

# COURSE SYLLABUS

Fall Semester 2007

## ENS 119: Opera Workshop

CID #5263

1 Hour Credit

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Dawn M. Padula  
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**OFFICE:** School of Music, Rm. 326  
**OFFICE HOURS:** By appointment

### **CLASS TIME/LOCATION:**

This class meets regularly Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 3:00-3:50PM in the Rm. 202 (Choral Hall). Additional class meeting times for this semester are necessary for this class' involvement as members of the crew for Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* in October, and are mandatory. Note the following rehearsals and performance times listed below. For your convenience, you have also been provided with a calendar:

Monday, October 15, 6-10PM  
Tuesday, October 16, 6-10PM  
Wednesday, October 17, 5:30-10PM  
Thursday, October 18, 5:30-10PM  
Friday, October 19, 5:30-10PM (Performance #1)  
Saturday, October 20, 5:30-10PM (Performance #2)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is considered to be a performance "workshop" in that it is focused upon the process of creating opera versus the product. In addition to learning the basics of stagecraft, this is a course designed to allow the individual vocalist to explore how to integrate movement and dramatization into performance. The workshop provides a safe place to juggle and experiment with the integration of voice, drama and movement.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

The most important goal in this course is, "The development and sharpening of your resources so that you are freer in mind, body and voice to explore the entirety of music and drama in the rehearsal and performance of sung theater." (*The Singing and Acting Handbook*, Thomas de Mallet Burgess and Nicholas Skilbeck, p.11.) Some of the areas we will explore this semester to achieve the above stated goal are, character development, music and text study, and stage movement. The "process" will be our primary objective from which a "product" can evolve.

### **TEXTBOOK, REPERTOIRE, AND/OR SUPPLIES:**

#### **Repertoire**

A spoken monologue (to be procured from a monologue book or play)  
An English art song or aria (from your semester's repertoire)

A foreign language art song or aria (from your semester's repertoire)  
An opera scene (to be assigned)—NOTE: The finished product *may* be presented in the last Forum of the semester!

### **Other Supplies**

A towel or Yoga matt (for any acting exercises requiring floor work)

Personal Make-Up Kit:

For sanitary purposes, you will also be required to purchase your own make-up and application supplies for the unit on Stage Make-Up. This kit is relatively inexpensive and many of the components can be used for any additional future productions. You will be provided with specific instructions as to where and how to order these makeup kits (and as to what the contents should be) during the first month of school.

A production T-shirt (price approximately \$8-\$12):

This is not an option! As a member of the crews for the Opera Players production of *Gianni Schicchi*, you are required to purchase a T-shirt... you, too, can be a walking advertisement! What a better way to show your pride as a member of the Opera Workshop!

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

### **Attendance**

Attendance at scheduled classes and production rehearsals is vital to your growth as a performer and the success of the workshop. You are counted as being in attendance when all of the following take effect: 1) you are physically present; 2) you have all materials necessary to perform the assignment; 3) you are properly warmed-up when you are scheduled to perform; 4) you are attentive and ready to participate in class; 5.) you present yourself with a professional attitude towards your director and your colleagues.

As this is an ensemble, no absences are allowed. If you are ill, your absence will be excused only with a valid Doctor's note indicating illness that would prevent you from physically being present in class. If you are ill and absolutely cannot make it to class, you will need to contact me with a voicemail and e-mail before rehearsal. If you have a question as to whether you should miss class due to illness, please contact me. Rule of thumb: If you are well enough to attend Choir that day, you are well enough to attend Opera Workshop!

Unexcused absences will result in a letter-grade deduction from your final grade; two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade and in your being removed from the class. Being tardy two times will count as one unexcused absence. Each additional time you are tardy past that will result in another unexcused absence. During Production Week for *Gianni Schicchi*, there are no absences that are allowed, this includes church choir rehearsals or work conflicts. You are given ample notice of these rehearsal times and dates, and you must make arrangements with your employers to clear your calendars on these dates. Absence from a Production Week rehearsal will result in your final grade being lowered by two letter grades.

### **Assignments**

Assignments are designed to help you hone your craft as a performer. They will be given to you well in advance of their due date. Their content and requirements will be explained on

an assignment-to-assignment basis. Your preparation of and proper execution of assignments make up a large percentage of your final grade for this course. *NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.* Late work will result in a failing grade for that assignment. Failure to follow instructions for a given assignment will also result in your receiving a failing grade for that assignment. If you have any questions, just ask for clarification.

