THEATRE 195 A: Special Topic
Devising: Creating New Work in a Collaborative Setting
Spring 2017, Fridays 2:00pm - 4:50pm, Merrick
Rachel Sullivan
rachel@honestaccomplice.org
Office Hours: Fridays 12-1pm
No Class on: 2/24, 4/14

Description: This class will offer an in depth investigation into the study of the devising process and the techniques and theories that lead to successful theater making in a collaborative setting. In this highly active, participatory course, students will create original work and will examine devising as both an art form and vehicle for social change. While there will be in-class performances, the focus of our work will be on content and form. Directing, writing, design, and acting students all welcome.

Methods:
In this course students will examine the history and practical applications of devising. Engaging the students as participants in the devising process, the instructor will model a variety of techniques for brainstorming, researching, expanding and editing material. Students will then have opportunities to create devised scenes on their own (playing the roles of actors or directors) and will explore the process of giving and receiving critical feedback. This class will also involve in depth discussions of readings that illuminate the devising process. The final project will ask students to design their own devised project and write a mock grant proposal explaining their concept, devising practice, and methodology.

Topics included: (subject to change)
- History of devising/theories of devising/ case studies
- Building a collaborative ensemble
- Generating material through physical, improvisation, visual, written prompts
- Research and preparation for rehearsal
- Editing material
- Critically evaluating work; methods for giving and receiving feedback
- Tools for collaboration

Course Requirements:
- Selected Articles will be posted on Latte
- *Devising Performance: A Critical History* by Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling
- You are required to see 2 live theater performances (one of which must be off campus)

Assessment/Grading
- Class presentations 20%
- Final Project Proposal  20%
- Critical response papers to 2 live performances 20%
- Class/Reading Response journals  20%
- Class participation 20%

Theatre 195A: Devising
**Attendance and Commitment:**
Attendance is required. There are no free absences. This course meets once per week, which means that one course meeting equals one entire week of class material. Your final grade will lower a half-letter for every unexcused absence. Two late arrivals will equal one absence.

Leaving early for a break doesn’t count as an excused absence.

If you cannot commit to attending class consistently and on time, you should reconsider taking this course.

This course will also require you to work with groups outside of class time.

**Expectations for an active class participant:**
- Has done the readings and participates and engages with others in discussions regarding content
- Is alert and present
- Takes notes/documents class work in a way that matches their learning style
- Asks questions and speaks; listens and encourages others to speak; collaborates and shares the space with classmates in activities and discussions
- Participates in class games, exercises, feedback sessions, discussions, scene creation
- Brings a willingness to try and take risks
- Plays an active role in their own education; communicates clearly with instructor if they have any questions, confusion, or needs.
- Risks giving feedback
- Allows space for more than one opinion and perspective in the group; respectfully disagrees.

**Class Policies:**
- Cell phones are turned off and put away during class
- If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please communicate with me promptly.
- You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities (http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srcs/rr/) for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity.
- Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, group meetings, preparation for exams, etc.).

*This course counts as an elective for the Theater Major/Minor and for the CAST Minor. Please submit the Online Substitution Form on the Registrar’s page (Forms-Major/Minor). If you have questions about completing this form, contact Prof. Jen Cleary (Theater) or Prof. Tom King (CAST).*
**Assignment Policies**

- As artists, you will not only need to create your own work but secure opportunities and funding. Our assignments will follow grant guidelines to provide practice for professional applications:
  - 5pm deadline is 5pm not 5:01, not 7pm, not next day
  - Word limit is there for a reason, 1000 words means 1000 words, not 1500.
    - While you don’t need to make it exactly 1000, please do not turn in something with 400 words for example.
  - Be proactive with what you need
    - If you need help, have a question do not wait till the last minute. I might not be able to respond.