

**FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR REAPPROVAL FORM**  
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

<b>COURSE TITLE:</b>	BROADWAY BABIES: STEPHEN SONDHEIM AND THE AMERICAN MUSICAL		
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Gary Richards	<b>DATE:</b>	21 November 2014

**RATIONALE.** Include short statement addressing how this course meets the FSEM's basic components and new student learning outcomes (see FSEM call above).

First-year seminars will

- utilize active, discussion-based, participatory learning: **My revised seminar centralizes student discussion (20% of grade), presentations (30% of grade), and blogging (20% of grade), with professorial lectures quarantined to the first two weeks of class.**
- be exploratory in nature, rather than just presenting conclusions: **Students are free to choose presentations that interest them and to complete a research project that is open-ended.**
- have students read primary sources, not simply textbooks: **My seminar has students read six musicals' books, six scholarly articles, and several production reviews as well as listen to numerous songs in performance. Finally, the seminar's research project requires at least four sources.**
- have students synthesize material from multiple sources to develop their own views on the topic: **The research project does this, but so too does the presentation on reviews, which asks students to synthesize three different reviews of the same show. For that matter, all discussion involves the synthesis of multiple opinions and observations.**
- be capped at 15 students.

Student Learning Outcomes (must be included on your syllabus!)

Upon successful completion of an FSEM, students will

- utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments: **My seminar discusses six scholarly articles, which allows students to see what professional criticism looks like and to judge it. Moreover, several assignments send students to online sources and invite students to compare these sources. The research project also requires a conference with me to discuss sources and their appropriateness and usefulness. Finally, the course incorporates the QEP learning module on research.**
- improve development and organization of written arguments: **My seminar includes multiple forms of writing, including blog posts, PowerPoints, and an research project essay. The course not only incorporates the QEP learning module of writing but also includes two workshops devoted to writing.**
- demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process: **The research project essay requires a formal revision after feedback from another student and me. This has been anticipated earlier in the semester by blog posts' points heavily incentivizing revision.**
- apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication: **The course incorporates the QEP learning module on speaking and has three formal oral presentations, each with a set time and specific requirements for supporting items, such as handouts and PowerPoints. I also distribute**

**a rubric for oral presentations at the beginning of the semester.**

- communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion.  
**Students will practice speaking in these formal presentations, daily discussions, and individual conferences with me.**

**SYLLABUS.** *Attach a course syllabus.*

***FSEM 100G3: Broadway Babies:  
Stephen Sondheim and the American Musical***

Sections 01 • MWF • 9:00-9:50 a.m. • Combs 322 • Fall 2015

<http://broadwaybabies2015.umwblogs.org>

***Dr. Gary Richards***

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***Office Hours:*** MWF 10:00-12:00 noon; TR 8:00-12:15 p.m., 2:00-3:00 p.m.; and by appointment

***Course Objectives***

According to the academic catalog, the “first-year seminar introduces students to the pursuit of intellectual inquiry. Students will study a non-traditional topic in a non-traditional way while exploring the concept of a liberal arts education.” This particular seminar will explore the relationship of composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim to the American musical, looking at both how he has been influenced and how he has been influential. The class will assess six landmark Sondheim musicals in depth, concentrating on the analysis of the book and the lyrics, the collaborative creative process, the various recordings of productions, and the receptions of these works. The class will also centrally introduce students to scholarly resources pertinent to these discussions and have students express themselves through multiple oral and written articulations and therefore refine developing skills of communication.

***Student Learning Outcomes***

- Utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments.
- Improve development and organization of written arguments.
- Demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process.
- Apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication.
- Communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion.

***Required Texts***

Stephen Sondheim, Bert Shevelove, and Larry Gelbart, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*

Stephen Sondheim and George Furth, *Company*

Stephen Sondheim and James Goldman, *Follies*

Stephen Sondheim and Hugh Wheeler, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*

Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine, *Sunday in the Park with George*  
Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine, *Into the Woods*

### ***Course Requirements***

***Participation:*** You should do all assigned reading on time, marking the text's margins with your insights. Because the class will not be primarily lecture, you should consistently be prepared to enter into discussion, whether to raise an issue, question an assertion, ask for explanation, or disagree respectfully. I encourage you to carry these exchanges outside the classroom, whether to discuss something with me or to continue a debate with a classmate.

All students begin the semester with a B assigned to them for participation. During the semester, if you participate in discussion, ask relevant, provoking questions, and show a genuine enthusiasm for the class, that grade will rise. If you only occasionally participate in discussion and/or ask somewhat irrelevant questions, that grade will remain the same. If you are silent on more days than you talk or do not talk at all, attack other students, and/or consistently make irrelevant comments, that grade will drop, perhaps even dramatically.

