

# Theatre Assessment Report AY 2020-21 DRAFT

## Summary

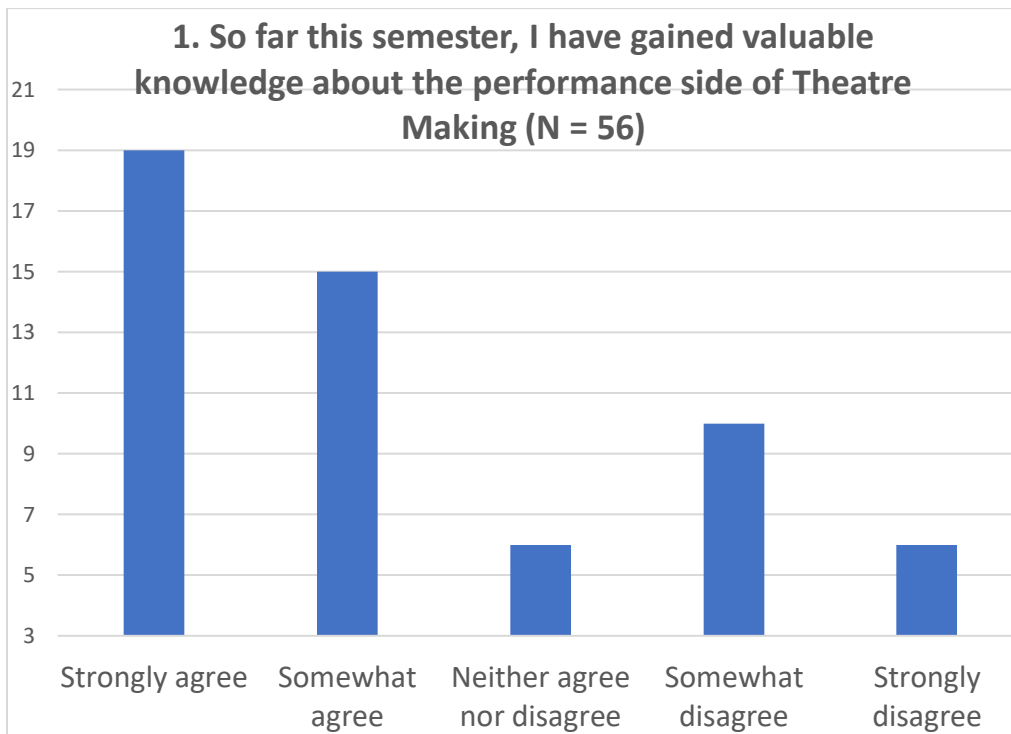
During the 2020-21 Academic Year, students were assessed in three courses: a survey in the Foundations course, performance in the Stage Combat three-course sequence, and a quiz in the Musical Theatre Five-Week Foundations course.

