

Dearest Musical Theatre Majors,

We hope this finds you as well as possible this summer. SPA has been toiling away trying to figure out, manage, and plan for the upcoming school year amidst the COVID situation and thought of you every step of the way. We wanted to reach out and let you know where Linda and I are as of July 8th in regards to course delivery and season planning. As you also know, none of this is set in stone as this is a **fluid and rapidly evolving situation**.

Musical Theatre Courses:

Our goal is to see our students in person as much as is safely possible. However, in order to do that, courses have to be in “hybrid” format. There are strict guidelines that we need to follow in order to adhere to State, University and Industry standards. Such as mask wearing, social distancing especially while singing and dancing (aspirating) and limiting the amount of human contact per week.

Example: Musical Theater Dance- I will see half of the class on Tuesday and half of the class on Thursday. On the day you do not come in person you will Zoom the class from your home. I will be teaching the same material on Thursday that I teach on Tuesday so when you “Zoom” it will be more for reinforcement. Such as, I will not be addressing the Zoom group as I need to give all my attention to the students in person, since our time is limited. When I do see you, I will have to work fast and warm us up quickly and efficiently.

In Musical Theatre Auditions Class, there is a large number of you and we are singing (aspirating) so we also have to be extra careful. We will break the class into three days, Monday, Wednesday, Friday. That amounts to about five students on each day, which is really all we have time to coach each day anyway. On the days you do not come in person to be coached and mentored on your audition/repertoire book you will Zoom and write down one “take away” that you learned from watching us coach your peers each class period. I would like to utilize face shields and/or full body shields in this course in order to see your face/acting better. More on face shields as it gets closer to August...

As more research comes out and with everyone required to wear masks, I think we can also employ this same kind of approach to Music Theatre Directing. The class is usually split into two groups anyway in order to rehearse, a Tuesday group and a Thursday group.

Hopefully, this is giving you some good examples of how we are having to adapt in order to see our wonderful students in person. Again, this is clearly not a formal syllabus just ideas to help you understand where Linda and I are trying to go with teaching our courses.

I have also attached (*please see the Dance section for that document*) the Dance Department’s Documents on guidelines for Fall courses for your reference. It is quite thorough and will be very helpful in understanding where we are headed this Fall.

Season Planning:

Due to unprecedented circumstances caused by the spread of Covid-19 virus, the School of Performing Arts (and the College of Fine Arts) has determined that it will be safer to focus on smaller more student driven creative work that can be presented virtually. We will return to larger productions when appropriate safety concerns for students, faculty, staff and audience members can be met. The CFA will

maintain a website for updated information as circumstances evolve.

https://www.wichita.edu/academics/fine_arts/

We have posted the NEW Season Information on the School of Performing Arts Website this morning:

https://www.wichita.edu/academics/fine_arts/spa/Season_Information/CurrentSeason.php

As you can see from the Dance Department's Documents, by day in class we will be 10 feet apart, wearing facial coverings, not traveling across the floor and limiting the amount of human contact per week. That said, we would need to do the same if rehearsing in the evening. And as you can imagine this would be very hard to adhere to all these restrictions and rehearse a large-scale musical. Think about the amount of aspiration that would be occurring just to sing and dance one group number, much less do a show without masks and then run off stage and funnel ourselves into the dressing rooms. It is imperative that as a State University we are consistent in our safety procedures and practices.

Project wise, the focus in the Fall will be on working on a virtual Senior Concert for our 17-18 graduating Seniors. My hope is that we can capture excellent footage that will become your Reel for your Websites you created as well as showcase this as a Virtual Senior Concert. Many details need to be figured out, but again this is where our heads are at as of July 8th.

In a perfect world in the Spring, we work on [title of show] and work towards a Musical Theatre Cabaret showcasing scenes from Musical Theatre Lab and Scene Study as well as a Freshman and Transfer Showcase.

Being that [title of show] is already cast from last Spring, **there will be NO Musical Theatre Season Auditions** the first week of school. Again, we encourage you to audition for any projects that are being done virtually and encourage you to focus on smaller more student driven creative work and work from the classroom that can be showcased.

Please also understand that as a State University we are under much stricter guidelines and mandates than businesses in town. There are two theatres open in town producing shows, please feel free to audition and secure work with them. Your level of safety and comfortability is totally up to you. However, if you choose to study at a State University this Fall just realize that our guidelines are required to be much stricter.

My hope is to send you another update at the beginning of August.

On a personal note, we miss our current students terribly and are really looking forward to a stellar Freshman and Transfer class of majors. My heart aches for performance students trying to navigate these unprecedented times and for our upperclassmen preparing to graduate and go out into the industry. You will be the leaders on how we create, deliver and experience Art. You will TRULY be the future of this industry and I cannot think of a better group than all of you to do that.

With great respect and admiration,

ABS and Linda