### **Professionalism and Collegiality**

The motto of this class truly is to “have fun!” in that it is about learning about the craft of performance. However, all of this must be within reason. We will be doing several exercises that are designed to get you out of your shell and into the realm of being a dynamic stage performer. You might feel silly, and as a result, might feel that the best way to get through any embarrassment would be to make fun of the exercise. With that in mind, note that each exercise should be taken seriously in that while fun is had, you always are keeping in mind that this is part of the process of what is necessary to be a good performing artist. It is imperative that we create a safe environment of creativity. What this means is that you should always display nothing but the utmost respect towards your colleagues and their work that is being presented. Some students in the class may even suffer from performance anxiety, a very normal and common reaction to performing in front of a group. One of the goals of this class is to help young performers to overcome any anxieties but allowing them a place to practice and to hone their craft. As such, each member is responsible for exuding an atmosphere of safety, support and sensitivity. “The Golden Rule” is extremely applicable in this course as you all will be in front of the class as much, or even more, than I will be. Any student behaving in any way that I deem unprofessional or disruptive will be asked to leave. The participation grade for that day will be an “F.”

### **Technical Crew Duties**

This section of Opera Workshop will serve as the technical crew for the production of Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi* presented by the Opera Players in October. As such, you will attend all production week rehearsals (see Calendar and “Course Content by Class Period”), and will execute assigned technical duties. Several of you will work as make-up applicators for members of the cast, as several of the roles call for age makeup. Specific assignments will be given to you as the production date draws closer. For Production Week (October 15-20), you will need to watch the Opera Workshop Bulletin Board for the daily schedule.

### **Communication**

You must check your e-mail on a daily basis! It is a requirement for this course (and I imagine, several other courses you are taking!). I will be using BlackBoard (located on the shsu.edu website homepage) to upload class information, assignments, announcements, etc. You must check this every day, as well as your shsu.edu e-mail account. If you choose to use a different e-mail account, be sure that you have your shsu.edu account forwarded to that e-mail so that I can get in touch with you. No excuses! This campus is loaded with public computers, so I will not accept any excuse that your e-mail was down or that you could not check BlackBoard on the web. The Opera Workshop Bulletin Board will also contain important information. Remember to check this at least once a day.

### **Live Performance Attendance**

You should plan on going to see a live opera performance sometime this semester. The Houston Grand Opera (HGO) is world renowned and just an hour away! Student tickets are usually available at discounted prices. Their performance calendar is available online at:

<http://www.houstongrandopera.org/OtherDisplay.aspx?PageID=9>

Your instructor (me!) will be in two operas in Houston this semester at Opera in the Heights, *Carmen* (role of Mercedes and Carmen for student performance) and *Le Nozze di Figaro* (role of Cherubino). I'd love to see you there! The performance calendar is available online at:

<http://www.operaintheheights.org/>

I'm double-cast in *Figaro*, so I'll let you know which of the 6 performances are mine as soon as I know.

The University of Houston Moores Opera Center (my alma mater) is also presenting *Gianni Schicchi* this fall in a double-bill with a Poulenc one-act opera. More information is available online at:

<http://www.music.uh.edu/events/calendar.pdf>

Their fall production is the same weekend as ours, but they also have performances on Sunday and Monday.

### **GRADES:**

Grades are based on successful preparation and execution of Assignments, your successful and enthusiastic execution of your assigned Technical Crew Duties, Participation, and Attendance. Participation includes proper attitude (see "Professionalism and Collegiality"), mastery of concepts learned and studied, and improvement. Assignment preparation and execution is the equivalent of quizzes and exams:

Participation:	30%
Assignments:	40%
Technical Crew:	30%

\*Deductions for Attendance violations will be taken from your final semester grade as indicated above.

### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

#### **Academic Honesty:**

*The Faculty Handbook states that the University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Furthermore, the University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to cheating on an examination of other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.*

**Proper Classroom Demeanor/Rules of Conduct:**

*Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Please turn off or mute your cellular phone and/or pager before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspaper, sleeping, talking among each other at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in, minimally, a directive to leave class or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.*

**Americans with Disabilities Act:**

*SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. **NOTE: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.***

**Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy:**

*Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.*

*University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). This request must be made in the first fifteen days of the semester or the first seven days of a summer session in which the absence(s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.*