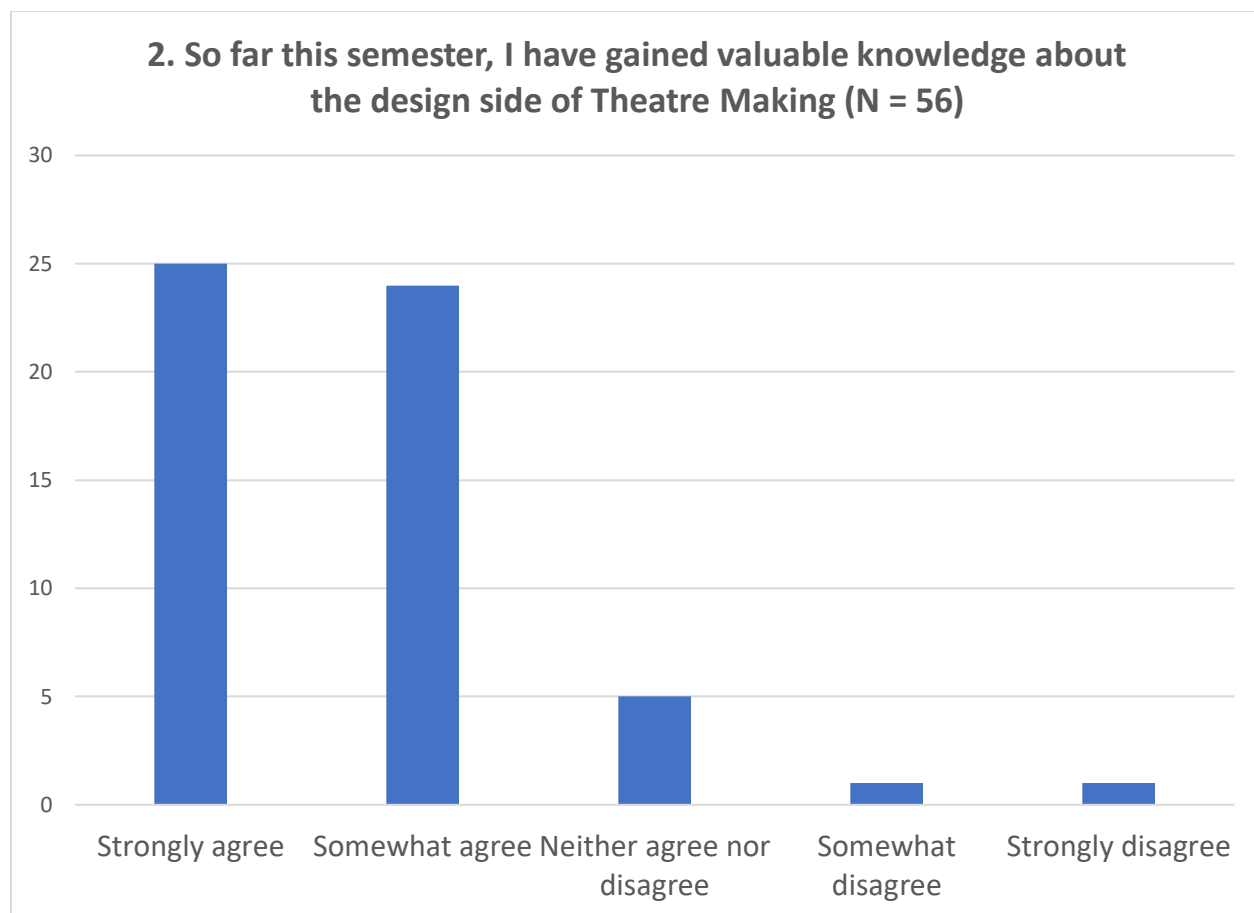
### I. Assessment 1: Foundations Student Survey

#### Method

During the Fall 2020 semester, a brief survey was created to be administered to all eight sections of the Theatre Foundations course. A total of 56 students completed the survey. It should be noted that CFAC leadership contacted part-time faculty teaching these sections and advised them not to administer the survey, thus the response rate was less than it might have been otherwise.

#### Results





The final three questions were open-ended. Themes from the student comments were:<sup>1</sup>

**3. What do you think is going well so far this semester?**

- Making good connections and collaborating with other students and teachers in the class
- Learning and understanding the material/concepts

**4. What do you think is not going well so far this semester?**

- Not enough time spent learning about the performing side of theatre. Most time spent with design.
- Heavy workload that involves too many small assignments
- Difficult class to do over zoom

**5. What, if anything, would you change about this class?**

- More of a balance between learning about design and performing sides of theatre
- The pandemic being over and the class being fully in person
- Less workload

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<sup>1</sup> The complete student comments are in Appendix A

