Mission Statement:
Our mission is to serve as a leading center of Christian thought and action providing an excellent education from a biblical perspective and global context in pivotal professions to equip Christian leaders to change the world.

COURSE SYLLABUS

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION & THE ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS

THE 721 01 (COHORT B)
RAPIER AND DAGGER FOR THE STAGE
SPRING 2012
LOCATION: FILM STAGE
CLASS MEETS: MW 3-4:50 PM

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Michael Hill-Kirkland
Phone: (W) 757-352-4730; (C) 757-617-7174
Fax: 757-352-4279
E-mail: michhil@regent.edu
Office Hours: MWF 10-11 am; TH 10am-12 pm
Office Location: COM 224

All students are required to read and have a thorough understanding of the syllabus. Any questions or concerns need to be addressed to the instructor. Please sign and return to the instructor the statement of compliance at the end of this document.
**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course takes as its focus a variety of safety and aesthetic principles as well as practical techniques utilized in staging Renaissance-style sword fights for the stage. Principles covered will include, but are not limited to: distance/measure, partnering, cue-reaction-action principle, masking, reversal of energy, and the pyramid of safety. Techniques covered will be drawn from the following categories: footwork, cuts, thrusts, parries, cross parries, hand parries, reinforced parries, direct and complex attacks, prise de fer (taking of the blade) attacks, avoidances, dagger attacks, and the integration of unarmed techniques with blade work. Taking two (2) SAFD Skills Proficiency Tests as adjudicated by an SAFD Fight Master is required of all MFA Acting students.

3 crs.

**RATIONALE/PHILOSOPHY**

Christ taught us, “…and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free” John 8:32. For me, acting, indeed doing theatre, has always been more about presenting truth than pretending; albeit a heightened truth that we don’t come across everyday. Indeed, much of the history of humankind has been spent in the search of “truth.” It is my belief, as a Christian artist, that where the truth is there also is God. The Apostle John informs us, “…God is spirit and those who worship him worship him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24. As actors, our responsibility is to seek out the truths the playwright is attempting to articulate in their script and then to strive to present that truth, via our character, as honestly, and as interestingly as possible within the context of the production’s style, genre, concept, etc. If we present the character truthfully, from their perspective (and remember--the villain is always the hero of their own story), we contribute to the overall truth of the effort—and there also is God. The better workmen we are the more artfully we can reveal (like peeling back the layers of an onion) the often-universal truths the playwright has embedded in our character. The Apostle Paul also encourages us to strive to become the best workmen we can be, “…do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly holding the word of truth.” II Timothy 2:15. The more adept at your craft you are the more effective you will be in telling the truth through your work. This course is designed to equip you with additional tools (and to give you expertise at using them) so as to make you an “approved workman,” that you might more effectively worship God in spirit and in truth through your craft.

**PREREQUISITES**

None.

**DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

- All MFA Acting students will demonstrate mastery of objective-driven acting technique at a professionally competitive level.

- All MFA Acting students will demonstrate objective driven acting as the cornerstone of performance in diverse literary genres.

- All MFA Acting students will articulate and defend artistic choices in the language of acting craft, ensuring their relevance as informed collaborators in the creative process
• All MFA Acting students will demonstrate healthy, effective, character-driven work in the applied disciplines of voice and movement.

• All MFA Acting students will effectively integrate and apply biblical principles of the Christian faith to their academic and creative work.

• All MFA Acting students will take and pass the SAFD Skills Proficiency Test in no less than two weapons/styles.

**COURSE OUTCOMES FOR THE 721 RAPIER AND DAGGER FOR THE STAGE**

1. Effective and safe execution of cuts, thrusts and parries in all lines with the rapier and dagger;
   *Assessments: Exercise work; Assignments; Quizzes; Midterm; Final*

2. Effective and safe execution of pris de fer (transporting techniques) with the rapier and dagger in all lines;
   *Assessments: Exercise work; Assignments; Quizzes; Midterm; Final*

3. Effective and safe integration of essential safety principles including (but not limited to) eye-contact cueing, the magnet and steel principle, proper distance/measure, the Cue-Action-Principle (CRAP), reversal of energy in offensive techniques, on versus off-line techniques;
   *Assessments: Exercise work; Assignments; Quizzes; Midterm; Final*

