

Theater is a language through which human beings can engage in active dialogue on what is important to them. It allows individuals to create a safe space that they may inhabit in groups and use to explore the interactions that make up their lives. It is a lab for problem solving, for seeking options, and for practicing solutions.

—Augusto Boal, creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed

SEXUAL ASSAULT EDUCATION THEATER

UNST 421-515/ CRN: 64084/ 6 credits / Spring 2012 / Fridays 9:00am – 1:00pm/ NH 382

Instructor: Eden Isenstein
Office hours: By appointment
Phone: 503-887-4447 (cell)
E-mail: eni@pdx.edu

Course Description

In this class, students will learn about the dynamics of sexual assault as they practice using theater as a tool for social change. Students will develop short plays about sexual assault and its prevention based on classroom readings, discussions, prior learning, and lived experiences. These plays will then be performed for various campus audiences based on the Theatre of the Oppressed Open Forum model, in which audience members are invited to stop and shift the action by joining the play, thereby practicing strategies for facing challenging situations and "rehearsing for the future."

Community Partners

Women's Resource Center (WRC)

Located in Montgomery Hall, lower level (1802 SW 10th Ave.)

Contacts:

Jessica Amo, Assistant Director
jamo@pdx.edu
503-725-5640

Adrienne Graf, Coordinator of the Interpersonal Violence Prevention and Advocacy Program
ipv@pdx.edu
503-725-5605

Mission

The Women's Resource Center seeks to empower women and to encourage their active and equal participation in all levels of the university community and the larger society. We encourage the participation of ALL people in the community as we strive to provide a safe and supportive environment for self-identified women.

Values

- **Social Justice:** Actively seeking the end of oppression based on gender, race, religion, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, and physical and mental abilities; and any other forms of oppression.
- **Community:** Utilizing programs and resources to decrease isolation and increase support networks; we maintain an accessible space where women and others can network and share resources.

- **Safety:** Decreasing incidents of violence and promoting a campus environment in which all people feel safe; and providing services to those who have been in unsafe situations.
- **Leadership and Mentoring:** Encourage and allow more women to become leaders and to have a strong voice on campus and in the community.
- **Diversity:** Valuing the differences that enrich our lives and promote understanding; and actively working to create a community that values diversity.
- **Research:** Provide resources for people seeking information on women's studies; promoting events and programs that educate and empower women; educate PSU and community about women's issues.

Diversity Statement

The Women's Resource Center supports the right of all people to learn and live in safety and without fear. We value diversity by recognizing and affirming the common humanity of all persons and the intrinsic value of each individual. In this community space, we intend to challenge ourselves and others to put feminist theories into practice with courage, integrity and compassion.

Goals, Objectives, Outcomes

This Capstone course is designed to engage our learning community in meaningful action with various learning communities within Portland State University through our collaboration with the Women's Resource Center.

The goals for this Capstone are as follows:

- 1) to provide PSU Capstone students with a personally, academically, professionally, and creatively meaningful service-learning opportunity; and
- 2) to further the mission of PSU's Women's Resource Center as it works to educate the campus community about sexual assault and its prevention.

The objectives of this Capstone address both course content and the University Studies' goals of communication, critical thinking, appreciation of diversity and social responsibility, and are as follows:

- 1) to offer students first-hand, real-world experience creating a learning community that will develop and perform an interactive theater piece for students on campus (*communication, critical thinking, appreciation of diversity, and social responsibility*);
- 2) to increase students' understanding of the dynamics of sexual assault on college campuses and at PSU in particular (*critical thinking, social and ethical responsibility*);
- 3) to enhance students' facility and confidence with written and oral communication, including the writing of reflective pieces and theatrical scenes (*communication*);
- 3) to increase students' abilities to think through and apply concepts to practical action, particularly as these pertain to community collaborations in general and our collaboration with the WRC and its constituents in particular (*critical thinking*);
- 4) to facilitate students' building of healthy and functional relationships around both differences and likenesses experienced within the classroom community and with the community partner's constituencies (*appreciation of diversity*); and
- 5) to encourage students' ongoing identification with and participation in a shared community, both on a small scale (as members of a classroom learning community) and as change agents at PSU, using theater as a tool for social change (*social responsibility*).

Instructor's Expectations

I know that each student enters this class with profound gifts and skills. I am interested in being in a class in which everyone is welcome and included and in which everyone takes responsibility for welcoming and including everyone else. I expect that we will practice bringing ourselves—our best selves—to this

work every day with that intention: to be fully present to this experience and to companion each other as we make our way together through it.

