

## **SW 360K: Peer Theatre Performance**

Unique #63983

Spring 2007

Wednesdays 2-4:50 PM

### **Voices Against Violence**

**Instructor:** Lynn Hoare  
**Office Hours:** By appointment.  
**Office location:** Counseling and Mental Health Center, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, SSB  
(All visitors must check in at the front desk.)  
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**VAV Class Support:** Tara Buentello: [taraeb@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:taraeb@mail.utexas.edu)

## **I. Course Description**

This course focuses on the performance of intervention techniques to prevent or intervene in situations that could lead to interpersonal violence including sexual assault, relationship violence and stalking. Students trained in *theater for social change* techniques will learn to perform scenarios using improvisation and participatory activities in their educational performances and facilitate discussions about interpersonal violence prevention and intervention.

## **II. Course Objectives**

- To integrate knowledge of issues with interactive theatre methods in order to create dynamic, realistic theatrical scenarios that educate and raise awareness of the issues of stalking, sexual assault and relationship violence
- To perform scenarios about interpersonal violence for on and off-campus audiences based on the materials and training covered in SW 360K, Fall 2006.
- Learn methods for making appropriate referrals and gain knowledge about the resources and procedures on campus and in the community.
- To practice theatre techniques, improvisational methods and facilitation skills and use them as tools to educate the campus community at large.
- To learn more about issues of interpersonal violence and incorporate that knowledge into the exercises and scenarios.
- To be informed and able to share knowledge of interpersonal violence dynamics, resources, support and programs on campus.
- To explore strategies for transforming a violent culture through performance.

### III. Class Conduct, Organization and Attendance

#### Conduct:

Students are also expected to adhere to student conduct guidelines at all times. Students must understand that they are selected into this class as leaders and ambassadors for the Voices Against Violence Program. They are held to a higher standard of personal conduct both in and outside class. Please be mindful that your interactions outside class also reflect the higher standard that is associated with being a VAV leader. This includes the kind of information that you share on things like the facebook and your interaction with other students in informal settings.

Students are encouraged to engage in respectful dialogue around the issues presented in class. We encourage students to be aware of the power and control dynamics in our day to day interactions and be mindful of others in class. Any physical, verbal or psychological intimidation toward anyone in class will not be tolerated.

Students are also expected to maintain professional conduct with each other, even if they may have personal relationships or friendships with each other outside the class.

#### Confidentiality:

**Given the nature of our class, we require an agreement of confidentiality from everyone. Any personal information brought up in class should stay in class unless the person who revealed the information brings it up outside class.**

**The class location in the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) makes it very important to maintain confidentiality of any other students you may meet or any other confidential information you might encounter on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the SSB. Students in the class may not approach any other student (other than their classmates) in the waiting area of CMHC even if they know them, unless they are approached first by the other student. Even then, please keep your conversation to a minimum and do not discuss the meeting with anyone else. Students are also prohibited from going into any other area at CMHC besides the waiting area, the conference room and the restroom.**

**CMHC has instituted new polices about areas that can be accessed by non-CMHC staff. Given those rules, you will need to be picked up from the waiting area by Lynn or another CMHC staff person to be escorted to the class room. This also means that if you leave the conference room during break, you will need to be escorted back again to class. Given this rule change, it is extremely important that you be on time for class and be back on time from breaks.**

The focus of the class will be to perform for audiences outside our class. *Each student will be required to sign-up for specific performances and perform 6 times outside class and be a “peer evaluator” for one performance during the semester. Two of the six performances will be graded (15 points for each performance with letter grades given) by Lynn. The other four performances will be graded for participation (5 points each) but will not be given letter grades.*

An initial list of performances and a sign-up sheet will be provided within the first 2 two weeks of class. Given the nature of the class, it is not possible to provide “make-up” sessions for missed performances due to illness – so students are encouraged to sign up for more than six performances. Additional performances can count toward VAV points. Students will be responsible for their own transportation to and from the performances. Effort will be made to limit most of our rehearsal time to our class meeting time on Wednesdays. Students are expected to be available for a brush-up rehearsal one hour before each performance. Rehearsal times may be required outside class times as well.

We may invite guest speakers or view videos to enhance our expertise. From time to time, students will be given handouts/readings that related to the class topic and may be asked to incorporate their response to the readings in their journals. Students are responsible for active participation in the class, participating in the required number out-of-class performances and completing all assignments on time. Students are encouraged to participate in activities/presentations related to the class topic. Students are also expected to adhere to student conduct guidelines at all times. Students are expected to NOT be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when they are in class or at any event or context where they are representing VAV.

