

**AMGT 599 – SELLING BROADWAY
FALL TERM 2017**

Aug 28-Oct 2

Mon 7:20-10:00pm

George Mason University, Arlington Campus
Founders Hall, Room 308

PROFESSOR

Andrew Damer

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Office Hours: Phone by appointment or immediately prior to class

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course traces the path of a commercial theatrical production from a regional or pre-Broadway tryout to Broadway and beyond with a specific focus on audience development and marketing and sales strategies. Students will consider the factors that go into positioning and messaging, initial pricing and scaling, advertising and promotions, inventory and revenue management, and traditional and social media with the goal of launching a new commercial product, building an audience, and extending the life of that show.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course, students can expect to gain an understanding of the Broadway industry with specific focus on marketing and sales strategies for theatre. Students will learn how to competitively position a show, identify a target audience, and build an integrated marketing campaign to reach and evolve with that audience. Students will also gain an understanding of various revenue management tactics in order to create supplemental value for the customer and incremental revenue for the presenting organization.

RECOMMENDED READING/LISTENING

- *Cl to Eye* hosted by Erik Gensler, podcast
- *I Wanna Be a Producer – How to Make a Killing on Broadway...or Get Killed* (2016) by John Breglio, ISBN-10: 1495045161
- *The Producer's Perspective with Ken Davenport* hosted by Ken Davenport, podcast
- *Razzle Dazzle* (2015) by Michael Riedel, ISBN-10: 1451672160
- *The Secret Life of the American Musical: How Broadway Shows Are Built* (2016) by Jack Viertel, ISBN-10: 0374256926

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

1. Arrive and be ready at the scheduled start time.
2. Be present and engaged in class. Participate in discussions and ask questions.
3. Be prepared to discuss assigned readings or podcasts.
4. Hand in assignments on time and be receptive to constructive feedback.
5. Be supportive and respectful of fellow students, the professor, and guest lecturers.

EVALUATION & GRADING SCALE

100 points	In-class participation and engagement
50 points	Competitive positioning
50 points	Scaling and discount strategy

50 points	Social media guidelines
100 points	Sales, discount, and weekly gross tracking

350 total points

326-350	A
315-325	A-
308-314	B+
291-307	B
280-290	B-
273-279	C+
245-272	C
0-244	F

CLASS SCHEDULE (subject to change)

In advance of the first class, please:

- Subscribe to and read the [Broadway Briefing](#)
- Explore [Playbill.com](#), [BroadwayLeague.com](#), [IBDB.com](#)
- Familiarize yourself with the shows currently and soon to be on Broadway

WEEK 1 – MONDAY, AUGUST 28

- Introduction to the course and student expectations
- History and structure of Broadway
- Understanding the Broadway audience
- Audience perceptions
- Current Broadway landscape
- Competitive positioning
- For next class:
 - Assignment: Competitive positioning, due 9/11
 - *Cl to Eye*, “Pricing Expert: Steven Roth,” May 1, 2017 podcast
 - *The Producer’s Perspective*, “Episode 83 – Brian Mahoney,” July 31, 2016 podcast

NO CLASS (LABOR DAY) – MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

WEEK 2 – MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

- Guest speaker: Janette Roush – VP of Marketing & Insights, AKA NYC
- Ticketing
- Initial pricing and scaling
- Variable and dynamic pricing
- Discounting and packaging strategies
- Group sales, tourism, and ticketing partnerships
- Insights and analytics
- For next class:
 - Assignment: Scaling and discount strategy, due 9/18
 - *The Producer’s Perspective*, “Episode 66 – Adrian Bryan-Brown,” April 4, 2016 podcast
 - *The Producer’s Perspective*, “Episode 122 – Sara Fitzpatrick,” July 23, 2017 podcast

WEEK 3 – MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

- Finding and cultivating an audience
- Building a brand
- Messaging and communications
- Traditional and digital media
- Interactive and social strategies
- For next class:
 - Assignment: Social media guidelines, due 9/25
 - *Cl to Eye*, “Marketing on the Road: Laura Matalon,” July 10, 2017 podcast
 - *The Producer’s Perspective*, “Episode 61 – Kate Shindle,” February 28, 2016 podcast

