

## Unit 1: Light and Darkness

### Week 1: Intro; Syllabus Overview; Fairy Tales Introduction

- Introductions: names, getting-to-know-you, expectations for the course
- \*\*\*Basic storytelling structures, 3 act structure
  - Exposition
- Theme definition: Light and Darkness
- Fairy Tales Overview (summary game)
- Into the Woods (songs, clips, costumes, lyrics)

### Week 2: Into the Woods (CHARACTER ARC)

- Cinderella class discussion - passage analysis of *The Uses of Enchantment* (Bettelheim)
- Break-out groups assigned characters: Jack, Red Riding Hood, Wicked Witch, Cinderella
- \*\*\*Character arc within the 3-act structure
- Readings for this class:

Fairy tales: Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Riding Hood

Supplement: Wicked Witch character?

<https://www.tor.com/2014/08/22/fairytales-most-wanted-the-five-most-well-known-character-types/>

### Week 3: Wicked (CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT)

- Comparing serious topics (racism, bullying, prejudice) against lighter songs (“What is this Feeling?”, “Popular”, “Dancing through Life”, “Defying Gravity”)
- \*\*\*Character development
- Reading analysis of passages from *Wicked*
- Readings for this class:

Maguire, Gregory. *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. Print. (Selected Passages)

### Week 4: Spring Awakening (GENRE, THEMES, AND TONE)

- Reviving old language (script comparison), how are these themes discussed?
- Why rock opera? (lyric and music analyses, song order analyses) \*\*\*Genre, Themes, and Tone
  - Placement of laughter
  - Nature / Human Nature / Morals
- Costume and set design discussion
- Readings for this class:

Wedekind, Frank. *Spring Awakening*, n.p., 1891

### Week 5: In-Class Project

- Given our in-class analysis, students will be asked to reimagine how a character, novel, play, or movie of their choice would be portrayed as a musical, given the themes and deeper meanings attached to it. Students can choose to present their thoughts on character design, costumes, set, musical genre, choreography, etc. (they will not be expected to draft an entire musical). Students will then present their idea to the class and explain why their change would better illustrate the themes of the musical as a whole.
- For example: *I would turn Citizen Kane into a musical by altering the musical genre to reflect the viewpoint of each of his surviving acquaintances. For example, his ex-wife Susan could present her time with him as an operetta, while his manager Bernstein could reflect on his memories through jazz to reflect Kane's youth and rebellion. I would also never have Kane sing, to portray the theme that we can never truly know Kane, but rather how others perceive him.*
- Students will be given art supplies to more creatively present their ideas on posterboard, and will be allowed to work in pairs if they choose. Students will be given an hour and a half to work on their projects in class, during which Nicole and Jeremy can provide feedback and support, after which students will take turns presenting their ideas and asking questions to peers.

### **Unit 2: Comedy**

#### Week 6: Book of Mormon

- Religion's role in modern society; What questions does religion help us to answer?
- How can something sacred be explored without being offensive? Is this possible?
- What is comedy? History of comedy?
- Types of Comedy:
  - Exaggeration: "Spooky Mormon Hell Dream"
  - Irony: "Turn it Off"
  - Satire: "Joseph Smith American Moses"
  - What is "I Believe"?
  - Compare with popular media comedy (SNL, John Oliver, etc.)
- Readings for this class (select passages):

*The Book of Mormon*. Ed. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006. Print.

*The Holy Bible*, New International Version. Grand Rapids: Zondervan House, 1984. Print.

#### Week 7: Candide (COMMENTARY through SATIRE)

- Chapter comparisons and in-class readings of passages that stood out to students

- In-class analysis of themes: Cultivating one's own garden, Best of all possible worlds?
- Analysis of "Glitter and Be Gay": how form mirrors content, why an operetta?
- Clip and lyrical analysis of other musical numbers
- Readings for this class:

Voltaire. *Candide*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1991. Print.

#### Week 8: Cabaret (COMMENTARY/REVOLUTION through COMEDY)

- Subversion as a form of revolution: the Cabaret as a space of satire and undermining of norms (sexuality, gender roles, class, religion, ethnicity)
- Close readings of text passages
- The role of the Emcee and the Kit Kat Club
- Individual freedoms circumvented by the emergence of nationalist extremism
- Readings for this class:

Isherwood, Christopher. *Goodbye to Berlin*. London: Hogarth Press, 1939. Print.

#### Week 9: Cabaret Pt. 2 / Unit 2 Wrap Up / Mini-Discussion

- **In-class project or presentation, TBD**
- Potential spill-over time for previous topics if necessary; make-up for snow day
- Optional in-class screening of a musical (*Cabaret*, *Candide*, *Camelot*, *Spring Awakening*)
- Mini Discussion: Hamilton: Exposition discussion
  - Announce Final Projects

### **Unit 3: Revolution**

#### Week 10: Les Mis (SOCIAL ISSUES)

- Discussion of themes: war, poverty, revolution, sexism, class, corruption, moral ambiguity (Javert's character)
- How conflict is represented musically, stylistically (costumes, set, choreography), textually
- "I Dreamed a Dream" vs "Glitter and Be Gay" - dealing with trauma in music
- Readings for this class (select passages):

Hugo, Victor. *Les Misérables*. Paris: A. Lacroix, Verboeckhoven & Cie, 1862. Print.

#### Week 11: West Side Story (MORE SOCIAL ISSUES)

- Discussions of themes: Race in America, immigration, gang violence, corruption of youth, unemployment, authority
- Connect to Trump's America
  - Students need to tell us what their final project is
- Readings: Romeo & Juliet

### Week 12: Non-Diagetic Revolution/ Failed/Successful Musicals

- The Wizard of Oz and The Wiz
- Casting: *Hamilton*, *Spring Awakening* (Revival)
- Production: *Waitress*
- Re-writing: *The Wiz*
- Cats (?), *Amelie*, *Groundhog Day*, *Spiderman*,

### Week 13: Presentation of Final Project

- 1 - Pick a musical adaptation and write an essay on at least two aspects of the musical
  - Genre; Songs vs Texts; Story Arc vs. plot; Mise-en-scene; Non-Diagetic options; characters
- 2 - Pick a book of your choice and turn it into a musical based on two of the aforementioned categories
- Closing comments and themes