If you must miss a class meeting, rehearsal or event you have signed up for, you must notify Lynn Hoare in advance and arrange for a substitute if you are missing an event. A great deal of emphasis is placed on being in class due to the participatory nature of the course.

**You will be allowed one (1) unexcused class absence during the semester without penalty. More than one (1) unexcused absence will result in the deduction of three (3) points per absence from your final grade.**

**Out of class performance/presentation/tabling dates and times will be discussed in advance with the class – but once you have signed up for them - attendance is mandatory (unless YOU find someone at least 1 week in advance to substitute for your role) and will result in the deduction of five (5) points per absence from your final grade. No “make up” points will be offered for unexcused absences after you have signed up for events/performances.**

***The class will NOT have a final - however we will meet on the last day of class for evaluations.***

Students are also expected to be in class, rehearsals and for performances on time. **Students who are more than 5 minutes late to class, rehearsals or performances will have 1 point deducted from the final grade.** If you know you will be late because of a specific reason, please notify Lynn Hoare or your group in advance.

Students are also required to attend the Spring **class retreat on February 10<sup>th</sup> from 10am-5pm.**

Given the topics of discussion in class, I recognize that there may be issues that may come up for some students in the class. I encourage you to please take care of yourself and seek outside help/support if you need to talk to someone about your feelings. I encourage you to speak to Heather Davies or any another counselor at the Counseling and Mental Health Center (call 471-

3515 to make an appointment) or call confidential Telephone Counseling (471-2255). You are of course always welcome to talk to me as well.

From time to time, portions of the class or presentations/performance may be photographed, and/or video/audio recorded. Students should feel free to let the instructor know if they are not comfortable with that.

Students should also feel free to bring information about events related to class issues to class. Students are welcome to notify the class through email about such events. The class email list is not to be used for issues that are not related to the class.

Please note that the University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.

#### **IV. Assessment and Evaluation of Outcomes**

Class participation	10 points
Journals	20 points (10 Journals – 2 points each)
VAV points	10 points (4 events – 2.5 points each)
Peer evaluation	10 points
Performance participation	50 points (15 points per performance for first 2 performances, and 5 points each for next 4 performances)

*Class participation* (10 points) includes:

- Participating in a **brief one minute** check-in that lets the class know about the energy you are bringing to the class that day. It is NOT a recap of the week or an account of your day. It is to let people know how you are feeling that day, so as to be useful in performance – especially in scenes where people are interacting with you;
- speaking up in class and taking leadership in exercises;
- paying full attention at all times (if you feel sleepy – please step out to wash your face or freshen-up and come back – it is very insulting to presenters to have you fall asleep in class);
- incorporating materials discussed in class into the scenarios and exercises;
- creating diverse and culturally appropriate scenarios for particular requests;
- to remember that we are working toward *exploration not resolution*;
- critiquing your own performance and that of your fellow classmates while being respectful and sensitive to the topic and to other classmates;
- playing the role of the “audience” during class and taking initiative to sub-in the characters in the scenes; and
- being supportive of each other and working as a “team”
- actively creating a safe space for yourself and your classmates

Class participation also includes *Class attendance* and being on time to class. Please see section III above to learn about how absences will impact your final grade.

**Journals** (20 points): A total of **10 journals** will be required this semester. Journals for the week are due by 2 PM on Wednesdays starting on January 31<sup>st</sup> and can be emailed to Lynn Hoare at [lynnhoare@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:lynnhoare@mail.utexas.edu). There are NO journals due on Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>, March 14<sup>th</sup> (spring break) and March 21<sup>st</sup> (the Wednesday after spring break). Your last journal is due on April 18<sup>th</sup>. Please write your name and the due-date/Journal number on all journal entries so I know which week the assignment belongs to. When you email the journal to Lynn it is YOUR responsibility to make sure that you attach the journal to your email.

Journals during this semester will be more “open-ended” and will focus on our class rehearsals/exercises, exploring your performed characters, your reaction to the performances and your experiences related to our issues outside class. You are encouraged to specifically focus on your reactions, experiences and feelings after performing for audiences outside class and attending the VAV events. You may also feel free to explore the impact of the class/performances on your personal life and how it is impacting the lives of people around you. From time to time you will be asked to respond to specific questions/readings/reactions to speakers in your journal.