And that *is* a practice. Some days our best selves may look and sound and *be* a whole lot “better” than on other days. But I ask that each of you, if you choose to remain in this class, agree to take this same sort of commitment on for the duration of our time together and to investigate what that means to you.

In what ways might we commit ourselves to showing up, paying attention, telling the truth, and being open to the outcome? What do you need in order to practice your own version of this commitment?

If you miss a working class session, team meeting, or other Capstone-related event, I expect that you will let me know in advance, get notes from class, verify assignments, check on deadlines, collect materials from class, and stay current with the project. If you know in advance that you will miss a class session, please make arrangements to pass on any assignments related to that session.

If you need physical or other accommodation, please see me and/or contact the Disability Resource Center (435 Smith Center, 503-725-4150 [voice] and 503-725-6504 [TDD]).

Texts

- Reading packet available at Clean Copy
- Various articles and videos available online

Requirements

1—Class attendance and participation: 100 points

One-fourth of your grade will be based on the evidence of your commitment to our learning community and our community partner—namely, your attendance in and individual contributions to our class and your work in collaboration with the WRC.

To that end, you will earn up to **100 points** for class attendance and participation. Full attendance and participation points are earned for each working class session in which you:

- ◇ are on time and in attendance for the entire session in the classroom and/or participate in a task in the community, as agreed upon;
- ◇ show evidence of being prepared for class and work sessions;
- ◇ contribute to class discussions and work sessions;
- ◇ confirm that you have completed assignments on time; and
- ◇ take on tasks as necessary to the successful and functional group effort.
- ◇ If you miss a class session with a guest speaker, film or other integral piece as determined by the instructor, you will be required to complete an alternative assignment. (This will typically be a visit with the guest speaker, viewing of the film or other way to gather the missed information)

2— Reflections on class activities and experiences related to community partnership: 100 points

One-fourth of your grade will be based on your creative expression of your thoughts and experiences around every aspect of work in this course in regular reflection journals.

Weekly reflections, worth 10 points each, are due every Thursday starting the second week of class, with the final journal completed in our last class meeting.

3—Discussion Questions: 60 points

Weekly discussion questions provide the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge, understanding and synthesis of the class materials. Discussion questions are listed with the reading assignments on the course website.

4—Teamwork: 40 points

Capstone courses require students to work in interdisciplinary teams to create a final product of value to the community partner, and this course is no exception to that rule. We will, by necessity, collaborate intensively on this project, and you will evaluate your own and your teammates' participation in and contributions to the teams we develop to engage in our work. Each individual student will earn a total of up to 60 points for their participation on their team(s), and these points will be determined by the completion of:

- Self and Peer Evaluations (20 points)
- Instructor Evaluation (20 points)

5— Class project: 100 points

Each Capstone class is expected to complete a “final product,” some sort of concrete representation of the collaborative efforts of Capstone students across their disciplines and with the community partners they serve. The final products for this class are the performances we will stage at the end of the term. Your group will create a rubric to evaluate your performance. On the last day of class you will evaluate the performance based on your rubric.

- Final Project—Everyone in your group will earn the same grade (70 points)
- Group Project Overview (20 points)
- Program Bio (10 points)

Grading

In graphic terms, then, your grade will be determined in the following way:

Source of points	Points available
Class attendance and participation: Class attendance and participation = 100 points	100 points
Reflection: 10 entries x 10 points each	100 points
Discussion Questions 6 modules x 10 points	60 points
Teamwork: Self and Peer Evaluation= 20 points Instructor Evaluation= 20 points	40 points
Final product: Performance collaboratively evaluated by your collectively-developed criteria and your program biography.	100 points

Total: 400 points

I'll use the University's published 4-point grading scale to assign a letter grade to your end-of-term point totals.

You may feel free to discuss your status in the course with me; asking for and receiving feedback from me, the community partner, and classmates will help you remain oriented within the group.

You will not receive a grade for this class until you have returned all texts and/or equipment borrowed from the instructor, the community partners, and/or the University.

Schedule

Note: The following schedule—and this syllabus as a whole—should be considered a living document, a work in progress.