**Other Trend Comments**

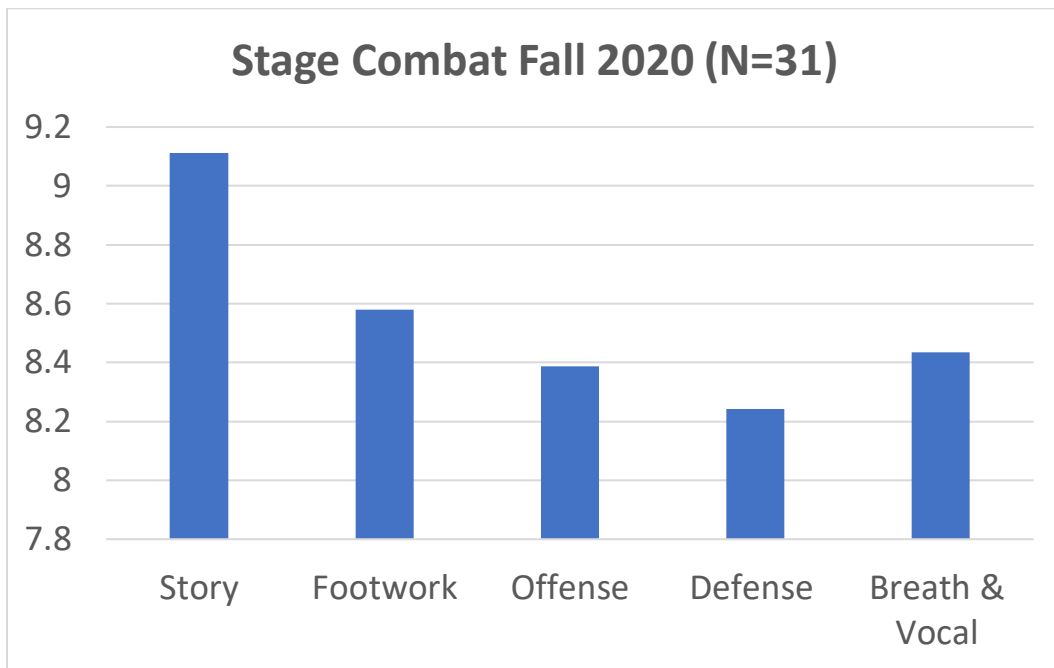
- Communication could be better between professors and student (ex. assignment due dates, grades, projects, expectations)
- Shorter class time or incorporate breaks
- Course material is too much at a beginner level

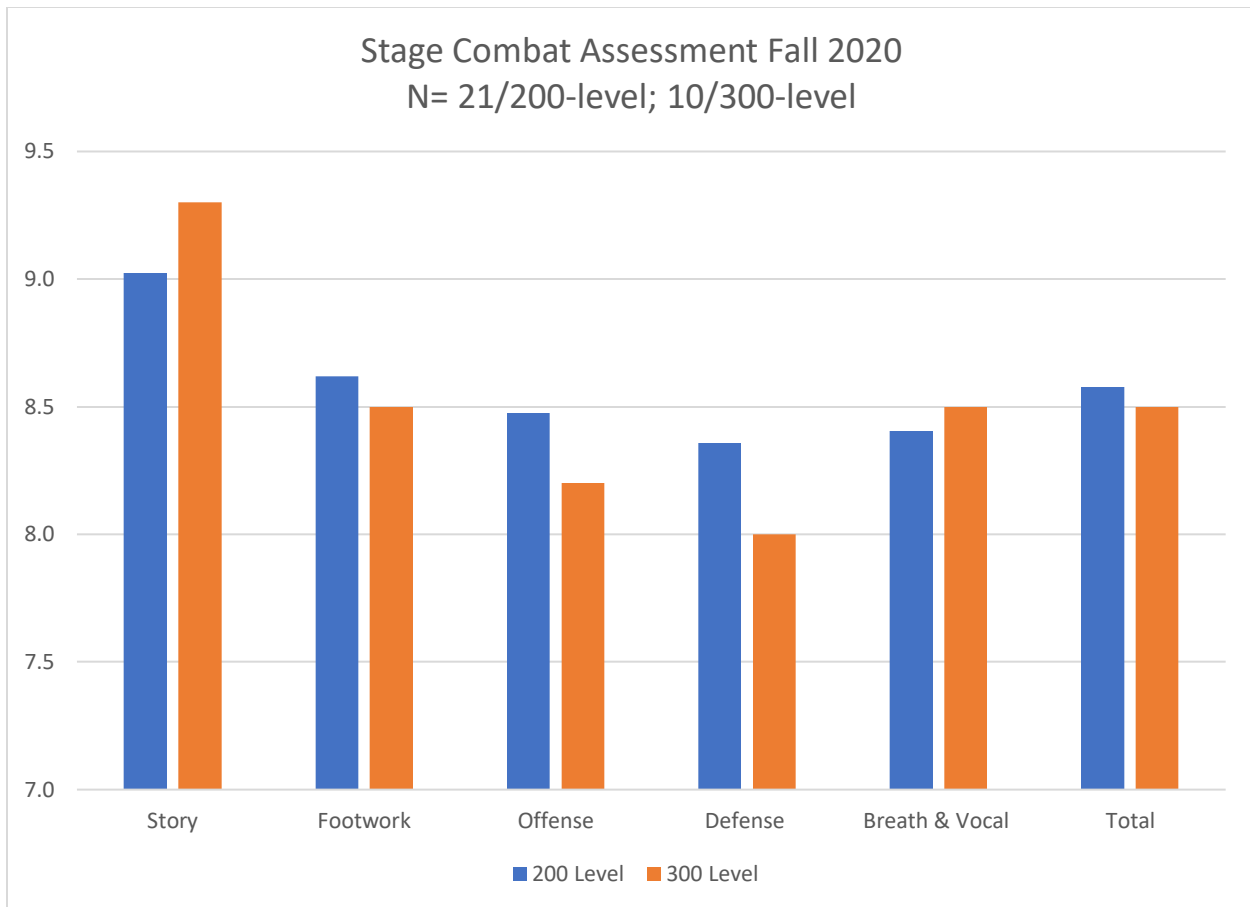
**II. Assessment 2: Stage Combat Assessment**