4. Healthy and dramatically effective utilization of the body and voice;
   *Assessments: Exercise work; Assignments; Quizzes; Midterm; Final*

5. Effective integration of beat-driven acting technique;
   *Assessments: Exercise work; Assignments; Quizzes; Midterm; Final*

6. Effective and safe partnering (cooperation & coordination);
   *Assessments: Exercise work; Assignments; Quizzes; Midterm; Final*

7. Effective and safe execution of linear and non-linear footwork patterns;
   *Assessments: Exercise work; Assignments; Quizzes; Midterm; Final*

8. Clear understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Fight Director;
   *Assessments: Exercise work; Assignments; Final*

9. Professionally competitive presentation of a dramatically effective, safely executed rapier and dagger fight scene fulfilling the mandatory requirements for passing the Society of American Fight Directors Skills Proficiency Test (SPT) in Rapier and Dagger;
   *Assessments: Exercise work; Assignments; Quizzes; Midterm; Final*

**COURSE MATERIALS**

**Required Materials/Equipment:**


• The practical portion of the Final will involve performing a fight, at performance level, within the context of a piece of dramatic literature. **The student is responsible for locating and choosing a scene**, in conference with his/her fight partner, a piece of dramatic literature to supply character and context **for the fight test**. The instructor is available for consultation;

• The student is responsible for acquiring a pair of leather work-gloves (gauntlets) and a pair of kneepads. Elbow pads are highly recommended, but are not required. Gloves may be purchased on-line via: The Sullivan Glove Company at: [http://store.yahoo.com/factoryoutlet/index.html](http://store.yahoo.com/factoryoutlet/index.html) or at American Fencers Supply’s The Armoury at [http://www.amfence.com/html/armoury.html](http://www.amfence.com/html/armoury.html)

I strongly suggest **UN-LINED** gauntlets. Knee and elbow pads can be acquired at most sporting goods stores. **You must bring your gloves with you to every class. You will not be allowed to participate if you are not wearing gloves.**

• **CLOTHING:** It is imperative you dress appropriately for this movement-oriented course. Please do not wear excessively tight or restrictive clothing. Additionally, do not wear overly loose or baggy clothing, as targeting becomes an issue for your partner. **Shorts are NOT appropriate** as wound techniques often require placing the blade on the body. Sweatpants and/or dance oriented clothing is fine. Long hair must be tied back. You may wear costume accessories when exercise-appropriate. Tennis shoes, cross trainers, and jazz sneakers are the most appropriate footwear. **Remove all jewelry before class begins.**

**Required Viewing:**

• The student is required to **locate and view two films** to facilitate the writing of a paper that compares and contrasts the artistry of two different fight directors.

• *Masters of Defence*. The Royal Amouries. **On reserve in the Library.**

• *The Stage Fight Director*. Theatre Arts Video Library. **On reserve in the Library.**

**Recommended Resources:**


**Course Requirements and Assignments**

1. This is a performance/technique focused laboratory course. Therefore, as in other performance-oriented classes, it is expected you will work both during and outside of regularly scheduled class times. This may include written assignments, such as notating fights, or practical assignments--such as rehearsing a choreographed fight combination with an assigned partner. The student may earn up to two hundred (200) points for consistent and committed participation in the course.

2. There will be two (2) exams administered during the course:
   a. Midterm Exam (100 points possible)
      1. 50 points possible for the objective portion of the exam;
      2. 50 points possible for the practical portion of the exam;
   b. Final Exam (200 points possible)
      1. 100 points possible for the objective portion of the exam;
      2. 100 points possible for the practical portion of the exam;

3. The students will, in conjunction with a partner and during class, choreograph and notate a ten (10) beat fight and perform it (at a safe tempo) in class. A maximum of thirty (30) points for creative and dramatically effective choreography are possible. An additional twenty (20) points are possible for clear notation of the fight in written form. The student may earn up to a total of fifty (50) combined points for both parts of the assignment.

4. There will be four (4) pop quizzes (practical) over the semester; the student will need to be present to earn these points. Each quiz is worth up to twenty-five (25) points for a total of 100 quiz points over the entire semester.

