Goal: Performing Arts seeks permanent course status for three courses developed and offered either experimentally, or under the aegis of a special topics class with rotating content.

- Directing for the Stage [developed and offered as Perfa 160, Special Topics in Performing Arts]
- World Theatre [developed as Perfa 60, Special Topics in Performing Arts]
- Theatre of American Cultures [developed as Perfa 130, Foundations II]

Context: development of Directing for the Stage

- Perfa 160 (Special Topics in Performing Arts) is an upper division course which rotates between the disciplines in our department, and is offered each time with a different topic or focus (ie Spoken Word, Dance and Film, Great Composers.) The target audience is non-majors meeting their general education requirements.

- Under the Perfa 160 aegis, Directing for the Stage was successfully developed and offered first in Spring 2010, and again in Spring 2012. The course was open to non-majors both semesters.

Rationale for requesting permanent course status

- Directing is a staple in the curriculum of undergraduate theatre programs everywhere. Our own students clearly benefited from the course experience, which opened new avenues of creative exploration within the discipline. High student evaluations (4.4-4.7) indicated that the students found both course and instructor enjoyable, and thought the course should be taught as an upper division major offering because it was intellectually rigorous, asking them to apply and sustain discipline-specific theoretical and critical methods, providing opportunities to practice a range of efforts related to directing, testing creative capabilities, and building individual confidence. These outcomes were confirmed by the theatre faculty who observed the final scene presentations.

We also found that most of the students who enrolled were theatre students with a strong disciplinary foundation and interest. We thus realized that Directing is probably too specialized a topic to serve the “general education” spirit of the course “Special Topics in Performing Arts.”

- For these reasons we propose to continue to offer Directing as an upper division theatre elective. Directing for the Stage addresses several departmental learning outcomes, noted below. If the course is granted permanent status, we also believe it will meet one or more of the following new college-wide core requirements: Artistic Understanding, Global Perspectives, and Social, Cultural and Historical Understanding.

- We request that the course be assigned the course number Perfa 162.

Context: development of World Theatre
• In Fall 2009, to meet the immediate need for more freshman course offerings, Perfa 60 was approved as a lower division equivalent of Perfa 160, “Special Topics in Performing Arts.” Again, the intent was to create a rotating topics course for the general interest student.

• Under Perfa 60, World Drama was first offered on an experimental basis in Fall 2009. In this course, students explored the forms, traditions, expressive styles and contributions of performance traditions from Asia, Africa, South America, often complimented by practical workshops taught by campus experts and guest artists.

• In Spring 2011, we again offered the course World Drama on an experimental basis, with some restructuring. As the instructor explains, “I added an early unit on text analysis; this unit was needed because students didn't have the tools for analyzing plays for dramatic action, narrative structure, character, theme, or historical/social contexts. We found ourselves challenging western traditions of dramaturgy as soon as we ventured into classical Asian theatre, and with this added preparation students were able to critique and deploy dominant western forms.” In the second iteration, the instructor developed further the critical performance practices, with research presentations and a final project based on the students’ cultures of origin.

Rationale for requesting permanent course status

• In response to these successful revisions, the Theatre Faculty now seeks permanent course status for World Drama. We note that the course complements our program's dramatic literature course, Theatre Masterpieces, and parallels music and dance programs' successful introductory course World Music and Dance.

• World Drama addresses several departmental learning outcomes, noted below. The course also aligns with larger curricular goals of the institution. If World Drama is awarded permanent status, we will seek approval for the Core Curriculum learning outcomes Global Perspectives, Artistic Understanding, and Social, Cultural and Historical Understanding.

• We request the course number Perfa 61 for World Drama.

Context: development of Theatre of American Cultures

• Foundations II (Perfa 130) has been, since the inception of the major, the second half of a two-semester sequence in the history of theatre. To meet the need to expose students to more contemporary, culturally diverse theatre, the course content was reconceived in Spring 2006 as Theater of American Cultures (Multicultural Theatre). Its status as an upper division major requirement was unaffected, and the course was offered again as Multicultural Theatre in Spring 2008.

• Multicultural Theatre focused on the shared national legacies the United States, using the theory of intersectionality to examine how categories such as gender, sexual orientation, race,
class, religious affiliation, and physical ability impact individual and collective identity formations.

