

# THR 3XX – Stage Combat 1

Michigan State University  
Fall 2013

**Time:** 12:40pm-2:30pm  
**Days:** M & W  
**Room:** AUD Room 12

**Instructor:** Zev Steinberg  
**Office:** AUD 201  
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**Phone:** (267) CALL-ZEV  
**Office Hours:** Friday (11:00 -12:00)  
Or By Appointment

## Course Description:

An introductory course in the design, practice, and performance of theatrical violence. This course will focus on unarmed, or hand-to-hand stage combat. Students will explore the techniques used to create the illusion of danger and the means by which we use violence to tell stories on stage on screen. Emphasis will be placed on the safety, partnering, and physical specificity. The course will culminate in a Sills Proficiency Test adjudicated by a Fight Master of the Society of American Fight Directors. Students will have the opportunity to certify in Unarmed stage combat.

## Course Objectives:

- To study the art form of Sage Combat through research, practice, analysis, and reflection.
- To learn and practice all of the compulsory techniques for unarmed combat, as dictated by the policies and procedures of the Society of American Fight Directors
- To practice the techniques needed to learn and perform fight choreography
- To perform a scene containing theatrical violence
- To explore the skills needed to fight on film vs. those needed for live stage work.

## Student responsibilities:

- Students must actively observe their peers in practice
- Students are expected to participate daily in warm-ups, exercises, combat techniques and performances.
- Students must be dressed in appropriate movement clothing for every class and performance
- You are expected to hold outside of class rehearsals for both the midterm and the final.
- Students must be able to show some degree of growth and development with respect to the performance of theatrical violence from the beginning to the end of the course.
- Students must be supportive and respectful of their fellow classmates.
- Students must complete all assignments and performances on their assigned due date.
- Students must contribute focused and creative participation in all class exercises, assignments, and discussions.

## Assignment Descriptions:

### Choreography Critique

Students will submit 3 video critiques of a scene of violence from contemporary film or local live performance. The critiques should evaluate the performance based on the clarity of storytelling, and performer's ability to create the illusion of danger. The video critiques should be between 1-3 min long and can be submitted over youtube or on D2L.

### Midterm Performance

Students will perform a piece of fight choreography set to a scene. The scene must have a setting, a relationship between the two characters, and must justify the choreography. No words will be used. Students will perform these fights before an invited audience.

### Final Performance

Students will perform a piece of choreography set to a scene from dramatic literature. All groups will receive the same choreography but will set it to different scenes. Your performance will be assessed on your ability to technically execute all the combat techniques required by the choreography, and your commitment to the acting of the story of the scene. This performance will coincide with the SAFD Skills Proficiency Test.

## Performance Projects and Assignments:

1. Critiques (3 total)	15% of your final grade -	10 Points (each)
2. Midterm Performance:	15% of your final grade -	30 Points
3. Final Long form Presentation:	20% of your final grade -	40 Points
4. Daily Participation (See Below):	50% of your final grade -	100 Points
		= 200 Points Total

Your performances will be assessed according to your own ability to comprehend and execute the work. In terms of performance projects, you will be evaluated with consideration of your individual progression and not in comparison to your classmates' level of previous knowledge, experience or progression.

## Participation:

Participation is critical to this class, which is why it is half of your grade. Participation refers to your willingness to volunteer with a positive attitude for class work and exercises; to speak up in discussions with pertinent comments or questions; being supportive, safe, and respectful to your classmates at all times. Responsibilities also include participation in exercises that require physical and emotional involvement.

Your participation grade must be earned, and will be on a 4-point scale every day:

- 1 Point for showing up on time and dressed in movement clothing
- 2 Points for saying and/or doing something constructive
- 1 Point for not being a douche

If you are absent for the day you will receive zero points. If you are more than 20 min late you will lose the first point but you can still earn the other 3 points.