WEEK 4 – MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

- Guest speaker: Nathan Gehan – General Manager, Bespoke Theatricals
- Path to Broadway
- Budgeting and forecasting
- Producer, creative, and company relations
- Union considerations
- Touring and deal structures
- For next class:
 - Assignment: Sales, discount, and weekly gross tracking, due 10/2
 - *The Producer’s Perspective*, “Episode 102 – Howard Sherman,” December 11, 2016 podcast
 - *The Producer’s Perspective*, “Episode 110 – Neil Pepe,” February 25, 2017 podcast

WEEK 5 – MONDAY, OCTOBER 2

- Guest speaker: Jen Buzzell – Director of Marketing, Signature Theatre
- Role and operation of regional theatres
- Integrated campaign strategy
- Future of Broadway
- Industry innovations
- Local and global opportunities

*** PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. ***

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CLASS POLICIES

- Please turn your cell phone ringer off and mute your laptop/tablet at the beginning of class. As a matter of courtesy to your professor and classmates, cell phones, text, and email should only be used during formal breaks in the class session.
- You may take notes on an electronic device. However, your attention should be focused on the class discussion at all times. Students discovered surfing the internet, emailing, or conducting business unrelated to the course will be given one warning. Any subsequent violation will result in the student being considered as absent for that entire class session.
- No portion of any class presentation, discussion, or lecture may be recorded. Any reproduction or distribution of class PowerPoints, lectures, or discussion materials will be acted upon as a violation of the honor code.
- Attendance and class participation are essential in this course. There are no wrong answers, opinions, or silly questions. We are all here to learn from each other. Please share your thoughts and previous experiences with us.
- 100 points are awarded for in-class participation and engagement, which requires students to be present from the start to finish of each class. Please inform the professor in advance of any absence. It is the student's responsibility to get any missed notes or assignments from fellow students.
- Assignments must be submitted, either in-person or via email, by the end of class (10 PM ET) on the day they are due. Late submissions will be graded as a "0." Assignments submitted via email should not be considered received until confirmation is sent by the professor.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

- The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an [Honor Code](#) with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.
- As in many classes, a number of projects in this class are designed to be completed within your study group. With collaborative work, names of all the participants should appear on the work. Collaborative projects may be divided up so that individual group members complete portions of the whole, provided that group members take sufficient steps to ensure that the pieces conceptually fit together in the end product. Other projects are designed to be undertaken independently. In the latter case, you may discuss your ideas with others and conference with peers on drafts of the work; however, it is not appropriate to give your paper to someone else to revise. You are responsible for making certain that there is no question that the work you hand in is your own. If only your name appears on an assignment, your professor has the right to expect that you have done the work yourself, fully and independently.
- Mason is an [Honor Code](#) university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is

taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

- It is Mason policy that once final grades have been recorded, faculty members are not to accept any work to change a grade. Grade changes can only be approved when they are due to a calculation or recording error on the part of the faculty.
- An incomplete grade (IN) should be used only if the student requests it in writing. An IN counts as a failing grade until completed, and it automatically turns into an F if a grade is not turned in by the deadline in the Schedule of Classes. Some students may prefer a C to an IN, and faculty shouldn't assume that the student wants an IN rather than a grade or that it is in the student's best interest to get an IN. In addition, faculty may assign an IN only if the student has a very limited amount of work to complete and there is a nonacademic reason they can't do so within the semester and if, in their best judgment, the student actually stands a good chance of passing the course by finishing the work satisfactorily. Typical situations for giving incompletes involve a final exam (missed due to illness) or a final paper (not completed because of a family emergency). Faculty members are not to assign an IN if the student has missed a substantial portion of the work of the semester and wants extra time to do it; Faculty members are not to assign an IN to give a student time to improve on work already completed.
- If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; <http://ods.gmu.edu>) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.
- If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact Disability Services at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through Disability Services.
- If you have a learning or physical difference that may affect your academic work, you will need to furnish appropriate documentation to Disability Services. If you qualify for accommodation, the staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructor. In addition to providing your professors with the appropriate form, please take the initiative to discuss accommodation with them at the beginning of the semester and as needed during the term. Because of the range of learning differences, faculty members need to learn from you the most effective ways to assist you. If you have contacted Disability Services and are waiting to hear from a counselor, please tell your instructor.
- Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. The instructor will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address.