Week/Day/Date	Activities	Readings/Assignments Due
1 F 9/28	<p>Class Introduction Cover the space Zip zap zop What is your name? What do you love? What do you hate? Create ground rules</p> <p>Introduction to Image Theatre- Complete the image in pairs Dueling images in groups Create group images about class topic I'm so smart and you are so awesome</p>	<p>Module 1- TO 101 Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus + Capstone handbook • “Why This Book? My Three Theatrical Encounters”-Boal • “Boal & Beyond”- Green • “Theater of the Recruits” - Grace Telesco, Interviewed by Alisa Solomon • “Notes From Inside”- Tim Mitchell <p>Assignments: Module 1 Discussion Questions (Completed in class)</p>
2 F 10/5	<p>Oppression 101 Fear/Protector Clap around the circle Donkey Secret Pals Class agreements Performance time availability Discuss reading in performance groups Work in groups to create images</p>	<p>Module 2- Oppression 101 Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 2,3, 4 & 8- Privilege, Power & Difference (Reading Packet) <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 2 Discussion Questions (see course website) • Reflection 1 (See pg. 10 in your syllabus)
3 F 10/12	<p>Guest: Jessica Amo, WRC Sexual Assault 101</p> <p>Fear/Protector Introduction to Sculpting Work in performance groups to sculpt images (time permitting)</p>	<p>Module 3- SA 101 Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 577-594 in Human Sexuality (Reading packet) • A Developmental Examination of Violence Against Women (Reading Packet) <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 3 Discussion Questions (see course website) • Reflection 2 (See pg. 10 in your syllabus)

<p>4 F 10/19</p>	<p>Balancing circle Introduction to Forum Space & Territory/ Bus Ride Watch T.O. video</p> <p>In performance groups: Sculpt images from personal stories/experiences connected to class topic. Share stories (optional) Find common theme(s) Create a group image Create 3 minute plays</p>	<p>Module 4- Gender Socialization Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masculinity as Homophobia (link) • Social Considerations Related to Adolescent Girls' Sexual Empowerment (link) <p>Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missrepresentation Trailer • Tough Guise clip on gender socialization- Jackson Katz <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 4 Discussion Questions • Group Project Overview • Reflection 3- How is the material you are studying in this course relevant to your own life? What kinds of reactions are you having as you work with the material? Which parts of what you are learning are most difficult or do you struggle with and why?
<p>5 F 10/26</p>	<p>Zip zap zop</p> <p>In performance groups: Sculpt images from personal stories/experiences connected to class topic. Share stories (optional) Find common theme(s) Create a group image Create 3 minute plays Clap around the circle</p> <p>2X3XBradford Group Check ins/inventory Hopes/Fears</p> <p>Discuss Activating Material</p> <p>Group Work</p>	<p>Module 5- Consent and TO continued Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking for Consent is Sexy- Abrams • Attributing Consent-Lim & Roloff • Activating Material- Rohd <p>Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student video on consent <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 5 Discussion Questions • Reflection 4- Expanding from last week's reflection, write about an incident (or incidents) of sexism, gender socialization, homophobia/heterosexism (the incident may include any or all of these topics) that has affected you. Be specific and descriptive. Were you targeted? Did you observe someone else being targeted? Did you target someone? Did you collude? Intervene? Suspend judgment as much as you can and explore the incident(s). I encourage you to

		explore the incident(s) in the context of the theory we have covered in class. As always, disclose what you feel comfortable sharing with me.
6 F 11/2	Find Your Mother Machine Machine with themes Relationship wheel Freeze tag in groups of 3 Group work	Module 6- Rape Culture & Bystander Intervention Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Assault on College Campuses • Jackson Katz on bystander intervention Videos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The Undetected Rapist’ • “Not Ever” Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 6 Discussion Questions • Reflection 5- See page 13 of syllabus
7 F 11/9	Clap around the circle in groups Pass the Monster Group work- refine and polish plays Monster Tag Rehearsal	Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection 6- Character Analysis (see page 14 of syllabus) • Bio & Play Title Due
8 F 11/16	Rehearsal	Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection 7- Where do you imagine the audience will intervene in your play? What sorts of interventions do you think they will try out? How do you think your character would respond to these interventions?
9 M 11/19	PERFORMANCE Nov 19 th 11-12:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cast arrives at 10:30am
9 F 11/23	NO CLASS- THANKSGIVING	
10 M 11/26	PERFORMANCE Nov. 26 th 5:30-6:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cast arrives at 5:00pm

10 F 11/30	Performance Debrief Performance self evals Self and Peer evaluations Course evals Performance audience evals Secret Pals Letter to the next class Reflection 10- in class	Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection 8- Performance reflection: What were your highlights/ insights from the performance? • Reflection 9- How will you use the information that you have gotten from this class in your everyday lives, work or community?

There's really only one question in life, and only one lesson. This question is whispered endlessly to us from all directions: Who are you? How are you going to find, and be, who you are? Th[is] question the whole world asks at every moment cannot help but feel the most dangerous: Who are you? Who are you, really? Beneath the trappings and traumas that clutter and characterize our lives, who are you, and what do you want to do with the so-short life you've been given?