Journals will be graded for completion. **Journals must be at least TWO typed double spaced page (12 point font size) in length with standard margins. Journals that are handed in LATE will be penalized, as will journals that are short or not thorough. ONLY ONE extension during the semester will be given with prior approval from Lynn.**

**VAV Points** (10 points) will be given for attending/helping with **4 events** that are either sponsored by the Voices Against Violence Program or have topics that are related to our class. Events that count toward VAV points will be emailed to you from time to time. Sign up sheets for tabling/helping with specific events that count toward VAV points will also be handed out in class. This can include tabling and helping with events such as the Vagina Monologues and Take Back the Night and co-facilitation with Lynn or other students to present programs on campus. You could also do extra performances as part of your VAV points. You will be required to write a one page report about your reactions. Each event will be worth 2.5 points. Please note, you will NOT be given points for your participation if you do not turn in your report. All reports must to be handed in by April 18th (unless there is an event after that – in which case the report for that event would be due on April 25<sup>th</sup>).

If you sign up for tabling/helping with a VAV event you are required to attend it or find a substitute who will attend in your place. You might also be required to take materials to the event and bring them back in a timely manner. Failure to do so will also impact your class participation grade.

**Peer Evaluation** (10 points): You are required to observe and evaluate one VAV performance that you are not part of. The goal of this exercise is that you have the opportunity to critically examine the performance, the skills, the information presented, the relationship between the spect-actors and actor-teachers and facilitator – from the outside.

Following your observation, you will write a thorough evaluation of this presentation including assigning each actor a grade. This includes commenting on each person’s performance as if you

were grading this person. As you have seen from the feedback Lynn and Diane have provided for the final exam last semester, this should be as thorough as possible to justify your suggested grade. (you do not have to use a rubric!)

This evaluation is due the Wednesday following the observation, unless you observed a program on Tuesday, and then the evaluation is due a week later on Wednesday. Please submit it by it by email by 2pm.

A description of the event will be helpful to add to your observation so that I have a context to the performance. Some questions to guide your observation and evaluation are:

- How was the audience prepared for the program by the facilitator or team?
- How did the actors interact with sub-ins?
- What did the audience learn/gain from this performance?
- What was particularly realistic or right on about the performance?
- What kind of specific, correct information was given out about the topics we are addressing?
- If there were educational moments that were not followed through or where incorrect information was allowed to stand, please explain and comment on this.
- What was strong about each actor's performance?
- What needs improvement in each actor's performance?
- How did the facilitator handle the audience? What did he/she do that was particularly effective? What does he/she need to work on?
- If you were the instructor, what would you recommend that the group continue to work on in this scenario?

**Performance Participation** (50 points): *Each student will be required to sign-up for specific performances and perform at least 6 times outside class and be a "peer evaluator" for one performance during the semester. The first two of the six performances will be graded (15 points for each performance with letter grades and feedback given) by Lynn. The other four performances will be graded for participation (5 points each) but will not be given detailed feedback. Student Coordinators may assist in the recording of participation points, and may also offer feedback to students in class (not graded feedback).*

**Performance participation** includes:

- playing your role (i.e. character, facilitator or "audience") to the best of your ability;
- incorporating the materials covered in class (especially red-flags and other information we covered in SW 360K) into your performance
- incorporating the guidelines/critiques given to you into your performances from last semester and this semester
- paying attention to the performances and the people you are presenting with and to the audience you are performing for
- incorporating new material into your scene
- creating "real" characters and scenarios
- incorporating "diversity" issues into the scenarios – especially being sensitive to the audience you are performing for

- being knowledgeable and sensitive about interpersonal violence issues and answering audience questions with accurate information
- knowing appropriate referral sources to respond to audience concerns
- making sure that you **DO NOT PROVIDE MISINFORMATION**
- taking time to debrief with your fellow classmates after a performance and provide them feedback, support and critiques
- being a good role model for the work that we are doing – both on and off stage
- showing up on time to class and performances prepared and ready to perform
- being willing to accept feedback and incorporate changes into performances

The performance participation grade includes being on time for all rehearsals and performances that you have signed up for. You will be given a list of dates to sign up for at the beginning of the semester. Additional performance events and dates may be provided throughout the semester. **Once you have signed up for a performance - attendance is mandatory and will result in the deduction of five (5) points per absence from your final grade.**

**Performance participation grades may also take audience evaluations into account when applicable.**

**ALL CLASS MATERIALS ARE DUE BY April 25<sup>th</sup>. Nothing will be accepted after this date without prior approval by Lynn.**

#### **V. Grading scale**

90+ points	A	(Excellent/Outstanding)
80-89 points	B	(Very good)
70-79 points	C	(Satisfactory)
60-69 points	D	(Barely passing!)
Below 60	F	(Did not make any effort at all)