THEA:452:01 Seminar in Theatre: Administration
Fall 2010
Mon-Wed-Fri 10:00 AM - 11:05 AM  Seibert Hall 106

Instructor:  Erik Viker, Associate Professor of Theatre
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Office Hours:  Tuesday & Thursday 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM  or by appointment

Introduction and expectations
This course is an in-depth exploration of theatre administration and audience services.

Prerequisites:  THEA:340 Stage Management & Theatre Operations, or permission of instructor.

Readings for each week must be completed in advance so class discussions may be informed by the textbooks and supplemental material as it arises.  Students are expected to bring questions and insights about the assigned readings to class for group exploration.  Students will complete weekly assignments relevant to the topics studied.  In the best seminar tradition, substantial student-led discussion, peer review and group critique of finished work are important aspects of the course.

Late assignments will not be accepted.  Exceptions may be considered only due to a catastrophic personal or family event, with documentation from the office of the Dean of Student Life.  Any requests for learning disability special accommodations must be made during the first two weeks of class, and documentation is required from the university counseling center.

The theatre administration industry is by nature collaborative, and many course activities will reflect this expectation.  For some projects, the class will be arranged into several groups to approach assigned challenges as collaborating theatre administrators would.  It is important that every student in shared projects contribute substantially to assignments, and grading will include assessment of both student-specific contributions and evidence of collaboration.  Penalties for plagiarism are of course severe, with details available in the SU student handbook.

Cell phones must be switched to “off” for the duration of every class period.

Under no circumstances will the instructor discuss a student’s grade or course progress with anyone other than the student or the student’s academic advisor.

Textbooks and supplies
The required textbook is Management and the Arts (4th Edition) by William J. Byrnes.  Supplemental material provided by the instructor will also be studied, including industry standards, management tools and other articles of interest.  Theatre Management by David M. Conte and Stephen Langley is highly recommended as a supplemental text.
Grading
Weekly assignments 50%
Participation and attendance 50%

Written work will be graded by professional academic assessment of grammar, spelling, insight and clarity of expression. All assignments will also be assessed for accuracy, thoroughness, and efficient use of required information. Easily avoidable errors including evidence of inadequate proofreading and editing will result in drastic grade reductions, up to one letter grade per instance.

In-class participation work will be assessed by professional academic observation of student engagement with the material, presentation preparation, efforts to use critical analysis and problem-solving skills, and cooperative interaction with colleagues during discussions.

Class Topics and Schedule
On Mondays we will explore information about an area of interest for theatre administration or patron services, with students identified in advance to lead discussions about the assigned readings. Wednesdays will most often focus on detailed project planning and resource coordination techniques. Fridays will usually be dedicated to in-class presentation and critique of administration projects assigned for that week. This schedule is subject to change on short notice.

Week 1 8/30 – 9/3
Course introductions; the nature of performing arts
Business versus aesthetics?
READING: Chapter 1

Week 2 9/6 – 9/10
Management theories and the arts
History of leadership in the theatre
READING: Chapters 3 and 4

Week 3 9/13 – 9/17
Theatrical operations and structures
Who does what and why?
READING: Chapters 2 and 6

Week 4 9/20 – 9/24
Planning and decision-making
READING: Chapter 5

Week 5 9/27 – 10/1
Human resources: peoplework and paperwork
READING: Chapter 7
Week 6  10/4 – 10/8
Leadership and group dynamics
READING: Chapter 8

Week 7  10/11 – 10/15
Budgeting operations
READING: Chapter 9

Week 8  10/18 – 10/22
Box office management
READING: electronic handouts
No class Monday (Midterm Break).

Week 9  10/25 – 10/29
Economics and finance
Commodity or luxury?
READING: Chapter 10

Week 10  11/1 – 11/5
Marketing the theatre
Communications direction: crafting the message
READING: Chapter 11

Week 11  11/8 – 11/12
Fundraising and development
READING: Chapter 12

Week 12  11/15 – 11/19
Audience services and house management
READING: electronic handouts

Week 13  11/22 – 11/26
Management theories revisited
READING: Chapter 13
No class Wednesday and Friday (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 14  11/29 - 12/3
Production management: Sawdust, stitches sparks
READING: electronic handouts

Week 15  12/6 – 12/10
Touring the arts
Event management and other oddities
READING: electronic handouts