*Method*

During the Fall 2020 semester, all sections of the three-level sequence of Stage Combat were assessed. Students were assessed on key stage combat assignments by teaching faculty the same rubric. As opposed to live, in-class assessment (pre-Pandemic), students recorded their performances, and these recorded sessions were reviewed and assessed by faculty.

*Results*





Highest Student Performance

1. Story,
2. Footwork

Lowest Student Performance

1. Defense
2. Offense

There was a debrief on the results with David Wooley, Stage Combat Coordinator. He shared the following observations:

“In terms of their offense and defense [lower scores], it's not going down so drastically that it makes me go, ‘Hmm.’ It makes me go, ‘It's a harder weapon and you need to work harder to make it part of your thing.’”

“The goal really is to get the basics in that [lower level] class to be really strong and try to get the understanding of the basic concepts as strong as possible. I'm not surprised to see the [lower level] higher than the [upper level] when we're working that way. The three-hundred level also end up really spreading out so that you'll see the cream rise to the top.”

“But if you look at the storytelling, [it] gets stronger. I think we see the footwork getting better. Offensive and defense, it just gets harder to do when you're using the advanced weapons, that's all. But the breath and vocal gets better. It does make me go, ‘Need to work breath and vocal even more.’ That work needs to continually be beaten into them. And I think we also may be more critical when we're looking at offense and defense and using the weapons.”

“One of the interesting things about teaching at home is that we're able to look a little bit more in the technicalities of how things are going. But spatially, students fighting in their living rooms, I only see them from the waist up because they don't have enough room to actually walk. I had a student yesterday whose brain melted, because while she was trying to do class, her little brother and little sister were watching cartoons in the same space. So difficult to just even pay attention much less pretend to sword fight.”

### III. Assessment 3: Musical Theatre Final Week (Week 5) Quiz

#### Method

To gauge student knowledge of basic musical theatre history and concepts, students were given a twenty-three item quiz at the end of the Five-Week Musical Theatre Foundations course (THEA 141). There were 14 Multiple Choice questions that broadly covered *musical theatre performance* and 9 Short Answer questions that covered *musical theatre making*.

#### Results

#### Musical Theatre Week 5 Quiz (N=27)

Question #	Type	Question	# Correct	% Correct
1	M.C	Spoken scenes called	26	96%
2	M.C	Musical type	27	100%
3	M.C	What differentiates a musical from play	22	81%
4	M.C	Commissions a writing team	25	93%
5	M.C	Most successful musical writer	21	78%
6	M.C	Shows performed before opening	27	100%
7	M.C	Name of opening night	19	70%
8	M.C	Work with this person to create interpretation	26	96%
9	M.C	Actor Tool for stimulating creativity	16	59%
10	M.C	When actor gets sick, ___ goes on	23	85%
11	M.C	Composer writes ___, Lyricist writes ___	23	85%
12	M.C	Ask this person for help remembering staging	27	100%
13	M.C	Ask this person for dance counts	26	96%
14	M.C	Every scene, song..needs 2 things	26	96%
15	S.A	Late, end of rehearsal run of choreo	23	85%
16	S.A	Scene broken up into sections	26	96%
17	S.A	3 people on writing team for musical	21	78%

18	S.A	5 members of main creative team	12	44%
19	S.A	Why is sitzpribe thrilling	27	100%
20	S.A	Who receives calls, mail, etc.	9	33%
21	S.A	Know when to start show	9	33%
22	S.A	What is a show report/ When created	20	74%
23	S.A	When do understudies rehearse/ Who runs	12	44%
				79%

Multiple Choice Mean: 88%

Short Answer Mean: 65%

## Appendix A: Complete Student Comments from the Foundations Student Survey

### 3. What do you think is going well so far this semester?

So far, it has been alright. Nothing sticks out as outstanding

I am getting to experiment with many aspects of theatre

Having an understanding of concepts is all. Projects, group work, and curriculum of what we are actually learning is not great.