You should attend all classes regularly and promptly. If conditions force you to be absent, notify me ahead of time if possible; otherwise, see me immediately when you return so that we can discuss what you missed. Any work done within the actual missed class session, such as an in-class quiz, cannot be made up. There is no differentiation between excused or unexcused absences except in the following cases: you are a University athlete whose participation in a sport demands that you miss class; you are otherwise involved in an official University-sponsored activity that causes you to miss class; and/or you have encountered a long-term crisis that you are negotiating with the Division of Student Affairs. In each of these cases, you should provide me written documentation of the scenario so that the absences can be accommodated. After five absences, your grade for class participation will be penalized a full letter increment for each absence. If, at the end of the semester, for example, you have six absences and your grade for class participation is a B+, that grade will automatically drop to a C+. You can therefore seriously hurt your final grade in the class strictly on the basis of absences.

You should maintain professional behavior while in the classroom. All cell phones and other personal electronic devices should be turned off, and laptops should be used only for the taking of notes. If you are otherwise detected using an electronic device during class, such as texting or emailing, I will assume that you have chosen not to participate in an engaged fashion in the day's class and therefore, as with an excessive absence, will penalize your participation grade two full letter increments for each time you choose to use these devices during class. Note that this also applies if your phone rings during a class session. Please see me before an individual class session begins if special circumstances demand an exception to this policy.

You should also be aware of and adhere to the specifics of the Honor System of the University of Mary Washington.

***Conferences and Office Hours:*** I require students to meet with me in posted office hours or by appointment at least twice during the semester. The first of these meetings will be in the first two weeks of class so that I can begin to recognize you and get a sense of who you are, why you are taking the class, and so forth. More importantly, you will sign up for your semester's presentations.

The second conference will take place by Wednesday, October 18, while you are working on your research project discussed below. You are also welcome to see me at other times as well. Remember that email is a convenient way to reach me.

**Quizzes:** During the central weeks of the semester, there will be quizzes each Wednesday covering those reading assignments and presentations since the last quiz, including those assigned for that day. Each quiz will be ten questions answerable with short written replies. Without exception, a quiz cannot be made up or taken early, and a missed quiz receives a zero. I will, however, count only the highest ten of the twelve quiz grades.

**Presentations:** You will make three oral presentations throughout the semester. Each presentation should include a handout and/or PowerPoint that will be posted on the blog on an assigned page. I urge you to be as creative as you wish in these presentations, remembering that the handouts or PowerPoints should be accurate, substantive, and visually engaging.

- **Show:** Working alone or in pairs, you will make a five-minute presentation addressing a show on which Sondheim collaborated but on which we will not be focusing during class. These dates are: September 7, September 21, October 19, and December 2.
- **Reviews:** You will make a five-minute presentation on at least three reviews of a major Sondheim musical, either when it originally ran or when it was revived. Your handout will ideally feature links to the cited reviews. These dates are: September 18 (*Funny*), October 2 (*Company*), October 16 (*Follies*), October 30 (*Sweeney Todd*), November 11 (*Sunday*), and November 23 (*Into the Woods*).
- **Final Researched Project:** You will make a five-minute presentation of your final project discussed below during the final examination period.

**Blogging:** The blog (<http://broadwaybabies2015.umwblogs.org>) will function in two primary ways for this class: as a site to manage electronic documents, such as the syllabus, handouts, and presentations; and as an arena for both systematic and casual discussion of the assigned texts. After a training session on blogging on August 28, you will practice your newly acquired skills by making a 300-word post that includes at least two images and a five-item bibliography on an assigned figure in the twentieth-century American musical. This post must be made by August 31 so that the class can read the posts for September 2's class session.

After this initial assignment, you will make three posts of at least 150 words. This might be a close reading of a particular lyric, a bit of theater history or biography with accompanying graphics, a rebuttal or clarification of some point made in class, and so on. These may be posted any time during our discussions of plays but with the following deadlines: the first by October 2, the second by October 30, and the third by November 23. Each post that meets the assignment's guidelines generates 15 points. If you revise and/or edit after I respond to the post, it generates an additional 6 points. If you respond with at least 50 words to the posts of four classmates who have written on the same play as you have during a particular period, you can generate 12 additional points. Therefore, by diligently blogging, you can earn 99 out of 100 points.

