

Sample Syllabus

Get the Job in the Entertainment Industry by Kristina Tollefson

Course Description

Exploration and assimilation of successful techniques needed to secure employment in Theatre or related segments of the entertainment industry.

Course Objectives

- Have a working knowledge of the business side of the profession including:
 - unions and contracts
 - self-employment
 - tax and financial information that goes along with self-employment/independent contractor status
 - how to negotiate a contract, etc.
 - how to set your fees
- Identify your financial and personal needs
- Make a 5-year plan
- Know where and how to look for job openings
- Prepare employment materials suitable for the industry
 - resumes, cover letters, portfolios, websites, etc.
- Know how to prepare for and perform in an interview
- Effectively meet deadlines

Course Philosophy

I cannot learn this content for you. It is imperative that you complete the readings and do your assignments before coming to class. In class we can clarify and synthesize the information you have read and add real life examples and situations to help you understand. Please come to class with an open mind, a willingness to speak, and an enthusiasm for participation.

You may not get everything right the first time and that's ok. I may ask you to redo an assignment before grading it to give you an opportunity to improve your grade. If you want an opportunity to redo an assignment for an improved grade, please ask if it is appropriate for the assignment.

Required Materials

- *Get the Job in the Entertainment Industry: A Practical Guide for Designers, Technicians, and Stage Managers* by Kristina Tollefson

- Handouts, Articles, and Links as provided
- Required Tax Forms and Instructions: all are available online. If you want hard copies so you can write on them and take notes more easily, hard copies should be ordered immediately from irs.gov or can be picked up at the local tax office. You will need: 1040 with Schedules 1, 2, A, B, C, E, SE

Diversity and Inclusion - Take the Note

Natalie Arneson posted the following message in the Facebook group Artists for Anti-Racist Accountability (AFAR):

You know how in theatre we're supposed to just take the note? The director says to you, "You entered from the downstage wing. Please make sure you enter from the upstage wing," and you're supposed to say "Thank you." You're not supposed to say, "Yeah, I'm SO sorry, I just got confused, and I was running late because my costume change took longer than I expected, so I was trying to save time but I'm SO sorry, I promise it will NEVER happen again." You don't say that because the director doesn't care. It isn't conducive to the note session. You say, "Thank you" because you understood the note and you will act accordingly in the future.

I think this is how we white allies should be approaching our unlearning. I've read many articles and heard from many black friends personally that they are tired of the constant checking in, of the constant apologies from us...This is us excusing why we entered in the wrong wing instead of just taking the note.

Let's just take the note.

Every student in this class, regardless of ability, age, background, class, cognitive style, communication style, educational background, ethnicity and national identity, faith and non-faith perspectives, family status, gender identity and expression, income, military experience, political affiliation, primary language, race, sexual orientation, size, socioeconomic class, or any identity category is a valued and equal member of the group. We all bring different experiences to this class. It is our different experiences that will enrich the course content. I aim to create a class atmosphere in which all students can learn. I encourage every student to share their own experiences as they are relevant to the course, and I also stress that no student is ever presumed to speak for anything or anyone more than their own experience or point of view.

In my classes, you have the right to be yourself. You have the right to be called by whatever name you wish, and for that name to be pronounced correctly. You have the right to be referred to by your correct pronouns. You have the right to adjust those things at any point and correct me when I get it wrong.

In class discussions, please feel free to discuss openly, seriously, and passionately. I will not, however, tolerate insulting remarks, gender or racial slurs, or other forms of bullying, intimidation or hate speech. Publication of the remarks or questions or work of any classmate - in any form, written or recorded - without clear consent will be regarded as a violation of academic integrity and treated as such. I expect you to act with respect for this space, this subject, our process, and each other.

If you have an experience related to this class that contradicts my commitments above or if there are aspects of the instruction of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or a sense of alienation from the course content, please contact me without fear of reprisal. I commit to take the note and I ask everyone to do the same. If you feel uncomfortable contacting me, please contact the Director of the School of Performing Arts.

I encourage you to read the Principles for Building Anti-Racist Theatre Systems at <https://www.weseeyouwat.com/principles> published on the website "We See You, White American Theater."

