

## ***Leadership & Theater: Ethics, Innovation & Creativity – GBUS 8403-B***

**4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, Spring 2009**

**Late Week at 4:30-5:55 p.m. in the Abbott Auditorium**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this course is to build leadership skills and ethical analysis skills by reading, discussing, and performing dramatic scenes from great plays, one act plays, and full contemporary plays. The material will be chosen for their relevance to leadership, ethics, innovation and creativity. The course is built around the concept that the task of the theatre director is akin to the task of the CEO. In particular we will examine how directors draw vision from particulars, emphasize good casting or “getting the right people on the bus”, get the best out of their team, and approach work collaboratively. We will examine theater companies as high performance teams, and attempt to construct such teams through the course. Our emphasis throughout is on themes such as innovation, values, collaboration and creativity.

We are very fortunate to have Mr. Randy Strawderman co-teach the course. Mr. Strawderman is a critically acclaimed director and choreographer, who has conducted numerous professional acting and directing workshops. His bio is attached. In addition we will call on the professional expertise of students who have had the course or who have extensive experience in the theater. The final exam will be a performance open to the Darden community, which will take place on Wednesday, 29 April. A short paper setting forth the lessons learned will also be required.

### **Classes**

For the first week of the course, we will engage each other in some exercises and skill building. In week 2 we will have an intensive look at Neil Labute’s *Reasons to be Pretty* and *The Faber book of Monologues: Men* and *The Faber Book of Monologues: Women* by Jane Edwardes. In these scene classes we will work on casting the scenes, interpreting the scenes, performing the scenes, directing the scenes, etc. In weeks 3 and 4 of the course we will prepare and perform some of the shorter plays from the remaining book for the course, or from other sources. The last three weeks of the course will focus on a final performance of a play. This final performance can take many shapes and it will be up to us to conceptualize it, put it together, and perform it. Students are expected to perform and direct in each of the performances.

We want to explore the theater as a place to learn about ourselves, our leadership and each other. We want to have fun and make this the best experience you have had at Darden.

## **Evaluation**

Grades will be assigned as follows: 75% will be based on the performances in the class. 25% will be based on a final short paper setting forth the lessons learned in the class.

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Below you will find the list of books to be used in the course for 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr-Spring 2009. They can be purchased at The Darden Exchange.

***Reasons to be Pretty: A Play*** by Neil LaBute

(Faber & Faber, 2008 / ISBN: 0865479984 – paperback preferred)

***The Faber Book of Monologues: Men*** by Jane Edwardes

(Faber & Faber, 2005 / ISBN: 0571217648 – paperback preferred)

***The Faber Book of Monologues: Women*** by Jane Edwardes

(Faber & Faber, 2005 / ISBN: 0571217656 – paperback preferred)

***The Ultimate Scene Study Series Volume III: 103 Scenes for Three Actors*** by Wilma Marcus Chandler (ed)

(Smith & Kraus, Inc., 2001 / ISBN: 1-57525-220-1 – paperback preferred)

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**Class Schedule**

19 Mar	-	Introduction and Exercises
20 Mar	-	Exercises and Skills
25 Mar	-	Analysis of Plays
26 Mar	-	Analysis of Plays
2 Apr	-	Short Performance Plays
3 Apr	-	Short Performance Plays
8 Apr	-	Short Performance Plays
9 Apr	-	Short Performance Plays
15 Apr	-	Begin work on Final Performance
16 Apr	-	Work on Final Performance
22 Apr	-	Work on Final Performance
23 Apr	-	Work on Final Performance
24 Apr	-	Work on Final Performance
29 Apr	-	Final Performance
30 Apr	-	Wrap up and lessons learned

## **Biography – Randy Strawderman**

Randy Strawderman has extensive experience as a choreographer and director, for which he has won numerous awards. In addition, he has developed three new works for the theater. He conceived, co-wrote and directed “Red Hot & Cole,” a Cole Porter revue, which has been licensed by Music Theatre International and is still being performed all over the world. He also wrote and directed “Ella & Her Fella, Frank,” a new musical revue, pitting Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra in a sing-off in Heaven, and wrote and directed “Red Badge” a musical adaptation of Stephen Crane’s “The Red Badge of Courage.”

Randy co-founded Studio Theatre of Richmond, dedicated to the development of new plays and founded and served as Artistic Director for its “Young Writers for the Theatre” program, Virginia's first statewide New Play Competition and Festival for middle and high-school students. That program has sent writers on to the Dramatist Guilds National Playwriting Festival, with their plays being fully produced Off-Broadway with Broadway and Off-Broadway directors and actors. He has also served as Artistic Director of the Barksdale Theatre in Richmond and Associate Artistic Director at Theatre Virginia.

In addition to numerous regional productions, Randy has directed and choreographed national tours of “Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” and “A Child’s Christmas in Wales” and produced John Henry Redwood’s “The Old Settler” at the National Black Theatre Festival.

Randy holds a BFA in Theatre from Virginia Commonwealth University and is currently serving as guest artist, teaching acting and directing, at The Governor’s School for the Arts in Norfolk, Virginia.