- Subsequent to our 2008-2009 program review, the theatre faculty determined that we needed to restore Perfa 130 Foundations II to its original function as the second half of a two-semester sequence in theatre history. Since then, Perfa 130 has again focused on the rise of the modern theatre across the 19th and 20th centuries. As a consequence, the course content developed as “Theatre of American Cultures” is no longer being taught, except in small increments within other courses.

Rationale for requesting permanent course status

- The theatre program faculty recognizes the intrinsic merits of the course design “Theatre of American Cultures,” which was observed and positively reviewed by then-chair Cathy Davalos. Strong student evaluations (avg. 4.6) indicated that the course effectively utilized methodologies from theatre and performance studies to engage students in a historical and socially contextualized study of multicultural theatre. Because emphasis was on critical performance practice, as well as reading plays and essays, students became personally familiar with classmates’ identity profiles, and were able to practice difficult dialogues around the topics of race, gender and culture.

- The theatre program remains committed to offering students opportunities to engage with contemporary American theatre practices and perspectives. We note that “Theatre of American Cultures” addresses several departmental learning outcomes, below. Also, the course would likely meet one or more of the following new Core Curriculum outcomes: American Diversity, Artistic Understanding, and Social, Cultural and Historical Understanding.

- For these reason we seek permanent course status for Theatre of American Cultures. Our plan is to offer the course periodically as an upper division theatre elective.

- We are requesting that the new course number assigned for Theatre of American Cultures be Perfa 161. We note the resonant course pairing created by World Theatre: Perfa 61 and Theatre of American Cultures: Perfa 161

NOTE: NO NEW COURSES ARE REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THESE CHANGES; all three courses would be elective options within the existing major and minor.

Proposed changes in catalogue language:

PERFA 61/ WORLD THEATRE
The course explores the forms, traditions, expressive styles and contributions of performance traditions from Asia, Africa, and South America. Lectures are often complimented by practical workshops, for example on Chinese (Peking) Opera and African Dance: Ritual and Expression. The course focuses on common themes, including THE BODY AND CULTURE, CULTURAL LITERACY AND CULTURAL TOURISM, ACTION AND CONSEQUENCE, and LANGUAGE AND STORYTELLING. Students developed critical
performance practices, with research presentations and a final project based on the students’ cultures of origin

PERFA 161/ THEATRE OF AMERICAN CULTURES (MULTICULTURAL PERFORMANCE)
By studying the contributions of theatre and performance artists, this course addresses the shared national legacies the United States. The theory of intersectionality is used to examine the ways that gender, sexual orientation, race, class, religious affiliation, and physical ability impact individual and collective identity formation. While increasing their awareness of major contemporary artists, students also learn critical performance methodologies through projects exploring moments of identity recognition. These projects use theoretical models from dance/movement/spoken word composition to explore family histories and individual experiences.

PERFA 162/ DIRECTING FOR THE STAGE
This course engages in an experiential investigation of the art of directing for the stage. We focus on the development of such skills as composition and use of theatrical space; picturization and stage imagery; dramaturgy and historical research; and script analysis and textual interpretation. Students also gain experience in such areas as casting and development of a production concept, collaboration and communication, ensemble development, and the creation of “style.” It is an assumption of the course that stage directing is by its nature one of the ultimate “interdisciplinary” activities. As much as imparting skills, the course asks students to begin to think as directors, and to bring diverse aspects of their own identities to the work.

The UEPC is being asked to approve these curricular changes so that we can implement them in the 2013-14 course catalog. The Department believes these adjustments will allow us to better serve the needs of our students, both at the departmental and institutional levels.

Thank you for your consideration,

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ADDENDUM: relevant Performing Arts Theater Learning Outcomes

• Utilize a cross-disciplinary perspective in the arts and a familiarity with the Great Books / liberal arts tradition to identify the ways performing artists draw inspiration from nature, history, imagination, and the creative ideas and influences of others.

• Recognize similarities in structure (such as elements of phrasing) shared by all three performing arts
and be able to articulate the significance of structural elements in the analysis of a work’s form and meaning.

• Demonstrate the capacity for sustained and focused rehearsal efforts and for working collaboratively with different directors and performers.

• Perform the works of great choreographers, composers, and playwrights, as well as original/contemporary works of living artists.

• Adapt performance skills both in rehearsal and performance to the technical demands of specific masterworks of various styles and eras, as well as to original/contemporary works.

• Exhibit performance skills beyond the foundational to professional level while effectively negotiating the anxiety/excitement of live performance, and be conversant with advanced techniques of the discipline.