Required Technology

Regular computer access is a requirement for this course. Regularly back up all your work in the cloud or a second location. We are dealing with technology, so don't expect miracles. Technology cannot be 100% reliable. Therefore, don't wait until the last minute for something. You are required to have a working email address and regular, functional, reliable internet access as some assignments are due only through email/online and important class announcements and documents will be sent through the online classroom. You are responsible for making sure your email and internet is functional. You must also have access to Photoshop (or equivalent), Word (or equivalent), and Excel (or equivalent). If you do not have personal copies of these programs, you may use the computer lab which does have them.

Supplies

There will be many supplies and expenses for this course including but not limited to resume paper, portfolio materials, books, telephone calls, web hosting, and local travel.

Policies, Protocols, Disclaimers and Advice (AKA "The Rules")

The following will help your work in this course to go much more smoothly. Please carefully review these expectations and follow them.

- Please limit your distractions during class ESPECIALLY when we have a guest in class. Please don't attempt to multitask.

- Take notes in every class, especially about assignments! Not all details will be in the online classroom. We will discuss details and clarify assignments in class.
- Please speak up! In virtual class meetings joke in the chat but turn your mic on for anything content related! Please don't just leave me speaking to a collection of black silent boxes. Interaction significantly improves the quality of the course. :)
- Academic integrity will be appraised according to the student academic behavior standards of the University.
- Turn in your assignments on time.
- Keep up with the readings and do them on time. Students who keep up with the readings tend to do much better in this class than those who do not. You are spending your time and your money in this course. It only makes sense to get as much out of the course as you can. To do so means reading.
- Be courteous and considerate. Being honest and expressing yourself freely is very important but being considerate of others online is just as important as in the classroom.
- Participation - What you get out of the course is directly proportional to what you put into it, including doing assignments, checking e-mail, discussion postings, readings, and coming to class. This also applies to all virtual class meetings. You will get more out of the class if you turn your camera on.

Attendance Policy

I understand that you all have other classes and obligations pulling you in many directions and sometimes you get sick. For this reason, I do not reduce your grade if you do not attend class. If you need to be gone from class for any reason, please do not ask me for permission but please do let me know of your decision. This class is important and I will not give permission to miss it. It is up to you to make the choice to attend class or not. You are NOT penalized for poor attendance through point reduction or grade lowering but your grades will be higher if you attend class regularly because you will do better on all the assignments. Every absence is an excused absence and will not reduce the grade you earn. This means you do not need to bring a doctor's note or other form of "excuse".

Names, Labeling, and Rubrics

Anything turned in hard copy must contain your name and the name of the assignment. 5 points will be deducted as an "inconvenience fee" from every assignment that does not have a name and/or the name of the assignment including draft # if appropriate or for every missing rubric when assignment is turned in in hard copy. This includes all document names for electronic assignments. You MUST include your name on documents sent electronically. For example: Tollefson Needs Chart

Managing Your Workload

Most projects in this class are introduced and explained very early so that you can best plan your activities to accomplish them and spread them out over several days. Please take detailed notes about assignment guidelines. Use this time so that you are not rushing to complete the assignment the night before as this will show in your work. The more time I give you to do an assignment from the time I assign it in class, the more time I think it is going to take you to complete.

Rubrics

There are rubrics for most assignments which provide instructions and, in some cases, will be used for grading. They are available for download below. Consider each criterion as you are doing your assignment. **READ THE RUBRIC BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR ASSIGNMENT** and then also review it before completing your assignment and make any adjustments necessary to bring your assignment in line with the expectations.

Changes to the Syllabus

Changes to this syllabus, assignments, due dates, etc are a guarantee because we will adapt as we go through the semester.

Accessibility Statement

If you need classroom accommodations, please notify me within the first week of class and be sure you are registered with Student Accessibility Services.

Copyright

This course may contain copyright protected materials such as audio or video clips, images, text materials, etc. These items are being used with regard to the Fair Use doctrine in order to enhance the learning environment. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items. The use of these materials is strictly reserved for this classroom environment and your use only. All copyright materials are credited to the copyright holder.