5. The student will write a paper comparing and contrasting the fight choreography performed in two (2) films (or TV episodes) involving fights performed with the single rapier, or rapier and dagger. Two (2) different fight directors must have staged the fights. The student may earn up to one hundred (100) points for this assignment.
6. The student will write a paper/abstract (summaries), not to exceed three (3) pages in length, double spaced, on the material presented in each of the two (2) videos, Masters of Defence and The Stage Fight Director on reserve in the Regent University Library. **The student may earn up to twenty-five (25) points per video abstract for a total of fifty (50) points.**

7. The Student will write a paper/abstract, not to exceed seven (7) pages in length, distilling the primary points covered, chapter by chapter, in Soper and Turner’s Methods and Practice of Elizabethan Swordplay. **The student may earn up to one hundred (100) points for this assignment.**

8. The student will learn a rapier and dagger fight over the course of the semester. The first half of the fight will be tested as part of the Midterm Examination and will be worth up to fifty (50) points. The entire fight will be performed, within the context of a scene, as part of the Final Examination and will be worth up to one hundred (100) points. Fight sequences will be periodically videotaped and, time permitting, placed on Blackboard along with audio commentary.

**PARTICIPATION GRADE POLICY**

The majority of the material covered will be in-class lab-oriented exercise work. If you miss class it is virtually impossible to make-up the work. You also learn a great deal by observing your peers. **All students begin the course with two hundred (200) participation points banked.** You are afforded one (1) absence, after which the student risks having **twenty-five (25) points deducted for each subsequent absence after the first. An excused status is only possible if the instructor is contacted IN ADVANCE of missing class.**

**Tardiness:** Three (3) late arrivals constitute an absence. After fifteen (15) minutes, a tardy is considered an absence. If class has started, please enter as quietly as possible. Under no circumstance should a student enter the classroom when student(s) are engaged in performing.

**Formatting of Written Assignments**

All written materials must be composed in a font comparable to New Times Roman 12 pt. Include a title sheet that includes your name, the instructor’s name, the time and days the class meets, and the paper’s title. All written assignments should be **TURNED IN VIA EMAIL**, no later than midnight on the day the assignment appears as due on the Daily Schedule. **DO NOT turn in a hard copy.** Your written assignments will be graded and returned to you, via email, with comments embedded via use of the Word Comment feature, usually with a comment or two—and an indication of the points awarded—added at the end of the document.

**Late Assignments**

Late assignments will be lowered by 10% each day the assignment remains late (including weekends). Spelling, grammar, and composition will be considered when assigning a grade for the effort.
EVALUATION AND GRADING

As with any performance class, the grading process is somewhat subjective. Grades are assigned based upon the instructor’s perception of your progress and achievement. You will be graded according to your effort, progress, and product. Much of what you will accomplish has been assigned a quantitative value:

1. Midterm 100 pts.
2. Final 200 pts.
3. Choreography/Notation Assignment 50 pts.
4. 4 Quizzes (25 points each) 100 pts.
5. Exercise work (In-class) 200 pts.
6. Attendance, attitude, commitment 100 pts.
7. Compare/Contrast Paper 100 pts.
10. Abstract: Methods and Practices of Elizabethan Swordplay 100 pts.

Total 1,000 pts.

Graduate Grading Scale

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UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

It is expected that the student will, at all times, adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty in all aspects of scholarship and training. Use of another author’s material must always be properly documented and clearly cited. It is expected all work turned in during the semester will be a result of that semester’s scholarship. Retooled papers from previous courses, even at other universities, are not acceptable. Violating this policy may result in failing the course.

Students are on their honor to complete assignments with honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty involves intentionally or unintentionally stealing the intellectual property of others. Students are expected to be familiar with the university’s policy on academic integrity found in both the University
Student Handbook and School of Undergraduate Studies Catalog (http://www.regent.edu/general/catalog/) and to follow it. As an academic and Christian community, Regent University takes seriously the call for integrity and penalizes breaches of academic integrity.

Students should be aware that submitted papers may be checked using Safeassign (Blackboard’s plagiarism detection feature). This feature will determine the percentage of the submitted paper that matches other sources and will generate a report. Scores below 15% include quotes and few common phrases or blocks of text that match other documents, these papers indicate no evidence of the possibility of plagiarism. Scores between 15% and 40% include extensive quoted or paraphrased material or may include plagiarism and will require further review. Scores over 40% indicate a high probability the text in the paper was copied from other sources and should be reviewed for plagiarism. The professor or instructor will contact the student if plagiarism is a concern.

