

TPP 4401 Comedy Practice

T/Th (4:05pm-6:00pm) – G15

Instructor: Dr. Charlie Mitchell
Office Phone: 352-273-0515
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 1:30-3:00pm or by appointment
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COURSE OBJECTIVES

To strive for excellence in comedy writing and performance. You will create and perform late night monologue material, a standup set, and sketch material all of which will be part of your comedy writing packet.

EXPECTATIONS

This class is a space where you respect, support, and encourage your fellow performers/writers while understanding that constructive criticism is more valuable than praise. I will not censor work in this class. The only standard is whether the work is funny and chooses targets that are worthy of comic examination. There is only one absolute and unbreakable rule – you do not steal jokes.

Each week you will hand in a writing assignment such as late-night jokes, stand-up material, and sketches. Rewriting material is just as important as your first attempt. In class, you are expected to perform your own work and the work of your peers as well as improvise scenes to generate ideas for sketches. In addition to writing assignments and in-class activities, you will write and perform:

- a late-night comedy show segment(s)
- a stand-up set (“tight five”)
- a sketch comedy show

At certain times during the semester, you may need to make time outside of class to meet with me about your material.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Mastering Stand-Up: The Complete Guide to Becoming a Successful Comedian by Stephen Rosenfield. I will also provide handouts if needed.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This is a class *about* participation – attendance is a given. **You are expected to arrive ON TIME and to attend ALL classes.** If you feel you cannot make this commitment, please drop the class. When you work in teams, missing class hurts your peers.

Any absence from class for the following reasons must be supported by official documentation to avoid a grade penalty: serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation severe weather conditions, participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or

debate, court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). Religious observances do not require documentation. However, you need to let me know by the second week of classes which religious observances will impact your attendance.

Students are allowed ONE unexcused absence that does not require documentation and does not conform to the UF “acceptable reasons for absence.” Afterwards, each unexcused absence will result in a penalty of a full letter grade (10%) deducted from your final grade. Weddings, travel, job interviews, non-UF auditions, and other life events do not count as excused absences. If you have a logistical problem that will prevent you from arriving on time, see me immediately.

Any student that acquires THREE absences (either excused or unexcused) will be required to meet with me to discuss your continued participation in the course. For Majors: Failure to attend this meeting will result in Artistic Probation.

*NOTE: Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

GRADE BREAKDOWN

In-Class Participation/Attendance 40%
- every three weeks you will be assigned a participation grade
Written Assignments/Rewrites 40%
Performances (standup & sketch) 20%

PARTICIPATION RUBRIC

(Each category is graded from 1-5 [5 is the highest]. The total is then multiplied by 5 for a letter grade.)

1. Shows up on time
2. Participates in exercises and discussions
3. Demonstrates a positive attitude
4. Willingness to give and receive critical feedback

Note: Absences, excused or unexcused, will impact this grade. You cannot participate if you do not go to class.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS RUBRIC

(Each category is graded from 1-5 [5 is the highest]. The total is then multiplied by 5 for a letter grade.)

1. Follows assignment guidelines/For rewrites: Integrates feedback/shows improvement
2. Has clear comic targets (standup)/Follows a clear premise (sketches)
3. Work is properly formatted
4. Work is turned in on time

PERFORMANCE RUBRIC

(Each category is graded from 1-5 [5 is the highest]. The total is then multiplied by 5 for a letter grade.)

1. Material is memorized

2. Material is properly rehearsed
3. Forms relationship with audience
4. Supports other performers

CLASS CONDUCT

During class, there is no eating or cell phone use (especially texting).

HONOR CODE

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: “I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.” The Honor Code states that you cannot take photos or videos in class without my permission and the permission of fellow students.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

If you have a disability documented with the Disability Resource Center and wish to discuss accommodations, please email me or see me during my virtual office hours. If you have a learning disability that has not been documented, contact the DRC at <https://disability.ufl.edu/about/contact-us/>

COURSE EVALUATION

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/

AVAILABILITY

If you have something you want to discuss with me, please do not hesitate.

Your ongoing enrollment is confirmation that you understand and will comply with the requirements of this course. I reserve the right to alter this syllabus if necessary.

COURSE OUTLINE – COMEDY PRACTICE

Spring 2024

(subject to change)

TUES	THURS
Jan 9 Read Syllabus Discuss comedy theory Intro to monologue joke writing In class: Writing exercises	Jan 11 Due: 1 st round of Late-Night Jokes In class: Write more jokes. Break into teams for top ten list
Jan 16 Due: Top Ten List In class: Writing exercises	Jan 18 Intro to standup comedy Due: 2 nd round of Late-Night Jokes Due: Rosenfield p. 1-33
Jan 18 In class: Communicating with the audience exercise Due: Rosenfield p. 34-54	Jan 20 Dry run and feedback Due: First Draft of your Set Due: Rosenfield: p. 55-104
Jan 23 Individual meetings Due: Rosenfield: p. 105-146	Jan 25 Individual meetings
Jan 30 Perform “tight five” for class Due: Rosenfield: p. 149-174	Feb 1 Individual meetings Stand-up Performance
Feb 6 Intro to Sketch Comedy In class: Improv boot camp/generate sketch ideas	Feb 8 Due: Pitch 3 sketch ideas In class: Improvise sketch ideas
Feb 13 In class: Read/critique sketches Due: First solo written sketch (bring enough copies for all characters)	Feb 15 Generate sketch ideas Break into writing teams Due: Rewrite of solo sketch
Feb 20 Due: Team sketch In class: Read/critique sketches	Feb 22 Due: Rewrite of team sketch In class: Intro to character sketches
Feb 27 Due: Character sketch	Feb 29 Due: Character sketch rewrite

<p>March 5 Due: Stand-Up Presentations (see Canvas) In class: Stand-up exercises</p>	<p>March 7 In class: Present new standup material Due: Rosenfield p. 175-192</p>
<p>March 12 SPRING BREAK</p>	<p>March 14 SPRING BREAK</p>
<p>March 19 Due: Rewrite of new standup In class: Perform new standup material</p>	<p>March 21 Intro to parody In class: Improvise parody ideas</p>
<p>March 26 Due: Parody sketch</p>	<p>March 28 Due: Parody sketch write Writer's Room – class chooses final sketches</p>
<p>April 2 Rehearse sketch show</p>	<p>April 4 Rehearse sketch show</p>
<p>April 9 NO CLASS</p>	<p>April 11 Rehearse sketch show</p>
<p>April 16 Rehearse sketch show</p>	<p>April 18 Rehearse sketch show</p>
<p>April 23 PERFORMANCE</p>	