The collaboration in every group that I've been in is great

Learning about the design aspect

the adjust to zoom has been smooth

My Theatre Foundation 1 teachers are amazing. Julie Young and Kristi Bramlett. They have showed me so much so far and they are definitely my favorite classes.

I think the assignments and the zoom classes are going well since i feel I am learning much more than i expected.

I enjoy the teaching style, and the curriculum has improved my knowledge of the technical sides of performance and design

Really learning all the elements clearly

I think the pace of this class is pretty good

I'm finding the assignments to be working well

With design I haven't felt like I've lost any curriculum through zoom and I feel that a bit with performance but I've still learned so much in both.

Creative ways to learn the art through practical application despite being on zoom.

I'm actually learning and it's not just from a practice makes perfect stand point. So probably that.

I really like the variety of the assignments, the professors clearly care about the subject and are very helpful and understanding towards the students.

the projects that wear are doing are Is going well

I'm understanding the material

Really grasping the design elements

I think this semester I going great. My teachers are doing great and very understanding. They are also challenging me and pushing me out of my comfort zone in a good way

feeling connected with everyone

My Grades

Some of the work is really easy

I have been learning sides of theatre that I didn't even know existed

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My performance side of the class is going very well.

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there is very good and open communication

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Learning about the theatre from the design and performance perspective

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I think that now that we're moving on to bigger projects we're going to learn more and be more invested.

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I am learning a lot about letting myself go and opening myself up to new ways of learning! Also, I have felt a great sense of community in this class

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I like my classmates and my teachers

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Assignments are easy to understand and are laid out well for us

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In person classes and discussions

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Communication with teachers and students (for the most part)

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I believe my professors are really adapting important and crucial lessons that I am still able to learn on zoom

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Everything

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A good balance of in person and online

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I've learned a lot about design, and got some practice performing.

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I think that I'm creating good bonds with my peers and gaining very basic insight into theatre design.

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Sadly nothing in school. I have been gaining more knowledge, practice, and successful experience outside of Columbia.

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I think something going really well for this class is the connection between classmates. Once we started getting put into groups more often and actually got a chance to communicate with our peers, it made performing and being vulnerable in front of people a lot easier. I also think the formatting that you have recently developed (one teacher with half class on one day and visa versa on the next) is really helpful. I think it has kept things a lot more organized in my head in terms of knowing when things were due. It's also just a lot more effective in terms of how we are learning. I think pushing your classes together and taking up the entire 3 hour class is exhausting. And because you were cramming to fit all your criteria in, both segments always felt rushed and confusing. These last few classes have been working a lot better.

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I think Janice was effective at posting assignments and the requirements for each assignment. (At least for the most part)

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I made great connections with my classmates

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Class process and communication

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I think the class morale is really well maintained, and people are really excited about working.

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learning about concepts

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The class kept a steady pace

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making friends

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Everything!! Great class material, awesome teachers, fun projects!

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The instructors had amazing energy which kept me into the each and every zoom session.

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I think professors Berry and Sullivan both did an incredible job with this class despite the obvious challenges of it being online. They really listen to everyone's voices and really try to make sure everyone is doing well in the class.

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Everything really. I learned a lot despite the circumstances.

#### 4. What do you think is not going well so far this semester?

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The class has a 90% focus on the performance and 10% on all the other parts of making a production

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Remote days are very hard to focus for me personally

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I do not like group work at all. My group mates thus far have not put in the creative work that is expected, and I have carried group through creating ideas and performances. Even when I've tried to step back and really let others have a voice, we get off track and mess around and my grades have suffered. I also do not feel like our instructors aren't trying enough to teach us. Our curriculum is for kindergartners honestly. We frolicked in the park and made collage boxes. Like what in the hell does that have to do with theater and the art of theater making? I usually find it really easy to draw parallels between unconventional exercises and art, but I could not-for the life of me- figure out why we were learning some of the things we did.