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION

At the completion of the semester, the student will have the opportunity to evaluate and comment on course content and effectiveness of instruction. However, if the student has a particular grievance or is struggling with any particular unit of the course, the student is encouraged to seek out the instructor sooner rather than later (not just during office hours) that a remedy might be immediately sought to rectify the situation. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are instructed in Matthew 18:15, to go to each other, at first one-on-one, and express our concerns. We are then admonished to listen—not just talk; and then to address and fix the situation. Let us at least begin by following this sage advice.

Becoming Christian leaders includes learning how to evaluate others by providing honest evaluations that include positive affirmation and constructive feedback, as appropriate. Consequently, university policy requires that all students submit a formal student evaluation of teaching form at the end of the academic term. This mandatory requirement must be completed before students will be able to access their final course grade. This form is only available in an online format. Prior to the end of the course, students will receive an e-mail indicating that the form is available. Instructions on accessing the evaluation will be included. Since these evaluations are only available for a limited time, students should complete the evaluation as soon as they receive the e-mail notification that the evaluation form is available. Instructors will not have access to course evaluations until after grades have been submitted and will only have access to anonymous summary data. Students are also encouraged at any point during the term to offer comments that may be helpful to the improvement or refinement of the course. Students can access the online evaluation system at: http://eval.regent.edu/regentsurvey/students.cfm. If you have questions about the online evaluation please contact evaluation@regent.edu.

INCOMPLETES AND EXTENSIONS

A grade of “I” or “Incomplete” will be submitted by the instructor only under the direst of circumstances—such as a death in the family or severe illness—and only if properly documented. Regent University’s policy regarding the awarding of an “incomplete” is that the student has exactly one academic semester in which to receive a grade reflecting the completion of the course. Should the student fail to complete the requirements for completion of the course, the “I” on record will automatically convert to a “WF”. My personal policy is that the student will enter into a contract with specific and detailed deadlines for completion. Extensions for work missed due to illness or emergency must be negotiated and are granted at the instructor’s discretion.
ACADEMIC CONTINUITY

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for Regent University to suspend normal operations. During this time, Regent University may opt to continue delivery of traditional classroom instruction using the Blackboard Course Management System. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor the course Blackboard site in the event of campus closure.

UNIVERSITY WithDrawl

Students who have not attended or logged into a class, will, at the end of the second week of the session/semester—in accordance with university practice—be assumed to have unofficially dropped and will be administratively dropped from that class.

UNIVERSITY PolICIES AND Resources

Please review the following links for important information on University policies:

- Academic Calendar/Registrar Information
- Bookstore
- Honor/Plagiarism Policy
- Regent Library
- Student Services (includes links to student handbook, disability services, University calendar, University Writing Center, etc.)
- Technical Support – University Helpdesk
- Disability Statement – the student is responsible for contacting the assistant director of Student Services at 757.352.4486 to request accommodations, provide necessary documentation, and make arrangement with each instructor. The following website is designed to help our disabled students learn of their rights and responsibilities with regard to disability services. The site also has resources for faculty to become better informed of their responsibilities toward the disabled students in their classes. www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/student_life/disabilities.cfm

DISABILITY STATEMENT

THE STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTACTING DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LIFE AT 757.352.4867 TO REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS, PROVIDE NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION, AND MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH EACH INSTRUCTOR. THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE IS DESIGNED TO HELP OUR DISABLED STUDENTS LEARN OF THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITH REGARDS TO DISABILITY SERVICES. THE SITE ALSO HAS RESOURCES FOR FACULTY TO BECOME BETTER INFORMED OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS THE DISABLED STUDENTS IN THEIR CLASSES.

http://ww.regent.edu/disabilities

FINAL COMMENTS

The late Patrick “Paddy” Crean, Un-Official Dean of the SAFD (fight director/double for Errol Flynn) was frequently observed to say, “Thoughts fast, blades slow, points low, fight light.” And with that wise advice firmly in mind, let’s go to work.

Michael Hill-Kirkland, MFA, Ph.D.
Professor
Head MFA Acting Program
At times, due to unforeseen circumstances, course content may be subject to change. Please check with your professor to insure you have the most recently updated Syllabus for this course.

Regent University
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Phone (888) 718-1222
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Please sign here to confirm you have read and understood the course requirements as outlined in this syllabus.

___________________________________________________
Student Name (printed)

______________________________________________
Signature Date