Assignments

Professional Email Address

Send me an email from your professional email address. If you do not already have one you will need to create one. It is the email address you will use for this class. Follow the guidelines in the book and contact me if you need help figuring out something that works for you.

Career Goal

Submit a sentence or two telling me your career goal. This will help me provide you with targeted feedback and appropriate connections when it comes to assigning interviewers. You are welcome to let me know if this goal changes at any point in the semester.

Elevator Pitch

Write your elevator pitch based on the instructions and examples in the book. You will submit a final version based on feedback and revisions to your first draft.

Vision Board

The goal for creating a vision board for this class is about helping you focus on what your goals really are (you can include both professional and personal). This is the first step in the process of putting together your 5-year plan in a less stressful and more approachable way. Provide an image for Work and Career Development, Financial Satisfaction, Social/Relationship, Location/Relocation, Lifestyle, Family, Health, and any other goals that are important to you (could be education, spirituality, philanthropy, etc.).

Review the examples in the book. Focus on imagery not words and quotes. Along with your vision board, also submit a written explanation of what the items on your vision board are, why they are important to you and how/when you expect to achieve the visions you have for yourself.

Goals and Actions

The problem I see in many 5-year plans is that people include goals, but no action steps to actually reach those goals. It's great that in 5 years you want to be working in Chicago, but what are you going to do to get there? In five years where do you want to be in Work and Career Development, Financial Satisfaction, Social/Relationship, Location/Relocation, Lifestyle, Family, Health, and any other goals that are important to you (could be education, spiritual, philanthropy, etc.) in each of the areas on the spreadsheet. What steps do you need to take to accomplish those goals? Download and complete the worksheet.

5-year Plan

Now that you have an action plan for each of your 5-year goals, it is time to put together an overarching timeline for achieving those goals. After reading about 5-year plans in the book, download the worksheet and use your Goals and Actions as a starting place for your 5-year plan. You should be able to answer the Who, What, When, Why, and How in addition to How often, With whom, and How Long each thing will take you. There will be forks in the road. Sometimes you will head down the same road for a while or your forked roads may merge and then fork again. The idea of the spreadsheet is not to have three separate plans, but to have alternatives if something doesn't pan out how you would like. For example, what if you

don't find a job--need an alternative plan, what if you can't afford to move--need an alternative plan, what if you meet someone and it upends your whole plan, what if there is a pandemic? This requires time, thought, and consultation with family and significant others.

Needs Charts and Documentation

Download the worksheets for Personal Needs, Minimum Financial Needs, and Moving Expenses. Using the templates provided, fill in the chart for your financial needs as well as your personal needs and moving expenses. This requires some internet research. You can do internet searches to find out this kind of information. Copy/paste the content of the webpages into a word doc AND include the URL. Do not just provide me with a list of URLs. I want the URL and for you to copy and paste the information into a word doc. Do not worry about the wacky formatting. I would like an at-a-glance document that I can review and the link available in case I want to see more. Documentation is expected for each item listed. If you only provide me with URLs I will return your submission to you to complete and it will be counted late. This will become a very long word doc and that is fine.

Do this research for your current city, and for one other city of your choosing—a city that you have considered moving to. Remember—there are three sections to this—one for financial, one for personal, one for moving expenses. Personalize as needed.

Bio

You will likely have multiple bios depending on the purpose and the guidelines of the place you are using it. This bio will serve as your base bio that you can then edit to fit word limits or specific guidelines in the future. Following the guidelines and structure in the book, write a substantive bio. Start with what is most interesting, which is typically where you are going, and work backwards. There will be 3 drafts of this assignment.

Reference Confirmation Worksheet

Use this form to document the people you have requested to serve as references for you. If you are unable to obtain signatures from any of your references, a copy of an email confirmation is acceptable. Indicate email attached in the signature spot and then upload a copy of the email. Confirm what contact information they want you to use. While you will likely only ever use 3 references at a time, the references you use might change depending on the job you are applying for, or someone may be unreachable for a time, so it is good to have at least five prepared. Include text that explains why you are selecting each person and what they will be able to say about you as a reference.