—Derrick Jensen, from *Walking on Water: Reading, Writing, and Revolution*

The Reflection Journal: Processing Scholarship, Practice, Experience

One tool to assist you in making meaning of your class sessions, team and community practice, and personal experience in this Capstone is the reflection journal. In this journal, you will engage with the ideas presented in our course content, explore the connections between the theoretical and the practical issues you discover through your community work, and process the intersections of your personal experience with your team and community work.

Reading the journals you and your classmates prepare gives me insight into how I might frame our ongoing course experience. It also opens the door to a one-on-one written dialogue that you and I will share in these next 10 weeks.

Content: Your weekly journal entry is due each Thursday starting the second week of the term, with Reflection 10 completed during our final class session.

When and how to write: To prepare to write your journal entry, I suggest that you sit with and think about the framing questions (or other questions of your choice) for a good while. Live with the questions, and let them live in you. Then sit and write your way into your response. If you are fully engaged with the questions, you may not know where your writing will take you, and that's a good thing in a reflection. Each reflection *should* take you someplace you didn't know you were headed, as you discover the meaning this experience has for you as an individual. Write the reflection only you can write.

Please type all journals. Journals should be double spaced with 12 point font

The following table further outlines the expectations for reflection entries

Evaluation: Entries are worth 10 points each. If you turn in the on time and have clearly engaged with the questions (mine or your own), you will receive full points for it. Each individually prepared journal will be returned to you no later than the following week.
Late entries: Because your journal entries help me frame our class experience as it evolves and is revealed in your writing, I'll deduct a point per day that any journal entry is late. Please contact me if you need to make special arrangements for turning in your entry.
Confidentiality: I will keep the contents of individual journals turned in to me completely confidential. No other person will read or hear about your writing, unless you choose to show or tell.

Reflection 1

Before writing your first reflection, spend some time thinking through the *hopes, fears, needs* and *expectations* that you have for this course. After thinking through your orientation to the course, respond to any or all of the following questions, or any of your own questions that have emerged after our first week.

- What were your expectations about this class? Where did those expectations originate? Have your expectations changed as a result of your experience of these first two classes? If so, how? What provoked the change?
- What are your thoughts and feelings (including, possibly, any concerns or fears) about the work that you as an individual and we as a class will be taking on in this course?
- What are your hopes and desires for the next 10 weeks?
- What do you believe you will need in order to bring your best self to this collective work?
- How may others (your classmates, the community partner, the instructor, etc.) support your work in this class? How do you imagine you will be able to support the work of others?
- At this early point in our process, how do you see yourself belonging to this new class community and the larger community you'll serve this term? In what ways might it be challenging for you to interact with this class community and the larger community?

You may be as creative as you like in responding to any or all of these questions, or to other questions that have emerged for you in these first days of class. Tell a story. Risk not making sense. Surprise yourself: Write through the perimeter of what you understand into the heart of what you don't yet know but may discover through your writing of it.

As we move forward with our project I am hoping that we can be as intentional as possible in structuring our work and taking on tasks that are both necessary for our group effort and will help you learn and develop the skills you are most interested in enhancing. I invite you this week to survey your academic work to date and determine what ways you'd most like to be involved in this project.

Before you start to write, do the following:

- **List the most important/valuable courses** that you have completed. What were the objectives of each course? What were the most valuable skills you learned in each of these courses?
- **Collect a sample** of the most important and meaningful papers/projects/exams completed in earlier courses. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of your work? What skills stand out as you review these materials?
- **Review the primary aims** for your major. Have you met most of the aims of your discipline? Are there other discipline-based skills that you feel have not been addressed in your education?
- **Review the four general education goals** for our university (i.e., critical thinking, communication, appreciation of diversity, and social responsibility). Do you feel that you have acquired skills in relation to these goals in your general education and discipline-based coursework? What educational experiences are missing from your academic work?
- **Add any relevant materials** from your professional and/or personal experience which have shaped the skills and capacities you bring into our class. What do these materials say about your skills and capacities?

Now, with this survey of your work in mind, imagine that we have come to the wildly successful conclusion of our time together, and you are telling a friend all about it. How will you describe your participation in this course? What skills/capacities/talents did you intentionally bring into and use to create the successful outcome to our project? If someone had videotaped our class sessions what would they have captured you doing in the class, and especially on the project? What roles did you play, and which roles did you leave for others? Based on our beginning conversations about the many tasks that will need to get accomplished for that wildly successful outcome to happen, which ones did you take on, and which ones did you entrust to others?

