

THE DALTONIAN

Menu

🏠 Home » 2025 » November » 12 » Spotlight on New Classes at Dalton This Year



NEWS

Spotlight on New Classes at Dalton This Year

NOVEMBER 12, 2025 BY MIKA HIGGINS-WOO

This year has brought Dalton students a wide variety of new courses. From the Dalton theater department's replacement of classes offered in years prior, to the introduction of Greek as a language available for high school students. In order to learn more about these courses, the motivation behind starting to offer them, and how they're going so far, *The Daltonian* reached out to teachers leading three of the new courses offered this year. Below is everything you need to know about Mr. Slick's "Ways of Thinking/Ways of Knowing: History of Consciousness" class, Ms. Stolper-Muenz and Dr. Kohn's new history elective "Archives:

Collecting, Curating, and Communication," and Mr. Boyd and Ms. Cruz's "Musical Theater: Script & Score" class.

Ways of Thinking/Ways of Knowing: A History of Consciousness

Mr. Slick

Could you please describe what the new class is in a sentence or a few sentences?

Mr. Slick: I am offering two new electives this year, "Ways of Thinking/Ways of Knowing" and "Systems of Knowledge/Ways of Being." While they both fall under the banner of "A History of Consciousness," they are distinct courses with shared themes. The first course engages an age-old question, "What does it mean to think?" and we examine this through an investigation of select case studies and theories of consciousness, thought, and knowledge. We started with a grounding in analyses of machine/artificial intelligence in order to address the topic from a contemporary perspective, and my overall goal is to balance theoretical readings with practical examples. For instance, we put Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* in conversation with EvanTube to examine the significance and consequence[s] of fully mediated experiences and lives. The second course investigates the changing debate over consciousness and the various contextual factors shaping these discourses by investigating systems of knowledge production and the structural features shaping (personal and collective) consciousness. Both courses rely on a multidisciplinary lens and approach.

What motivated you to want to teach this class at this particular time?

Mr. Slick: I have always been interested in the history of ideas, and I think my own expertise and passion for the topic creates a dynamic learning environment.

How has the experience of teaching this class been so far? How have students responded?

Mr. Slick: I believe students have been excited by this experiment in learning as we leverage personal experiences to gain access to challenging source material.

Will you teach it again next year, and if so, will you teach it as you have done this year or make some changes?

Mr. Slick: I plan on offering both courses again next year with necessary revisions.

Archives: Collecting, Curating, and Communicating

Ms. Stolper-Muenz and Dr. Kohn

Could you please describe what the new class is in a sentence or a few sentences?

Ms. Stolper-Muenz: This class [is] designed for 11th-grade students who are passionate about history. [It] provides a 70-minute weekly session to explore archival materials and professional practices through collaborative workshops and case studies from various digital and physical archives, including the Dalton Archive. Students investigate challenges of recovery, preservation, and public access, culminating in a hands-on project where they design and lead a mini-workshop on curating their own personal [Dalton-related] archives.

What motivated you to want to teach this class at this particular time?

Ms. Stolper-Muenz: We wanted to design a course for juniors who show passion for and excellence in History, that rewards interest in the subject, but does not overload students with substantive coursework outside of course meetings.

Dr. Kohn: It was extremely important to me to keep a foot in the classroom with students, which Archives has enabled me to do. It also helped me remain collaborative within an academic department through co-teaching with Ms. Stolper Muenz. I think continuing to think like a teacher and historian helps me [to] be a better administrator!

How has the experience of teaching this class been so far? How have students responded?

Ms. Stolper-Muenz: The experience has proven to be highly rewarding for both teachers and students. The cohort, only 8 students, has bonded and they seem to have really thrived in the 70-minute period with a pass/fail grading system. We have also really appreciated the collaboration with the Library. The Archival Disaster simulation [a hands-on activity that the class participated in a couple of months ago] was such a hit that we did a similar workshop for teachers in the Helen Parkhurst Institute. We are even considering presenting our collaboration with Mr. Santos at the Society of American Archivists' annual conference this summer.

Will you teach it again next year, and if so, will you teach it as you have done this year or make some changes?

We would like to [teach this class next year]!

Musical Theater: Script & Score

Mr. Boyd and Ms. Cruz (responses below are joint responses)

Could you please describe what the new class is in a sentence or a few sentences?

This is a practical training course in the interdisciplinary medium of musical theater. From Jazz Era to Contemporary, Operetta to Musical Comedy, students will engage in practical scene and score study across a range of subgenres of this art form, learning how to embody both their distinctive musical and lyrical styles in performance, as well as incorporating these into larger acting scenes to be shared in class. In this course, singing and acting techniques blend together as students perform scenes from musicals throughout the year as culminations of each learning unit.

What motivated you to want to teach this class at this particular time?

We looked at our courses and saw this gaping, musical-sized hole... and needed to join forces as two departments to fix the dam! Always, we aspire to provide students with a range of theatrical and musical practices to explore the world today. However, without musical theater in our curriculum, we had been neglecting the largest and most immediate theater practice on our students' horizons and doorstep. We realized that, should our students ever aspire to go into the theater industry, the likelihood of engaging in musical theater in some form or another would be very high. Of course, then it would follow that musical theater should be a part of our curricular offerings. What's more, we put on large-scale productions every year! More often than not, these are musicals. It could only make sense, then, to have a course which focuses on the musical theater discipline.

How has the experience of teaching this class been so far? How have students responded?

An absolute joy! It's the highlight of both our weeks. There's a certain thrill to seeing students dig into material and make it their own in a class which, only a few months prior, had been an idea, a conversation. It's really awesome.

The students seem to really be enthusiastic about the material. They are given Assignments from different time periods, styles, and genres which are designed to stretch them as performers and artists. It's a lot of work and much preparation required on both teachers' and students' part, but, thankfully, they are all rising to the challenge, and then some!

Will you teach it again next year, and if so, will you teach it as you have done this year or make some changes?

We really hope so; that's our intention. The structure would likely be the same with acting and music coachings followed by sharings which build to a final culmination of each Assignment, but the Assignments are tailored to each student, so the scenes and music will differ from year to year. Ultimately, the class is all about collaboration; two departments, music and theater disciplines; we hope [Helen] Parkhurst would be proud! Now, a year in, it's about spreading the word and keeping the momentum—so all you musical theater fans, learn more before registration by reaching out to us!

Whether it's the new collaboration between the theater and music department or a new elective open to Junior history enthusiasts, Dalton offers a wealth of new opportunities to students this year.

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