Letterhead

By the end of the semester, you will have finalized your letterhead that you will use at the top of your resume and cover letter. There will be multiple drafts throughout the semester. For your

first draft, submit no less than three options which may include variations in font, color, and layout. From there we will begin to narrow your aesthetic down so that you can revise and finalize for your final submission. Follow the guidelines in the textbook.

Resume

By the end of the semester, you will submit a professional resume that follows the guidelines in the textbook. There will be 3 drafts and revisions due throughout the semester prior to your final copy.

Cover Letter

For this assignment you will need to use a real or fictitious job description/advertisement so you have details you can write about. You can find jobs advertised on Artsearch, Backstage Jobs, Facebook Groups among many, many other places. (please include job description along with your letter). By the end of the semester, you will submit your final professional cover letter that follows the guidelines in the textbook. There will be 3 drafts and revisions due throughout the semester prior to your final copy.

Business Card

By the end of the semester, you will have finalized your professional business card. There will be multiple drafts throughout the semester. For your first draft, submit no less than three options which may include variations in font, color, and layout. From there we will begin to narrow your aesthetic down so that you can revise and finalize for your final submission. Follow the guidelines in the textbook.

Website Portfolio Creation Research

For this assignment you will research at least three options for creating your website and submit a discussion post about what you think are the three best options. Include weblink, pros, cons, price, etc. Be as specific as possible and indicate which of these you would choose at this point and why. Separate each into its own paragraph that is at least 250 words.

Website Portfolio Evaluation Worksheets and Summary

Download the worksheet. Spend time exploring the websites of professionals in your area of concentration and select three (good or bad) to fill out a worksheet for. Please provide complete, thoughtful answers that show you thought about this for a while.

Photo Manipulation

Using the production photo I provide, adjust and manipulate the photo so that it is ready for use in a digital portfolio. It is bad practice to use photos right off the camera. You must adjust size, crop aspect ratio, and resolution. You may have to adjust format if they are not .jpg images. You may have to adjust contrast or brightness depending on how they display in web browsers. Be

sure to save the original file somewhere so you have the original image in case you need to go back to it for some reason. Follow the guide provided in the textbook related to image size and resolution. When complete, upload your .jpg image and include a description of what you did to manipulate the picture and why you chose to do those edits.

Interview Questions Worksheet

After reading the interviews chapter of the textbook, download the interview questions worksheet and write out your answers to each of the questions. Do not use the same story or example more than once in the same context and do not reference previous answers.

In Class Interview with Portfolio Presentation

You will participate in a mock interview with me in class during which you will also present your portfolio.

Phone/Zoom Mock Interview

I will assign you to an industry professional who has agreed to do a mock interview with you for the type of job you are interested in. When provided their contact information, reach out to them requesting the interview and attach a relevant resume and cover letter. Be prepared to be asked to share your presentation portfolio if you meet by video conference. When you have completed the interview, submit a self-evaluation. I will ask the interviewer to evaluate you as well.

In-Person Mock/Informational Interview

I will assign you an interviewer (let me know if you have a request). When provided their contact information, reach out to them requesting the interview. Send them a relevant resume and cover letter. Be prepared to present your portfolio as part of the interview. When you have completed the interview, submit a self-evaluation. I will ask the interviewer to evaluate you as well.

Presentation Portfolio

Following the guidelines in the textbook, create a presentation portfolio and accompanying draft of your opening, transitions, and closing. You will submit and present this several times through the semester adjusting and editing based on feedback each time.

Website Portfolio

Following the guidelines in the textbook, create your website portfolio including a home page with photo and bio or other style home page and an about page, portfolio pages organized as appropriate to your work. Contact information, and link to resume also required. You will have at least one draft due during the semester for feedback prior to making adjustments and submitting the link to your final version.

Reading Reflection Journal Entries

You will submit a written reading reflection journal based on the assigned reading by 8am on the day they are due. The journal entry should NOT be a summary of the reading, but rather a reflection on the reading. What are your thoughts and feelings about it? How does this relate to your experience or your career? Has the reading changed the way you think about something and if so how? Please write at least 250 words per chapter/article.