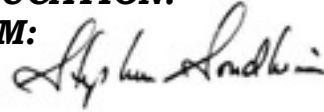


# **MUSICAL THEATRE AS LIBERAL EDUCATION: INTERDISCIPLINARY LESSONS FROM:**



**Faculty:** Marla Elliot, SEM 2, B-2115 ([elliotma@evergreen.edu](mailto:elliotma@evergreen.edu))

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**Class Sessions:** Wednesdays (6 - 9:30 pm) and FIVE Saturdays—

Apr. 11 & 25, May 2 & 16 (10 am - 5 pm) **and** May 30 (12 pm - 9 pm)

**Fields of study:** Performance Studies and Musical Theatre

Credits: 8

CRN: 30009

Classroom: COM 110/117

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

“Art, in itself, is an attempt to bring order out of chaos.”

“Musicals are, by nature, theatrical, meaning poetic, meaning having to move the audience's imagination and create a suspension of disbelief, by which I mean there's no fourth wall.”

—Stephen Sondheim



Stephen Sondheim is widely considered by critics and public alike to be the most influential and innovative composer/lyricist in American musical theatre. His works demonstrate that musicals, both on and off Broadway, are powerful vehicles for important ideas about self, culture, history, and creativity. Working with the sources, scores, and texts for these complex and subtle musical plays requires us to collaborate, to cross cultural barriers, to integrate the performing arts, and to become personally engaged with the ways they are embodied. We will learn how Sondheim brings "order out of chaos" in the creative process. From a performance standpoint, we will study (and sing!) representative songs from Sondheim's musicals.



Students will also actively participate in staging practices of the musical in general and Sondheim's works in particular. We will focus on three musicals: *Company*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Merrily We Roll Along*. Our examination of Sondheim's art will also involve analysis and some writing. Students will be expected to read the assigned texts, do required listening and screening, and complete all writing

assignments. We will sing every week and do a class presentation with the Evergreen singers on the final Saturday class—May 30. The program will culminate in a field trip to Seattle (tentative) to see an “Encore” style performance of *Merrily We Roll Along* at the 5th Avenue Theatre.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS** (available at the Evergreen Bookstore)

1. *Sunday in the Park With George* (Sondheim & Lapine), Applause Books, ISBN: 9781557830685
2. *Art Isn't Easy* (Joanne Gordon), Da Capo Press, ISBN: 9780306804687
3. *Merrily We Roll Along* (Kaufman and Hart), Samuel French, ISBN: 9780573696770
4. Other readings will be linked on our password protected website

### **EVALUATION**

Your evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

- Successful completion of all program requirements
- Adherence to the syllabus and agreements in the covenant
- Excellent attendance, preparation for & active participation in all program activities
- The quality of ideas and the writing in your papers and projects
- Demonstration of acceptable understanding of program content and learning goals.

### **GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**

*Excellent attendance and full participation in all program activities.* If you cannot make a class meeting, you need to let your seminar faculty know in advance—either by phone or by e-mail—and turn in all assignments when they are due, whether or not you are in class. Students are responsible for completing all class work missed due to absence.

*College-level work.* Since the program is focused on reading, writing, and critical thinking, you are expected to demonstrate these skills at the college level. Specifically, this means:

- the ability to read, understand, and then summarize texts
- the ability to learn from texts through discussion with others
- the ability to analyze and pursue writing assignments
- the ability to write coherent, focused, correctly punctuated prose
- the ability to develop and defend a thesis
- the ability and commitment to do all of the above reliably

*Electronic Devices.* Mobile devices including smart phones/pads and laptops will not be used in class except in circumstances where students have a disability or an e-book that cannot be accessed in any other way.

### **LIBRARY:**

Every student will be expected to have an active library account and be able to access it on any computer on or off campus.

### **PERFORMANCES AND CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

We will tentatively attend a performance in Seattle on the last weekend of the quarter.

*Fifth Week Conferences.* Every student will attend a brief 5<sup>th</sup> week conference with their seminar leader (with up-to-date portfolio and draft of Academic Statement in hand). If you are missing classes, not completing assignments or not working at the college level, you may receive a 5<sup>th</sup> week warning with feedback about what you need to do in order to receive a favorable evaluation and full credit.

*Email:* Marla and Mark will use your Evergreen e-mail exclusively, so make sure you regularly check email for communications from the faculty.

### **ACCESS SERVICES**

If you are a student with a documented **disability** that requires special arrangements, technology or financial support, please be in touch with Meredith Inocencio in the TESC Access Services Office--<http://www.evergreen.edu/access/>).

### **PORTFOLIO TABLE OF CONTENTS**

(what follows is a draft. A final breakdown of contents with details will be forthcoming)

1. Syllabus/Calendar, Covenant
2. Agenda from **every** class
3. Sheet music with appropriate notes and highlights
4. Study questions and your responses
5. Materials from Sondheim research group—notes, outline, bibliography
6. First draft and final draft of Essay
7. Classroom workshops—include all handouts with notes
7. Lecture notes and any other class notes
8. Copies of all Moodle readings (with notes)
9. Reading notes from the required books
10. Any other class writing (free-writes, writing exercises, etc.)