Western University  
Don Wright Faculty of Music  
**Music 2701B: Musical Theatre, Winter 2017**

Talbot College Room 141          Tuesdays, 7:00-10:00 p.m.

Instructor: Prof. Kristina Baron-Woods  
Office: Talbot College 324  
Office hours: Tuesdays 2 - 6 pm, other times by appointment  
Email: kbaron3@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistants:  
- Aliah Nelson  
  anelson29@uwo.ca  
- Mitchell Glover  
  mglover5@uwo.ca  
- Aiden Hartery  
  aidenhartery@gmail.com  
- Christina Bernardoni  
  christinabernardoni@gmail.com

**Course Description:**

This course will look at the musical theatre of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and will involve a survey of the history of the Broadway-style musical through the study of selected works from the repertoire. We will look at how the different elements of the musical (music, lyrics, book, choreography, and direction) work together to create a performance.

Other questions that we will consider:

- How do scholars perceive musicals within a cultural context?
- What structural and performance conventions typify the musical as a genre and how have these conventions changed?

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will be expected to achieve a general knowledge of the history of musical theatre through lectures, listening, and the course readings. Students will be expected to complete writing assignments using creative thinking and written language skills. Students will also learn to critique performance aspects of theatre and apply this knowledge in a review of a live performance.

**Evaluation:**

- 15% Short written assignment  
  Due January 31
- 30% Mid-term examination  
  February 28
- 20% Performance review  
  Due April 4
- 35% Final examination  
  Date TBA (in final exam period)

There is no textbook for this course. Course readings (journal articles) will be available online through various databases. USB of the musical examples will be on reserve and available for borrowing through the Music Library.

*You will be required to attend a live performance of a musical theatre production* in order to fulfill the requirements of one of the written assignments. I will make you aware of as many options as possible in London, but you may choose to see a performance elsewhere. We will also be attending the opening night of a new Canadian musical at the Grand Theatre; please budget $30 for this ticket.
Course Schedule:

Week 1  January 10  Introduction: The Elements of the Musical

Week 2  January 17  The Mega Musical
Lloyd Webber: *Cats*; Schoenberg: *Les Misérables*

Week 3  January 24  Disney and Other Tales
Mencken and Ashman/Rice: *Beauty and the Beast*; Schwartz: *Wicked*

Week 4  January 31  The Mini Musical
Brown: *The Last Five Years*; Kitt and Yorkey: *Next to Normal*
*First written assignment due in class*

Week 5  February 7  A New Canadian Rock Musical
Attend: Christenson: *Vigilante*  *We will be going to The Grand Theatre downtown to see this production. There will be an Artist’s Talkback with members of the artistic team afterward.*

Week 6  February 14  Modern Classics
Simon and Norman: *The Secret Garden*; Guettel: *The Light in the Piazza*

Week 7  February 28  *Mid-Term Examination*

Week 8  March 7  Back to the Beginning: Operetta
Gilbert and Sullivan: *The Pirates of Penzance*; Kern: *Show Boat*

Week 9  March 14  Rodgers and Hammerstein and the Musical Play
Rodgers and Hammerstein: *Oklahoma!* and *South Pacific*
Read the article: Andrea Most, “‘You’ve Got to Be Carefully Taught’: The Politics of Race in Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *South Pacific*” in *Theatre Journal* Vol. 52/3 (2000). In Project MUSE database.

Week 10  March 21  Americana/Canadiiana
Willson: *The Music Man*; Campbell and Harron: *Anne of Green Gables*

Week 11  March 28  Contemporary Canadian Classics
Arden and Cascio: *House of Martin Guerre*; Martin and Lambert, *The Drowsy Chaperone*

Week 12  April 4  Stephen Sondheim
Sondheim: *Sweeney Todd* and *Sunday in the Park with George*
*Performance Review assignment due in class*
Research and Annotated Bibliography Assignment (Due January 31)

Objectives:
To increase independent research skills by accessing historical materials in databases. To assess musical theatre reviews from significant sources in preparation for your own theatre review assignment. To learn from professional critics how to express your enjoyment or criticisms of theatrical productions.

Directions:
Choose TWO dates in the twentieth century: use your own birthday and then randomly select a year in the period from 1900-1949 and from 1950-1999. Example, my birthday is October 19, and my two dates for research are 19 October 1941 and 19 October 1987. *If your birthday on your selected year falls on a day where nothing of note happened, you may use a range of dates from a few days before to a few days after.

