MUSICAL THEATRE PERFORMANCE PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY
(revised – January 1, 2013)

The purpose of the Musical Theatre Performance area of concentration is to produce professional, artist/scholars with the ability to excel on ANY theatrical stage, including, but not limited to, Broadway, Off-Broadway, touring, regional, international, cabaret and concert, both major and minor, commercial and not-for-profit. The program asserts that beginning with intense self-discovery and exploration, matched with dedicated focus on foundational technique, followed by an unyielding diligence towards artistic and scholarly excellence, performers become creative, high-quality artists. The program works to facilitate not just the creation of performers who are highly skilled technicians of singing, dancing and acting but passionate artists with a deep respect for the craft who use musical theatre to communicate with audiences about our shared human condition.

The uniqueness of the program centers around two ideas. 1. The program provides a “conservatory”-style education in a University atmosphere. Students are expected to dedicate large amounts of time and energy to their craft, as required of any professional artist, while in the environment of the University experience, where other opportunities continually avail themselves. 2. The program offers the study of musical theater through an Afro-centric perspective. People of African Descent have had and maintain a unique place and contribution to the world of American Musical Theater. Students study black styles, traditions and history in addition to the traditional and contemporary American aesthetic.

The program is divided into two primary facets of learning:

Years 1 and 2: Intense self-discovery and exploration through a broad array of specific foundational techniques in the separate disciplines of Musical Theatre Performance, i.e., Acting, Singing and Dancing.

Years 3 and 4: Professional preparation through advanced technical studies, interpretive application and the synthesis of the disciplines.

Progression through the four years of learning is specifically guided and advised by the entire Musical Theatre Performance Faculty. Entrance into the program is through a highly competitive audition and interview process held each spring. The first three semesters of study are on a probationary basis only. ALL second year students must present to the entire Musical Theatre Performance Faculty in order to be invited to continue into the remaining five semesters. Year Four culminates in a public and industry-invited “Senior Cabaret/Showcase” followed by an exit interview with the Faculty.