**Research Project:** You will complete a term project that identifies a significant way that Sondheim has influenced U.S. culture in the late twentieth and/or early twenty-first centuries. The specific topic within this focus is of your choosing, but topics might include film adaptations of Sondheim musicals, noted revivals of Sondheim musicals, Sondheim's influence on other composers and

lyricists, and so on. You should meet with me to discuss your project by November 18, bringing to that conference at least two topics and four potential sources for each topic. You will ultimately present the project in two ways: a creative five-minute presentation (discussed above) and a six-page typed essay, written according to MLA guidelines, that delineates the project's specific argument and that is due November 30. In response to feedback from both a classmate and me, you will revise the paper and submit it at the time of the final examination.

**Grading:** Through the semester, I will use a system of letter grades and pluses and minuses that correspond to the following percentages: A/95 A-/92 B+/88 B/85 B-/82 C+/78 C/75 C-/72 D+/68 D/65 F/50. An A denotes work that is truly exceptional; a B denotes work that is a strong completion of the assignment; a C denotes work that is an adequate completion of the assignment; a D denotes work that is a poor completion of the assignment; and an F denotes work that fundamentally fails to complete the project in meaningful ways. (Note that an F is different from a zero. If you do not turn in an assignment, it will receive a zero rather than an F.) If I assign a slash grade, such as a B-/C+, it is the average of the two. Thus, in this case, it would be 80%. Final grades will be assigned with the following correspondences: 93.3-100 = A; 90-93.3 = A-; 86.6-90 = B+; 83.3-86.6 = B; 80-80.3 = B-; 76.6-80 = C+; 73.3-76.6 = C; 70-73.3 = C-; 66.6-70 = D+; 66.3-66.6 = D; 0-66.3 = F. I will round up to the nearest tenth of a point, but I will not add any point or fraction of a point to any grade other than via this rounding. Note also that at midterm I will report as “unsatisfactory” any grade that is below a C.

I will calculate grades based on the following percentages: Participation: 20%; Quizzes: 10%; Presentation of Shows: 10%; Blog Presentation of Composers and Collaborators: 5%; Presentation of Reviews: 10%; Blog Posts: 15%; Research Project Essay: 10%; Revision of Research Project Essay: 10%; Presentation of Research Project Presentation: 10%.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a disability that will impact your performance in this class, see me during the first week so that the proper documentation and accommodations may be received and made through the Office of Disability Services. You may also contact that office directly at (540) 654-1266.

## Syllabus

*Parentheses denote years; brackets denote page numbers.*

Monday, August 24:	<b>Introduction</b>
Wednesday, August 26:	<b>The Early Biography of Sondheim</b>
Friday, August 28:	<b>Blog and PowerPoint Workshop</b> <i>Last Day to Add Classes</i>
Monday, August 31:	<b>An Abbreviated History of the American Musical</b>
	<b>Composers and Collaborators Blog Post</b> (due by 5 p.m.)
Wednesday, September 2:	<b>An Abbreviated History of the American Musical</b> ( <i>continued</i> ) <b>Quiz #1</b>
Friday, September 4:	<b>Literary Analysis Workshop</b> • Stephen Sondheim, “Introduction” and “Rhyme and Its Reasons” [ <i>Finishing the Hat</i> ; available on blog]
	<b>Last Day for First Conference</b>
Monday, September 7:	<b>Presentations</b> <b>Show 1:</b> <i>Saturday Night</i> (1954; 1997) <b>Show 2:</b> <i>West Side Story</i> (1957)

**Show 3: *Gypsy* (1959)**

**Discussion on Module: Communication Apprehension** (to be completed by 10 p.m. on Sunday night)

***A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum***

- Wednesday, September 9: **Focus on Book**  
• Sondheim, Shevelove, and Gelbart, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962) [Act 1]  
**Quiz #2**
- Friday, September 11: **Focus on Book** (*continued*)  
• Sondheim, Shevelove, and Gelbart, *A Funny Thing Happened ...* [Act 2]
- Monday, September 14: **Focus on Music and Lyrics**  
Wednesday, September 16: **Focus on Music and Lyrics** (*continued*)  
**Quiz #3**
- Friday, September 18: **Focus on Criticism**  
**Reviews (Original)**  
**Reviews (Revivals)**  
• Lois Kivesto, “Comedy Tonight! *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*” [SS 35-45; available on blog]
- Monday, September 21: **Presentations**  
**Show 4: *Anyone Can Whistle* (1964)**  
**Show 5: *Do I Hear a Waltz?* (1965)**  
**Discussion on Module: The Writing Process** (to be completed by 10 p.m. on Sunday night)

