

## Syllabus: **HNRS 353: Tech in Contemporary World- Spring 2017**

Sections: 007, 002

Instructor: Chuck Leonard

email: [cleona12@gmu.edu](mailto:cleona12@gmu.edu)

Section	Class location:	Time:
007	Engineering 1107	M/W 10:30-11:45
002	Mason Hall D005	M/W 1:30-2:45

Office Hours: 12-1 on M/T/W/R, others by appointment

Office location: Mason Hall D203H (Honors College Offices)

Phone: 703 993-4290 (office)

Email is my preferred means of first contact. You are also welcome to drop by my office.

**Texts:** The Last Lecture, Randy Pausch and Jeffrey Zaslow, 2008. Hyperion, NY.

ISBN: 978-1-4013-2325-7

\*Students will be responsible for readings and YouTube videos listed on Blackboard and frequently, follow up homework.

### **Course Description**

Theater has pushed the envelope of technology in many directions. Students will examine new developments of tech designed for use in theater and new uses of existing tech, focusing on the cutting-edge. We will also look at bleed-over tech moving from one area into use in other areas, including theatre.

Artists have frequently been at the forefront of those who take new technology and turn it to alternate uses. Students will use case studies of various uses of new and developing tech in theater. These will include (but are not limited to) theater tech such as automated (intelligent) lighting (Vari-Lites), sound/acoustics, 3-D set designs, virtual reality stagings, interactive theatre relying on text messages and RFID chips, digital projection, use of distance-learning for theater, computerized movement for sets/staging, puppetry, flashmobs, Improv Everywhere.

Students will explore how new tech has changed the theatre. Some changes seem permanent and some are more fleeting. We will also seek to find any underlying causes for these differences.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Students will build a foundational knowledge of theater; its purposes and connections to other performing arts. They will learn about many of the major areas of technology involved in theater and how they have changed in the last 30 years. Students will apply this knowledge, putting new tech to use or develop models for its use. Students will synthesize perspectives from multiple disciplines and know

how to relate this subject to other subjects. Students will integrate the knowledge, taking the connections beyond theater and this classroom, understanding the personal and social implications of knowing this subject. Students will learn more about themselves and about others. The instructor will strive to offer learning experiences that change how much students care about our subject. Students will become better self-directed learners understanding how to continue learning about this subject.

### **Course Requirements**

Exams: Two exams testing knowledge of lectures, readings, and terms, performances, and class discussion. One will be mid-term and one during the final exam period.

Weekly assignments (posted on Blackboard) may include readings from texts or websites. You must write responses on our Blackboard discussion board.

One of your Blackboard assignments will be a production critique on Gogol's Nose. The critique is to note use of technology and suggestions for ways the production could use new tech in appropriate ways. You must justify your choices.

Gogol's Nose                      March 30-April 9                      TheaterSpace, GMU

\*Free ticket available 2 weeks in advance at CFA box office with your student ID. Otherwise, there may be costs associated with plays you will be required to see.

Two group presentations: Small group (5-6 students) projects requiring involvement from all individuals. Your group topic must be approved. The format of your presentation is open to creativity and can include anything from lecture to performance of an original piece, but must also be approved. It will be graded by evaluation of your organization, clarity of presentation, thoroughness of research, and creativity. Potential topics- Lighting, projections, CAD design, marketing, sound, multi-media, play/performance development, props, and costume, virtual reality, pervasive media, performance blogs, recording performance.

Case Study and presentation- (\*\*\*)Subject to change) Develop a model/skeleton of a performance piece. Incorporate use of new tech in marketing, playwriting/development, design aspects (set, sound, lights, props, etc.). Use Randy Pausch and Jeffrey Zaslow's, The Last Lecture as source material. Develop an outline for the script (not writing dialogue) and production concepts for an imagined performance. Focus should be on the use of new technology (that developed in the last 30 years-usually digital). Each student hands in individual papers exploring his or her involvement.

### **Grading**

Class participation	10%
Exams (Two at 10% each)	20%
In-class written and Blackboard assignments	30%
Group projects (Two at 10% each)-class presentations.	20%
Case Study presentation and reflection	20%

<b>Grading Scale</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>87-89</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>77-79</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>60-69</b>	
<b>A</b>	<b>93-100</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>83-86</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>73-76</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>&lt; 60</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90-92</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>80-82</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>70-72</b>		

### **Course policies**

- Attendance is expected at all classes and is reflected in the grade for class participation.
- Unless required by the instructor, laptops and cell phones should be off during class time. If an emergency requires that you are accessible via cellphone, speak to the instructor before the class.
- Students will need to have access to Blackboard and Mason email and are responsible for checking it regularly for class assignments and information.
- Privacy and security is important for faculty and student digital communication. For that reason, please use your Mason email when communicating with me or classmates about the class.
- George Mason University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment free from any discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, marital status, pregnancy status or genetic information.
- George Mason University recognizes that individuals with disabilities may need reasonable accommodations to have equally effective opportunities to participate in or benefit from university educational programs. It is the responsibility of the student who requires accommodations to provide the faculty member with a letter from the Office of Disability Services to determine the best ways to support the student.

### **Academic Integrity**

- The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. GMU has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.
- As in many classes, a number of projects in this class are designed to be completed within your study group. With collaborative work, names of all the participants should appear on the work. Collaborative projects may be divided up so that individual group members complete portions of the whole, provided that group members take sufficient steps to ensure that the pieces conceptually fit together in the end product. Other projects are

designed to be undertaken independently. In the latter case, you may discuss your ideas with others and conference with peers on drafts of the work; however, it is not appropriate to give your paper to someone else to revise. You are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. If only your name appears on an assignment, your professor has the right to expect that you have done the work yourself, fully and independently.

- Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

### Student Support Resources

George Mason University has a number of resources to help student's achieve success. They include Counseling and Psychological Services, Learning Services, University Career Services, the Writing Center, etc.

### Important dates Spring 2017

<i>January 1 Day of Week</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	Mon Jan 16
<b>First day of classes</b> ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed	Mon Jan 23
<b>Last day to add classes</b> —all individualized section forms due Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	Mon Jan 30
<b>Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty</b>	Mon Feb 13
<b>Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)</b>	Fri Feb 24
Immunization Record Deadline	Wed Mar 1
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via <a href="#">Patriot Web</a>	Mon Feb 20 – Fri Mar 24
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	Mon Feb 27 – Fri Mar 31
Spring Break	Mon Mar 13 – Sun Mar 19
<b>Incomplete work from Fall 2016 due to Instructor</b>	<b>Fri March 31</b>

<b>Incomplete grade changes from Fall 2016 due to Registrar</b>	<b>Fri April 7</b>
Dissertation/Thesis Deadline	Fri May 5
<b>Last day of classes</b>	<b>Sat May 6</b>
<b>Reading Days</b> Reading days provide students with additional study time for final examinations. Faculty may schedule optional study sessions, but regular classes or exams may not be held.	Mon May 8 – Tue May 9
<b>Exam Period</b> (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)	Wed May 10 – Wed May 17
<b>Commencement and Degree Conferral Date</b>	May 20
<i>January 1 Day of Week</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	Mon Jan 16