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Nothing everything is great

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performing

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having enough time to comprehend the work

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For my Theatre Foundations everything is amazing and I have zero complaints

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Not having a schedule of assignments a head time. We know what content is being covered over the semester but not how many assignments there are total or even how many to expect each week.

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I feel like I havent had as much time to learn about performing as I have design

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Making connections with peers

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just me often getting my assignments confused with other work

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I'm not really enjoying doing warmups at the start of class, being at home makes it difficult to be as loud or as focused as I'd like to be

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Not being in person really hasn't made performance easy nor has it helped with learning the performance end because I feel I just learn better in person

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It is really hard to keep up with the workload which makes the class sometimes more stressful and I lose the exploration and discovery of the art because I'm just trying to submit on time.

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The amount of work assigned. It seems a bit excessive.

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sometimes I get a little confused about due dates, as they're not always clear

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Im not understanding everything in this class

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I feel like I'm not learning everything I can because of the pandemic

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Learning the performance stuff is hard because I need more hand on help and critiques on how to make myself better.

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I really can't think of anything off of my head.

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a little confusing

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Actually Learning the info

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There is this easy work that I learned in elementary school, and then we suddenly jump to things that I've never done before and the demonstrations are really short and there's a big difficulty spike.

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The homework load is extremely overwhelming

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I just wish it was in person.

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Nothing

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There's too many small assignments that are easy to forget about, and they come from two teachers so it's twice the work for one class.

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I wish I could have the opportunity of having this class without the corona virus, but I know nobody can change that.

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I feel like this class is moving a bit slow for me, and it is easy for me to feel a bit bored with the material.

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We're not learning anything about performance skills in theatre like acting, inflection, monologues, script scoring, ext. It is a little disappointing because we only do yoga and and design, but completely ignore the performance side of theatre

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Nothing

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We aren't learning anything. We do yoga and go to the art institute.

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Meeting people and getting comfortable with the people I'm performing in class with

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Nothing

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Communication about grading process

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I miss being in person, its so much easier to learn about acting when you can actually act. And yes we do something with zoom, and thats alright, its just hard.

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What do you think is not going well so far this semester?

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Our professors ignore our needs. We come together and express our concerns with how they run the class and disrespect us, and we're met with gaslighting and accusations that we are ganging up on them. There is absolutely zero empathy coming from teachers to students, and it's affecting our motivation and will to learn.

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It is very devastating, especially for out of state students like me that is so passionate about self-improvement and their goals within their field to attend a school that shows little effort and care. My theatre foundation making class, has to be my most disappointing class ever.

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Some things not going so well this semester are more so along the lines of formatting. I felt like this entire semester was kind of jumbled in terms of organization of assignments and projects. We as students are held to expectation of accounting for the time it may take to figure out a performance online vs an in-person setting, and if there is a complication, to communicate it to the teacher in enough time to still turn the assignment in on time. So while I understand that this is a new learning

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environment for everyone, including teachers, they should also be held to the expectation of accounting for the possible complications that may arise when uploading or posting assignments. And- if a complication does arise, for example if you happen to forget to click the "post" button on the assignment, I would at least expect there to be an extension on the assignment. Especially if the mistake is something out of student control. I think there needs to be a myriad of adjustments for this class as we continue forward with online schooling. Whatever communication teachers and students put in in a normal class setting, needs to be doubled in an online setting. Overall, I think this class was very much a trial run for zoom, so the expectations are a lot different, but at the end of the day I'm still paying 20,000 dollars to go here and I expect for my teachers to be holding themselves to the expectations they hold their students.

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The professors of my class don't communicate with each other about their lessons/assignments & it shows. It makes working on these projects very difficult because they'll change one or more aspects of the assignment to accommodate the other. They also have a habit of giving us small details about the assignment without briefing us on the assignment itself, so it's hard to make decisions for that project because we have so little information. As for the performance side of this class, I feel like we're mostly doing the same/similar exercises in the beginning of the year & I'm not quite sure what I'm supposed to be taking away from them ??

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The Communication between Professors and students. The professors seemed to dislike teaching the class and it almost felt like they didn't want to listen.

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The way this class is being taught.

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#### Grading

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It's extremely repetitive and I don't believe the class works on the strengths of the students. Additionally, the professors say some offhanded things that are genuinely hurtful/negative. There's more 'making fun' than there is constructive criticism, it's demeaning and doesn't create a space where students feel comfortable coming to their professors.

