THEA 345 Theatre Marketing & Public Relations

SPRING 2015  T TH 11:00-12:15  |  DA-218
Peggy Ryan peggy@peggryan.com
Office Hours by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

This course covers current topics in theatre marketing, analyzes marketing strategies, and offers practical applications of marketing and publicity for theatres. We begin with an introduction and history of the U.S. theatre sector that is designed to help students develop a foundation for assessing theatre marketing strategy and application. Readings for each class will be a mix of articles in industry magazines, books on performing arts marketing strategy, short case studies, and financial studies and reports of the theatre sector.

The goal of the course is to familiarize you with current issues affecting the health of the theatre industry and how effective marketing plays a crucial role in the overall vitality of the sector, and asks you as a class to work as a think tank to develop new ideas to improve existing industry standards in theatre marketing and apply them practically to the SDSU theatre production season. By the end of the course, you should have a basic understanding of a marketing department's contribution to the financial livelihood of a theatre, and the tools at your disposal for the marketing and promotion of a full theatre season. You will improve your understanding of how performing arts organizations can attract new audiences and build frequency and loyalty, and how to create offerings that appeal to target audience without compromising artistic integrity.

The class will begin with a lecture-style overview of the day's topic. Then we will move to a directed discussion format, followed by in-class exercises. Students who have completed reaction papers for that day's class will be expected to take the lead in discussion.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class Participation 25%

The three components that make up the class participation grade are (1) class attendance and participation in discussion, (2) attendance at class-related marketing events, (3) attendance at all required performing arts events, as referenced in the syllabus. If you cannot attend a required event, you must notify me in advance and explain the absence to obtain clearance for the missed participation, otherwise, you are liable to reduce your class participation grade significantly. Much of the value of this course will come from classroom discussion related to marketing of TTF events and the readings, so doing the readings and being aware of TTF events is imperative.

Reaction Paper 10%

Each student will be assigned one group of daily assigned readings for the purpose of performing online research to find a theatre(s) utilizing the strategies and tools described in the readings, and then writing a short description of the theatre's practical application of the strategy/tool. Your top reading day preferences will be collected on the first day of class and I will accommodate as many first choices as possible. Reaction papers are due to me by email (please put THEA 345 in the subject line) 24 hours before the start of the class to which they are assigned. A detailed assignment sheet will be on Blackboard. Late papers will be penalized and no papers will be accepted after the start of class.

READINGS

All Readings are on Blackboard, organized by class topic, with the exception of the following two books that are available for purchase at the bookstore.

Waiting in the Wings: A Larger Audience for the Arts and How to Develop It. Bradley G. Morison, Julie Gordon Dalgleish, October, 1992


CONDUCT, TARDINESS, MISSED DEADLINES: Participation will be an important part of this class; while attendance is not a grading criterion, you cannot participate if you aren’t present. Late arrivals are ok, but please don’t disrupt the class or make a habit of coming late. Consistent, disruptive side-talking will be discouraged and if necessary penalized.

Penalties for late papers/ projects/ midterms will be waived for students with legitimate excuses. A legitimate excuse takes the form of a note from a medical professional, university administrator, military commanding officer, or other authority figure recognized by the university. Penalties for papers will be waived only for students with a legitimate excuse that covers a substantial period of time (not just the day before the paper was due).

Phones are not to be used in class for text messaging, web surfing, or calls. Computers are to be used for note-taking, not web surfing. Misuse of phones and computers is distracting to other students and disrespectful to me. Repeat offenders will be ejected from the classroom.

FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE IS PROVIDED BY THE SDSU’S STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES OFFICE.

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIOR:

This course will adhere strictly to all SDSU policies with regard to students’ expected classroom behavior and academic integrity (including cases of plagiarism). Please contact the instructor if you need clarification or have any questions about these policies.
THEA 345  
COURSE SCHEDULE  

W1  
January 22: Class introduction.

January 27: The development of the U.S. theatre sector.

January 29: Current events and challenges facing the theatre sector.

February 3: Who actually goes to the theatre anyway?
DUE: Read AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN THEATER, National Endowment for the Arts | DESIGNING A CULTURAL POLICY, Justin Lewis | WAITING IN THE WINGS Chapter 6 | REVOLUTIONIZING ACCESS: MIXED BLOOD THEATRE’S RADICAL HOSPITALITY INITIATIVE, Americans for the Arts
February 5: Special guest Dani Bedau, Chair of SDSU’s Art Alive! *
DUE: Prepare 5 questions for Dani Bedau

February 10: Getting started marketing the theatre.
DUE: Read MARKETING CULTURE AND THE ARTS Chapter 1 | MARKETING WORKBOOK FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS | SUBSCRIBE NOW! Chapter 6

February 12 - EXTENDED CLASS PERIOD: Commercial vs. nonprofit and business vs. mission. | Marketing push for film festival at Farmers Market
DUE: Read DEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP, American Theatre, March 2014 | MISSION VS. BUSINESS MODEL IN THE NON-PROFIT ARTS, TRG Arts blog, August 2014 | WAITING IN THE WINGS Chapter 8 | Buy your ticket to attend Emerging Filmmaker Spring Festival running tonight and tomorrow night.