Group Project Overview

Please include TWO sections (This paper must be completed separately by each individual group member)

Section ONE: A 2-4 page paper describing the following:

- Your group's established roles, norms and rules
 - How will you make decisions?
 - How will you handle conflict?
 - Agreements around communication, attendance etc.
 - What is your scheduled weekly meeting time?
- A brief description of the plan your group is formulating. If it is still in flux, discuss the options on the table and the factors at play in your decision making
- A description of what you bring to the group. This might be knowledge or skills from classes or experience in the community. It might be that you have an asset like a truck or community connections or access to computer software or perhaps the work fits with your career goals. Really consider what you have to offer here.

Section TWO:

Attach a table including the name of your group, the names of the members in your group, each person's e-mail & phone number, whether or not they check e-mail regularly, role in the group if you choose to assign permanent roles (such as note taker, facilitator etc...), and any other information you think would be helpful to have as a quick reference.

Reflection 5

One theme we'll likely pursue this term is summed up in a quote from human rights activist Kathy Kelly: "What we see depends upon where we stand." We've already started talking about this, with our work on social location and our "Sexual Assault 101" class with Adrienne. One thing I have learned from teaching is that we each "see" something different when we look at the topic of sexual assault depending on where we stand in relation to it. If this is at all true for us, it will be true for our audiences as well.

This week, I encourage you to get clearer about where you stand. I also encourage you to pursue "understanding" here instead of "judging." The purpose of this reflection is to gain awareness of the messages you have taken in about sexual assault, recognize what questions you have about the dynamics of assault, and identify resources to help answer these questions. Here are some prompts to get you started:

- When you look back over your life, how did you come to believe what you currently do about sexual assault? What messages did you get about sexual assault from your family, from your cultural and/or religious background, from your education, from the media, and/or from your own lived experiences? In what ways have those messages been consistent? In what ways have they conflicted and contradicted each other?
- In what ways do your current views on sexual assault conform to the dominant messages you got from those places, and in what ways do they stray from the messages you heard as you grew up? How have you chosen what you believe to be true about sexual assault from all of the messages you have gotten about it over time? What has caused you to believe some things and not others?
- What do you need to understand about sexual assault now, at a deeper level than you've understood it before, in order to successfully contribute to our project? Where do you see possibilities for growth and learning in you around this topic? How might you best receive the resources you need to develop that growth and learning?

Again, I encourage you to use the space of your reflection to write your way into something you didn't quite know about yourself and your experience until following the path onto the page.

Reflection 6- Character Analysis

Now that each of you knows your character, it's time for you to inhabit that character as truthfully as you can in order to co-create a compelling theater piece. We might think of each character in this play as an iceberg: There is a tiny bit of who each person is revealed through his/her choices in the play, but there is much, much more below the surface. What's below the surface is your character's backstory, all that your character is and has experienced and brings to this particular situation. Your revelation of your character's backstory will help you understand your character's motivation to behave in the way s/he does.

This week, I ask you write an autobiographical sketch of your character. Start by spending time with the story: Explore what your character's motivation is for what he/she says and does.

After spending sufficient time reflecting on who your character is, use one or more of these prompts to step into your character and write your autobiographical sketch from that place:

- ❖ Where do you come from? Where did you grow up, and what was that growing-up experience like? How would you characterize your childhood? What fundamental experiences have shaped you into the person you are today?
- ❖ What brought you to this set of people, this setting? What's your major? How is the college experience going for you? What's comfortable and easy about it, and what's challenging? How do you deal with those challenges?
- ❖ What kinds of relationships (friendships and intimate relationships) do you have in your life? Who are your closest friends, and what makes those friendships strong? Are you satisfied with the relationships you have in your life? Why or not why?
- ❖ Who are your parents, and what kind of relationships do you have with them? Do they approve of and support you, and, if so, what forms do that approval and support take? If they don't support you, what are the consequences of that lack of support?
- ❖ What are your hopes and dreams for the future? Where do you hope to be in 5, 10, 20 years' time? How do you plan to get there?
- ❖ Describe in detail an experience from your past that connects to this current experience. How does this past experience link to the present one? How did that past experience shape you and inform your experience in this current situation?

Here are several things to keep in mind:

- ❖ **Remember, you are writing this reflection as your character—you are not answering these questions as yourself.** This reflection is essentially an invention, a way for you to explore who your character is so that you may fully inhabit her/him. While there may be overlap between you personally and your character, there will also necessarily be differences—so I encourage you to dive as deeply into your character as possible to reveal *his/her* truth.
- ❖ **Be sure to write this reflection in the first person, using “I” statements.** You are being your character in this piece, so write in your character's voice.
- ❖ **Dive deep.** Your acting will be enhanced by knowing your character at the deepest levels possible, so use this reflection as a place to continue diving in...