**Visitors in the Classroom:**

*Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.*

**\*COURSE CONTENT BY CLASS PERIOD**

***\*While I make every effort to follow this schedule, there may be some changes as the semester progresses.***

***I will notify you of any changes to this printed schedule, if any, as soon as they arise..***

Monday, August 20	Course Introduction; Presentation of Syllabus
Wednesday, August 22	<b>NO CLASS—Dr. Padula attends Faculty Staff Meeting with President Gaertner</b>
Friday, August 24	<b>Elements of Stagecraft</b> ASSIGNMENT: Study “Stage Manager’s Handbook” for Quiz
Monday, August 27	<b>Elements of Stagecraft, cont.</b> QUIZ: “Stage Manager’s Handbook” Terminology Practical Application ASSIGNMENT: Pick monologue—to be presented starting September 17
Wednesday, August 29	<b>Creating an Environment</b> ASSIGNMENT: Creative Movement to Musical Background (of your choice)—to be presented September 5 and 7
Friday, August 31	<b>Creating an Environment, cont.</b>
Monday, September 3	<b>NO CLASS—LABOR DAY HOLIDAY</b>
Wednesday, September 5	ASSIGNMENTS presented for class
Friday, September 7	ASSIGNMENTS presented for class, cont.
Monday, September 10	<b>Improvisation</b>
Wednesday, September 12	<b>Improvisation, cont.</b>
Friday, September 14	<b>Improvisation, cont.</b>
Monday, September 17	<b>Monologues</b> presented for class
Wednesday, September 19	<b>Monologues</b> presented for class, cont.
Friday, September 21	<b>Monologues</b> presented for class, cont.
Monday, September 24	<b>NO CLASS—Dr. Padula performs <i>Carmen</i> for a Student Performance in Houston</b>

Wednesday, September 26	<b>Monologue</b> work/Exercises
Friday, September 28	<b>Monologue</b> work/Exercises
Monday, October 1	<b>Stage Make-Up</b> (YOU MUST HAVE YOUR MAKE-UP KITS FOR THIS!) ASSIGNMENT: English Art Song—to be presented starting October 26
Wednesday, October 3	<b>Stage Make-Up</b> , cont. Sing-through scene
Friday, October 5	<b>Stage Make-Up</b> , cont Sing-through scene
Monday, October 8	<b>Stage Make-Up</b> , cont Sing-through scene
Wednesday, October 10	<b>Stage Make-Up</b> , cont Sing-through scene
Friday, October 12	<b>Stage Make-Up</b> , cont Sing-through scene
Monday, October 15	<b>NO DAY CLASS—EVENING PRODUCTION REHEARSAL 6-10pm</b>
*Tuesday, October 16	<b>EVENING PRODUCTION REHEARSAL 6-10pm</b>
Wednesday, October 17	<b>NO DAY CLASS—EVENING PRODUCTION REHEARSAL 5:30-10pm</b>
*Thursday, October 18	<b>EVENING PRODUCTION REHEARSAL 5:30-10pm</b>
Friday, October 19	<b>NO DAY CLASS—EVENING PRODUCTION 5:30-10pm</b>
*Saturday, October 20	<b>EVENING PRODUCTION 5:30-10pm</b>
Monday, October 22	<b>NO CLASS</b> (to make up for last week!) ASSIGNMENT: Foreign language Art Song or Aria to be presented from memory week of November 12
Wednesday, October 24	<b>NO CLASS</b> (to make up for last week!)
Friday, October 26	<b>English Art Songs/Arias</b> presented

Monday, October 29	<b>English Art Songs/Arias</b> presented/work, cont.
Wednesday, October 31	<b>English Art Songs/Arias</b> presented/work, cont.
Friday, November 2	<b>English Art Songs/Arias</b> presented/work, cont.
Monday, November 5	<b>English Art Songs/Arias</b> presented/work, cont. ASSIGNMENT: Be sure you are memorizing scene assignment—due November 19!
Wednesday, November 7	<b>NO CLASS—NATS</b>
Friday, November 9	<b>NO CLASS—NATS</b>
Monday, November 12	<b>Foreign Lang. Art Songs/Arias</b> presented Scene run-through
Wednesday, November 14	<b>Foreign Lang. Art Songs/Arias</b> presented, cont. Scene run-through
Friday, November 16	<b>Foreign Lang. Art Songs/Arias</b> presented Scene run-through
Monday, November 19	<b>Foreign Lang. Art Songs/Arias</b> presented Scene run-through from memory!
Wednesday, November 21	<b>NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</b>
Friday, November 23	<b>NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</b>
Monday, November 26	<b>Scene work</b> (staging)
Wednesday, November 28	<b>Scene work</b> (staging)
Friday, November 30	<b>Scene work</b> (staging)
Monday, December 3	<b>Scene work</b> (staging)
Wednesday, December 5	<b>Scene work</b> and Semester Wrap-Up!