**Quizzes:** The instructor reserves the right to give unannounced quizzes at any point during the semester.

### **Attendance Policies:**

You will be allowed 2 absences without being penalized. Beyond these two absences, only a University sanctioned absence or medical absence will be excused (and official University or Department excuse form will be necessary to excuse you; or a note from your physician). **No absences of any kind will excuse you from class responsibilities.**

You, the student, will be held accountable for keeping up with class assignments and projects. Although the instructor reserves the right to calculate the participation grade (see Participation) by subjective evaluation of the "quality" of each student's participation, the primary factor in your attendance will be evaluated as follows:

- 2 absences = no grade reduction
- 3 absences = a 0.5 grade reduction
- 4 absences = a 1.0 grade reduction
- 5 absences = automatic failure of class

**Tardiness:** Tardiness is disruptive to a class of this nature and will not be tolerated. Any tardiness will be recorded along with attendance. Attendance will be taken promptly at the start of class. If you enter the room after the role-call has been completed, you will be considered tardy.

3 tardies = 1 absence

If you enter the room anytime after 20 minutes of the official start of the class you will be marked absent for that class day. If you depart from class for any reason before the official end of the class, you will be marked absent for that day.

### **Grading Policies:**

This is a studio class with daily active participation. Your attendance, support, and enthusiasm along with a concentrated daily effort significantly affect your final grade. **No Late written assignments are accepted. Missed performances or presentations due to unexcused absences result in immediate failure of the project.** If syllabus changes due to over-ambitious scheduling, grading policy will be altered and distributed.

### **Grading Scale: (In Percentages)**

93-100	=	4.0	73-77	=	2.0
88-92	=	3.5	68-72	=	1.5
83-87	=	3.0	60-67	=	1.0
78-82	=	2.5	59 and Below	=	0.0

**Additional Policies and Procedures to note:**

1. Academic Honesty: Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that, "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades and professional standards." In addition the Department of Theatre adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grade; the all-University Point on Integrity of Scholarship and Grade, and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or MSU web site: [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu)) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from a source. You are not authorized to use the [www.allmsu.com](http://www.allmsu.com) web site to complete any course work in THR-804. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade including but not limited to failing grade on the assignment in the course.
2. Accommodations for disabilities: Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 TTY.
3. Drop and Add: The last day to add the course is the end of the first week of classes. The class day to drop this course with a 100% refund and no grade reported is 9/24/12. The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is 10/17/12. You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.
4. Observing Major Religious Holidays: You may make up course work missed to observe a major religious holiday only if you make arrangements in advance with the instructor.
5. Participation in Required Activity: To make-up course work missed to participate in a required activity or a university-sanctioned event, you must provide the instructor with adequate advanced notice and a written authorization from the faculty member of the course or from a university administrator.
6. Attendance: Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class.
7. Internet: Some professional journals will not consider a submission for publication if the article has appeared on the Internet. Please notify your instructor in writing if you do not want your course papers posted to the course web site.
8. Disruptive Behavior: Article 2.3.5 of the Academic Freedom Report (AFR) for students at Michigan State University states that, "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.3.10 of the AFR states that, "The student has a right to a scholarly relationship with faculty based on mutual trust and civility." General Student Regulation 5.02 states that, "no student shall...interfere with the functions and services of the University (for example, but not limited to classes...) such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Judiciary process.

**Course Calendar:**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Number of Weeks</b>
<b>Unit 1:</b> Foundational Techniques	5 Weeks
<b>Unit 2:</b> Storytelling and Choreography	1 Week
<b>Unit 3:</b> Specialized Techniques and Styles	2 Weeks
<b>Unit 4:</b> Midterm Choreo	1 Week
<b>Midterm Performance</b>	
<b>Unit 5:</b> Fighting on Camera	2 Weeks
<b>Unit 6:</b> SPT Choreo and Scenework	5 Weeks
<b>Final Performance and Skills Proficiency Test</b>	