Search through The New York Times (or use the online version at ProQuest Historical Newspapers New York Times database) for substantial reviews of musical theatre productions within your selected date ranges. Create an annotated bibliography summarizing and assessing two of these reviews. Within the reviews you select you must include two of the three types of reviews: a rave review (i.e. very positive), a mixed review, or a pan (i.e. very negative). One of these reviews must be from the first period 1900-1949 and one must be from 1950-1999. The reviews should be from original Broadway productions and not revivals. You may need to do a little research online to determine this.

Use a standard bibliographic citation style (MLA or Chicago style) for the layout of your annotated bibliography. This involves listing your source, then writing a paragraph or two about the source. In your paragraphs, describe the tone of the review and how you come to this conclusion. What elements of the production does the critic mention (music, lyrics, design, direction, acting, etc.); does he/she feel that any one element brings the rest of the production down? What kinds of words and language does the critic use to enliven their argument?

Effective annotated bibliographies include the following information: a summary of the author’s intent, an assessment of authorial bias, an evaluation of the text, and a reflection on how the author’s work might assist or influence your own.

Formatting guidelines:
Approximately 2 pages (each source should take no more than a page) in a 12-point standard font (prefer Times or Times New Roman, with no more than 1” margins. There is no need for a title page for this assignment; just include your identifying information on the top of the first page. The last name of the author sticks out; everything else, including the annotation, is indented. The annotation should be single-spaced, with spaces between the citation and the annotation and between any paragraphs.

Sources:
The New York Times is the only resource you will need! You may use the online version through the ProQuest database (ProQuest Historical Newspapers New York Times version). Ask for help at Weldon or the Music Library on the second floor of Talbot College if you are not familiar with accessing or using this type of resource.
**Performance Review Assignment (Due April 4)**

**Objective:**
To apply what you have learned about musical theatre to a specific production, to consider what you have observed and transform it into ideas of your own, to think critically about the theatre and become an active participant in the creation of the theatrical experience, and to enhance your own writing skills.

**Directions:**
Book a ticket to a show after ascertaining that it is, indeed, a musical! (Be really clear on this matter: reviews of operas and straight plays will not be accepted for credit.)

Read/skim the booklet *Evaluating a Performance* by Michael Greenwald (in the course reserves binders in the music library) to get some ideas about the kind of things to look for when reviewing a show. Be aware that Greenwald is writing mainly about reviewing plays, but that the same guidelines that he discusses can easily be adapted to the review of musicals by adding discussion of music/lyrics or the vocal and dance skill of performers. You could use the appendices in the Greenwald book to note the kind of questions that may be answered in the course of your review. The most important question that Greenwald suggests you answer is “Why is this good theatre?”

On show night, get to the theatre early enough to read the program. There will likely be a set of program notes written by the director and possibly the designer of the show. These will often be very helpful in understanding a concept, or why certain directorial and design choices were made. If you can read a plot synopsis of the show before going, even better.

**Formatting guidelines:**
3-4 pages in a 12-point standard font (prefer Times or Times New Roman). Double-spaced with 1 inch (2.5 cm) margins. A title page with an interesting title that encapsulates your experience watching this musical; i.e., just the show’s title on your title page does not tell me anything about how you felt about the show.

You will also need to attach a ticket stub to prove that you went to the show during this term. (If you are a collector and are concerned about getting your program and ticket back in good condition for your scrapbook, you may photocopy the stub and the main information page of the program and include that instead.)

**There will be more information posted on OWL in the first couple of weeks of term, including detailed guidelines and a rubric.**
University and Course Policies

Who can take this course:

It is your responsibility to find out if you may take this course for credit. Please ensure you have any prerequisites required or permission from your Dean or academic advisor to take this course. If you do not have permission to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Plagiarism:

The University has a strict policy on plagiarism and academic integrity:

"Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar)."

Furthermore:

"The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking."

All work for this course is to be performed independently and must be new work. A student cannot submit work that has been previously handed in for another course.

Accommodation on Medical or Compassionate Grounds:

Any missed assignments will require a doctor’s certificate. If you need additional time to meet course expectations for medical or compassionate reasons, in addition to contacting me, please see Diane Mills, Academic Counsellor of the Faculty of Music, or the Academic Counsellor in your home faculty in order to obtain proper documentation.

Appeals:

Student appeals that relate to this or any course (marks, grade appropriateness of assignments, or grading practices) are heard first by: 1) the course instructor (informal consultation); 2) the Department Chair (submission of written request); 3) the Dean of the Faculty (submission of written request). Details of the appeal process, grounds of appeal, and examples of relief are given in the Academic Calendar.

It is your responsibility to meet all assigned deadlines. Extensions will not be given.