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movement, it's hard to do over zoom

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the material was lack luster, it felt like we went in circles.

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my attention span

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Being told to make spacial relationships with each other over Zoom...it just doesn't add up.

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zoom is hard altogether... I'm just grateful I had good instructors to get through it

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Everything is going well so, everything is good.

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#### 5. What, if anything, would you change about this class?

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I would definitely change the balance of learning about the performance side of theater and the design part of theater. I came to this class hoping to learn more about what happens in lighting, costumes, set design, etc. If I wanted another drama class, I would have taken one

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Not really, I just need this pandemic to end :(

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Absolutely everything. The entire structure of this class needs to change. Thomas and Jules need to try way harder in planning for this class. I can tell that lectures and lessons were barely prepared and they basically sat on the side and talked while we just fucked around. So not cool.

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I wish there was more acting involved in some of the criteria

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I would love to be actually learning things instead of just being told to do things all the time

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I would rather have the class do more acting type of things

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the time it starts

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I would change nothing except having class in person but, that is out of everyone's control

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I would change the syllabus to include a weekly schedule that includes what assignments are expected each week, so we may be able to properly plan our time according to how much homework we can anticipate instead of not knowing until the last minute.

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add more in about the performance side, though I know it can be very hard with corona being in play

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Less of such a large workload

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how much work we receive at once

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I'd maybe talk about the theatre department in general? At home I'm finding it difficult to be connected with the department and I'm not sure what I should do.

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I can't really think of what I would change for THIS class because I feel like my teachers are doing the best they can and I think they're doing a pretty good job for this theater fundamentals class.

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I would obviously rather be in person especially for the performance part but other than that I think less assignments would help me be able to fully explore and learn from each assignment. I actually really enjoy the class though and think out of all of my classes this semester this class has done the best job at adapting to online.

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Having both Julie and Kristi under the same class. They have enough material to stand on their own and it would be easier to function within the classes as separate entities.

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more clarity about the due dates

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Im not entirely sure

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getting a lot of work from both teachers

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Make it a hybrid

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I can't think of anything that I would change about it. I mean I would like it to be in person or a hybrid class.

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n/a

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Online Learning

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The difficulty spike

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Lighten the homework load

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Nothing so far.

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Given that it's a 3 hour class, I would change it to allow us a quick 10 minute break during class time.

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Shorter class time

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Less small assignments.

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I would love to learn more about design, but I know that is to come!

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We need to do more performance work. I am not saying we have to break social distancing, but some lessons on performance, acting, characterization, inflection, script scoring, monologues, ext. would be very beneficial to all of us

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Nothing

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More performance and acting techniques need to be taught as well as individual/group/team performance work

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Nothing

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If both teachers are splitting a large grade, they should tell the students and submit their grades at the same time so the grade doesn't plummet for a week the jump back up the next week

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Have it be in person?

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I think that the class should be scrapped. I think the intro to design could be helpful for performance majors. Likewise, I think the intro to performance is definitely helpful for design majors, but the specific aspects of performance that are taught in this class are not. I'm paying thousands of dollars to be here, and in return I'm taught how to be an egg for two hours straight (real example). I think we should be taught more about how performers use their voice and space and take on influences, rather than how to flail their arms around and scream out letter sounds for four months. I understand the intention, but the execution is extremely poor.

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I would change the lack of motivation in class

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The professors obviously don't work well with each other and have an obvious dislike for one another. (They even criticized each others work styles). Also requiring Rachel to use her school email instead of her personal email as well as requiring her to post assignments when she assigns them because otherwise it's hard to know what her guidelines for assignments are.

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The professors & also the fact that this is a required course even when most of us already know the basics.

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It's very stressful to not have any grades in for the only assignments that truly affect our grades

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I would change how in depth the class goes, I felt it was very one dimensional and monotonous. While I understand zoom as changed a lot for the academic world right now, having extremely similar projects every week doesn't hone in my skillset or teach me new things.

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nothing- i'm sure it's much better in person than over zoom

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Add more to the material we learned.

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just wish classes were in person

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If you're going to continue to have zoom classes student are going to need a break or a shorter day once in awhile. zoom is tough and this was my last year so I was encouraged to finish. If I was a freshman id be taking a gap year because zoom sessions aren't easy, they're extremely tiring

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Nothing.

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