***Company***

- Wednesday, September 23: **Focus on Book**  
Sondheim and Furth, *Company* (1970) [Act 1]  
**Quiz #4**
- Friday, September 25: **Focus on Book** (*continued*)  
Sondheim and Furth, *Company* [Act 2]
- Monday, September 28: **Focus on Music and Lyrics**  
Wednesday, September 30: **Focus on Music and Lyrics** (*continued*)  
**Quiz #5**
- Friday, October 2: **Focus on Criticism**  
**Reviews (Original)**  
**Reviews (Revivals)**  
• John Olson, “*Company*—25 Years Later” [SS 47-67; available on blog]  
**Blog Post #1**

***Follies***

- Monday, October 5: **Focus on Book**

- Wednesday, October 7:           Sondheim and Goldman, *Follies* (1971) [Act 1]  
**Focus on Book** (*continued*)  
**Quiz #6**
- Friday, October 9:               Sondheim and Goldman, *Follies* (1971) [Act 2]  
**Focus on Music and Lyrics**
- Monday, October 12:           **Fall Break**
- Wednesday, October 14:       **Focus on Music and Lyrics** (*continued*)  
**Quiz #7**
- Friday, October 16:           **Focus on Criticism**  
**Reviews (Original)**  
**Reviews (Revivals)**  
• James Fisher, “Nixon’s America and *Follies*: Reappraising a Musical Theater Classic” [SS 69-84; available on blog]
- Monday, October 19:           **Presentations**  
**Show 6: *A Little Night Music*** (1973)  
**Show 7: *The Frogs*** (1974; 2004)  
**Show 8: *Pacific Overtures*** (1976)  
**Discussion of Module: The CRAAP Test** (to be completed by 10 p.m. on Sunday night)

***Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street***

- Wednesday, October 21:       **Focus on Book**  
• Sondheim and Wheeler, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (1979) [Act 1]  
**Quiz #8**
- Friday, October 23:           **Focus on Book** (*continued*)  
• Sondheim and Wheeler, *Sweeney Todd ...* [Act 2]
- Monday, October 26:           **Focus on Music and Lyrics**
- Wednesday, October 28:       **Focus on Music and Lyrics** (*continued*)  
**Quiz #9**
- Friday, October 30:           **Focus on Criticism**  
**Reviews (Original)**  
**Reviews (Revivals)**  
• Judith Schlesinger, “Psychology, Evil, and *Sweeney Todd* or, ‘Don’t I Know You, Mister?’” [SS 125-141; available on blog]  
**Blog Post #2**

***Sunday in the Park with George***

- Monday, November 2:           **Focus on Book**  
• Sondheim and Lapine, *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984) [Act 1]
- Wednesday, November 4:       **Focus on Book** (*continued*)  
**Quiz #10**  
• Sondheim and Lapine, *Sunday in the Park with George* [Act 2]
- Friday, November 6:           **Focus on Music and Lyrics**
- Monday, November 9:           **Focus on Music and Lyrics** (*continued*)

Wednesday, November 11: **Focus on Criticism**  
**Quiz #11**  
**Reviews (Original)**  
**Reviews (Revivals)**  
Edward T. Bonahue, Jr., "Portraits of the Artist: *Sunday in the Park with George* as 'Postmodern' Drama" [SS 171-185; available on blog]

***Into the Woods***

Friday, November 13: **Focus on Book**  
• Sondheim and Lapine, *Into the Woods* [Act 1]  
Monday, November 16: **Focus on Book** (*continued*)  
• Sondheim and Lapine, *Into the Woods* (1987) [Act 2]  
Wednesday, November 18: **Focus on Music and Lyrics**

**Quiz #12**  
**Last Day for Second Conferences**  
Friday, November 20: **Focus on Music and Lyrics** (*continued*)

Monday, November 23: **Focus on Criticism**  
**Reviews (Original)**  
**Reviews (Revivals)**  
• Laura Hanson, "Broadway Babies: Images of Women in the Musicals of Stephen Sondheim" [SS 13-33; available on blog]  
**Blog Post #3**

Wednesday, November 25: **Thanksgiving Break**  
Friday, November 27: **Thanksgiving Break**

Monday, November 30: **Writing Workshop**  
**Research Papers Due**  
Wednesday, December 2: **Presentations**  
**Show 9: *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981)**  
**Show 10: *Assassins* (1991)**  
**Show 11: *Passion* (1994)**  
**Show 12: *Bounce* (2003)/*Road Show* (2008)**

Friday, December 4: **Summaries and Conclusions**

Final Exam Session: **Research Project Presentations**  
**Revisions of Research Papers Due**

**SUBMIT this form and attached syllabus electronically as one document to Dave Stahlman ([wdstahlm@umw.edu](mailto:wdstahlm@umw.edu)). All submissions **must** be in electronic form.**