to reflective, collaborative or competitive processes that they will encounter in the arts professions, so that their sense of vocation unfolding is increased while their sense of career success as a binary concept (its either successful or it's not) is diminished.
4. define their role in a larger context of an organization, company, community or culture, and articulate how their approach to their art is informed by their intellectual pursuits, emotional depth, ethics, understanding of human nature, awareness of history, exposure to other art forms and literature, politics, justice and spirituality.
5. articulate how art can intersect with social justice and give relevant examples of current practices.
6. begin a professional portfolio that can serve as a means for reflection, a systematic collection of selected work samples, and a presentation to potential employers.

Academic Integrity Policy: Expectations in connection with group work, collaborative assignments, and peer tutoring are that knowledge might be shared and developed with others. It follows that in some cases, ideas generated in

cooperative learning projects will become a part of more than one student's portfolio. Relying on others to complete one's own work, not being honest about actual contributions to a group project, plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Instructor will respond to academic dishonesty with appropriate reporting, grade reductions, and in some cases, a failing grade will be given. For the University policy see <http://www.scu.edu/academics/bulletins/undergraduate/Academic-Integrity.cfm>.

Disability Accommodation Policy: To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in The Drahmman Center in Benson, room 214, (408) 554-4111; TTY (408) 554-5445. Students must register with Disabilities Resources and provide appropriate documentation to that office prior to receiving accommodations.