

Students to perform one night stand-up

BY SHANNON WALTER
Staff Reporter

Class was funny for 17 students this semester.

This semester 17 students left Jay Self's JINS course with smiles on their faces. This is the second time Self, assistant professor of communication, has taught the Art and Science of Humor Junior Interdisciplinary studies course, which was designed to allow students to analyze humor and its effects on the mind and body.

Self said his students wrote three papers analyzing stand-up routines, the career of a comedian and a comedian's portrayal of a humorous message. As a final project, Self requires the students to develop their own stand-up comedy routine and present it at an off-campus event called "One Night Stand (Up)," which will be at WrongDaddy's tomorrow at 8 p.m.

"They're building a routine throughout the course of the semester," Self said. "It takes a long time to really develop, and really good comedians will take maybe a year to get a good 30-minute set of material."

Each student has five to seven minutes to deliver their stand-up to a live audience. Routines will be videotaped, so peers can later view and critique each student. Students write what they have learned in a paper to receive their final grade, Self said.

"One of the hardest things to do is stand-up comedy because it's you all alone with a microphone and that's it," Self said. "And you're all of a sudden responsible for entertaining [people]. Last time we did this there were 300 people in the audience."

Junior Roger Alexander said he decided to take this JINS course because he is a business administration major and was hoping that learning about humor and how it works would help him in his career.

"I like watching a lot of stand-up comedy,



Students in the Art and Science of Humor Junior Interdisciplinary studies course will perform their stand-up at WrongDaddy's at 8 p.m.

and I like laughing, like everybody else," Alexander said. "I always thought that if I could add some humor into the business aspect of my career — if I could learn how hu-

mor works and learn how to set up jokes to be funny — that would help the social aspect of working with business clients."

Alexander said he saw the stand-up assign-

ment as a challenge for him in this course.

"Dr. Self said six people dropped out of the class after the first day, but I stayed because I saw it as a challenge," Alexander said. "It's something I've never done before and just because it's hard doesn't mean I'm going to run away from it. I see it as something I can take on, and if I'm successful with it, it will be another accomplishment under my belt."

Alexander said the theme for his stand-up stemmed from being a minority in most of his classes. He said he knows that many comedians, including Dave Chappelle and Chris Rock, deliver their comedy from a minority stand-point, but he is going to relate it to living in Kirksville and attending Truman.

"I'm not nervous yet," he said. "I probably will be that night."

Junior Katibeth Lee said she took the JINS course because she saw the Fall 2007 students' stand-up and wanted to take a fun class.

She said analyzing comedy has made her much more aware of jokes and humor. She developed her main theme around herself and her experiences. She will be talking about "gay speak," which builds upon terms known and used within the gay community, she said.

"I'm going to give my own spin on gay speak, so it will be a little lesson for all the straight people in the audience," Lee said. "I've had really good responses with what I've done in class so far. It is a comedy class, so we are all talking about personal issues and telling funny stories from our lives and everyone is really open."

Although the class has been fun, Lee said she realized only recently that she might be nervous.

"It does make me nervous," Lee said. "I just realized that [tomorrow] I have to do stand-up, which kind of terrifies me, but I also think it's a great experience, and it will be a lot of fun."

Showgirls team kick into tryouts

BY EMMA MUELLER
Staff Reporter

Five, six, seven, eight.

The Showgirls dance team hosted tryouts April 24 and 25 in the Pershing small gym. Sixteen girls attended the tryouts. Six had been on the team before, and 10 were newcomers.

Brandi Keller, Showgirls and cheerleading coach, said she had hoped more girls would try out. The 2009-10 Showgirls team will be smaller than in years past — 10 girls made the team.

Keller said she prefers the small team size because of the number of uniforms the team owns and the practice space available to them. The Showgirls also are transitioning from being student-run to having a coach. This year was the first year the Showgirls worked under the eye of a coach.

"In the past, they always had an adviser who was in charge," Keller said. "The coach has always taken a role with the cheerleaders and never the Showgirls. I try really hard to give them an authority figure, a leader who can help them recreate their image and move forward. They also know that they can always come and talk to this person should something happen."

Co-captain senior Kelsey Menke explained that this year has been the finest of the four years she has been a member of the Showgirls.

"This has been my best year, even though it was so stressful as captain and having a coach for the first time because we've never had a coach before," Menke said. "We were learning how to deal with that and what her responsibility was and what our responsibilities were. It still was phenomenal because the girls were so understanding, and we just fit really well together."

Being a part of the Showgirls is a big commitment, in addition to her responsibilities as co-captain, Menke said. However, she said for her, school always comes first.

"It's two hours a day, four days a week," Menke said. "That's not including games, so you have to make sure that you have an open schedule for games. It's difficult, especially if you have night classes. Showgirls knows that the priority when you come to Truman is school. We try and work our schedules

around practice, but if people have to leave early or come a little late because of class, it's OK."

As co-captain, Menke's responsibilities extend beyond attending practices and games.

"You have to bring the music every game," Menke said. "You have to make sure the girls who are teaching the dances for specific games have the dances done, have the music cut and make sure there are no inappropriate moves. It's just a lot of networking."

Senior Andrea Weber, a member of the Showgirls for one year, said she remembers the tryout process well. To make the team, a rigorous two-day clinic and tryout in front of judges must be completed. Only girls who have been on the team for three years are guaranteed a spot, she said.

"The clinic is where you learn the routine you're going to be judged on, and you go over the skills that are going to be required for trying out," Weber said. "While you're there, you get to have a get-together with the previous Showgirls, and you really get to know people, and you don't really feel much like an outsider."

The actual day of the tryouts provokes the most anxiety, Weber said.

"It's a long night of practicing," she said. "It's not that hard to learn dances, but when you're under pressure like that, it seems impossible at the time. Then, the next day you come back and you can bring a buddy with you, and they each ask you to do a technical skill. And it's basically just a table of judges in front of you, and they have a sheet which they judge you on."

But Weber said making the team makes it worthwhile.

"It definitely added to my Truman experience," she said. "It's really cool to be a part of something unified and something that's also very much intertwined with so many other Truman things. We've gotten to do so many cool things just by being on the team."

Freshman Kara Jacquin is the newest and youngest member of the Showgirls, she said she is excited for the opportunity to perform.

"I'm really excited to dance at the collegiate level," Jacquin said. "I just think it's really cool that I get to represent Truman."



Freshman Kara Jacquin participated in the Showgirls tryouts last weekend and is now the newest and youngest member of the dance team.

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