

8 Week Syllabus

THE GENIUS OF SONDEIM

Instructor: Bonnie Weiss, M.A.

In addition to the items listed below, this course will include several clips of Sondheim over the years speaking about and demonstrating his creative process, his mentorship by Oscar Hammerstein, his troubled relationship with his mother as well as his joys, regrets, and triumphs.

Class 1: Early Influences: Supporters, Detractors, and Collaborators

Including discussion and clips from “All That Glitters” (a musical Sondheim wrote as a college student), “Saturday Night”, “West Side Story”, “Gypsy”

Class 2: Breaking from Tradition and Forging a New Path: From Forum to Frogs

“A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum”, “Anyone Can Whistle”, “Do I Hear a Waltz”, “Evening Primrose”, “The Mad Show”, “Frogs”

Class 3: Sondheim & Prince Early Years:

Exploring commitment phobia, self-delusion, betrayal and other “light” topics

“Company,” “Follies”, “A Little Night Music”

Class 4: Sondheim & Prince Later Years

The negative impact of imperialism; the madness and revengeful rage that results from devastating loss; the dissolution of youthful idealism, steadfast friendship and a marriage – all interspersed with moments of riotous comic relief!

“Pacific Overtures “Sweeney Todd” “Merrily We Roll Along

Class 5: Sondheim & Lapine – A New Direction

Exploring artistic obsession, spiritual enlightenment; social, communal and parenting pitfalls.

“Sunday in the Park with George”, “Into the Woods”

Class 6: Sondheim Gives Voice to the Marginalized and the Disempowered

A piercing look at the depths of undefended love and the misguided illusions of presidential executioners. (Again, in the latter production – with moments of delightful levity!)

“Passion”, “Assassins”

Class 7: Sondheim & the Movies and Back on Off-Broadway

Comical kink, outrageous seduction, soulful separation, unfettered ambition

The films “7 1/2 %n Solution, “Reds”, “Dick Tracy and “Singing Out Loud “ (unproduced).

Off Broadway: “Wise Guys”/”Gold”/”Bounce”/”Road Show” (4 subsequent productions based on the same biography.) “

Class 8: Sondheim as Teacher & Coach, Satirical Send-Ups, Finale

Mentoring acting and voice students at a London academy

Parodies of his songs from your instructor’s Sondheim Cabaret Tributes and other sources.

An overview of Sondheim’s entire career and his most recent interviews.