February 17: Special guest Margaret Larlham, TTF professor and director of ALICE: Curiouser and Curiouser *
DUE: Read ALICE: CURIOSER AND CURIOSER | Start planning your weekend, including watching at least one film at the Student Film Festival, Sept. 18-19

February 19: A contemporary reality of theatre finances.
DUE: Be prepared to tell us about your experience at the film festival | Read GET SMART, HOLD TIGHT, American Theatre, Nov. 2012 | EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED, American Theatre, Nov. 2013 | THEATRE FACTS 2012, Theatre Communications Group

February 24: Special guest Steven Adler, stage manager, theatre management researcher, and Provost of UCSD’s Warren College *

February 26: The big dilemma - Subscriptions vs. single tickets.
DUE: Read SUBSCRIBE TO THIS!, American Theatre, Nov. 2012 | WAITING IN THE WINGS Chapters 4, 5 & 7 | SUBSCRIBE NOW! Chapter 4 | STANDING ROOM ONLY, Chapter 11 pages 261-287

March 3: Designing a season brochure, advertising, and promotional materials.
DUE: Read Waiting in the Wings pages 136-141 | Subscribe Now Chapter 15 and pages 135-139 | The Principles of Design | Theatre brochures distributed in class
March 5: Marketing push for opening of ALICE at SDSU Farmers Market.
DUE: Buy your ticket to see Alice, running this weekend and next.

March 10: Selling theatre tickets - a compromise, and the beginnings of audience development.
March 12: Consumer behaviors, experience, and environment.
DUE: Read SUBSCRIBE NOW! Chapter 30 | STANDING ROOM ONLY Chapter 8 | MARKETING CULTURE AND THE ARTS Chapter 4

* Visit dates are subject to change. Some guest speakers will be in person, while others will be via videoconference.
March 17: Pricing, discounts, papering, and group sales.
DUE: Your idea for a for-profit marketing innovation for the arts | Read STANDING ROOM ONLY Chapter 11, pages 287-295 | SUBSCRIBE NOW! Chapter 25

March 19: Selling a season to subscribers and following up.
DUE: Read Subscribe Now! Chapters 5, 18 & 24, pages 36-37, 94-95, 170-181

March 24: Digital media and other digital tools.
DUE: Single ticket marketing plan for a show in the 2015/16 Season | Read COLLECTIVE WISDOM, American Theatre July/August 2013 | BRINGING THE ARTS ONLINE, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust | Additional reading TBD

March 26: Digital media guest speaker Jessica Ordon *
DUE: Prepare 5 questions for Jessica Ordon

March 31 & April 2: Spring recess, no class

April 7: Introduction to Public Relations for the theatre

April 9: Public Relations guest speaker Lizbeth Price *
DUE: Prepare 5 questions for Lizbeth Price | Digital marketing plan for a show in the 2015/2016 Season

April 14: Community outreach and cross promotions.

April 16: Marketing and Education, context and new audiences
DUE: Read ENGAGE AND EDIFY Dec. 2012 | WAITING IN THE WINGS Chapters 11 & 12, and pages 142-143

April 21: Education special guest speaker John Abodeely, Deputy Director of The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities *
DUE: Prepare 5 questions for John Abodeely | Press release for SDSU 2015/2016 Season

April 23: Marketing push for opening of THE GREAT AMERICAN TRAILER PARK MUSICAL at SDSU Farmers’ Market.
DUE: Buy your ticket to see The Great American Trailer Park Musical, running this weekend and next.

April 28: Alternative models - universities and small theatres AND discussion of final projects
DUE: Final marketing project outline | READ BIGGIES MEET SMALLS, American Theatre, Nov 2011 | SOCIAL STRUCTURE, INSTITUTIONS, AND CULTURAL GOODS, Paul DiMaggio | PITTSBURGH CULTURAL TRUST OVERVIEW, brochure

April 30: Class meeting TBD and may be affected by attendance of the graphic design class (meeting M W, 12:00-2:40) to develop art for the SDSU 2015/2016 Season as well as attending TTF theatre rehearsals for marketing support.

May 5: Class meeting TBD and may be affected by attendance of the graphic design class (meeting M W, 12:00-2:40) to develop art for the SDSU 2015/2016 Season as well as attending TTF theatre rehearsals for marketing support.
DUE: See SDSU Film: Best of the Best Student Showcase Spring 2015 on 5/13 and SDSU Wind Symphony and Orchestra TEXTures on 5/6

May 7: Marketing push for the Best of the Best Student Showcase at SDSU Farmers Market.

May 8-14: Finals week
DUE: Final marketing project 5/11 | See SDSU Film: Best of the Best Student Showcase Spring 2015 on 5/13

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