

SCENE STUDY I



Scene Study | THEA 3304 | CRN: 28652 | Spring, 2019

Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30-11:50am

Fox Fine Arts, D180

Instructor: Greg Beam

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Office Hours: Monday, 10:30-11:50 & 1:30-3:00; Wednesday, 10:30-11:50 - Worrell Hall 114, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course builds on the techniques and principles introduced in Acting Fundamentals, applying them to the interpretation of contemporary dramatic literature in collaboration with a scene partner. We will focus on fluid communication, spontaneity, and sustained commitment to character goals and tasks, grounded in a detailed understanding of the text and an acute sense of what is at stake in the scene.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To further develop facility with the core elements of acting technique: circumstances, character, text analysis, behavior, action, obstacle, intention, improvisation.
- To instill a habit of fluid, unguarded communication.
- To enhance the ability to work with a scene partner.
- To practice these skills with contemporary drama until they become second nature, laying the groundwork for the interpretation of more challenging text in Scene Study II/III, Acting Genres, and Shakespeare.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To learn and rehearse two contemporary scenes with a partner, exercising effective give-and-take in developing the scene (i.e. challenging your partner without bossing them around).
- To imbue the performance of those scenes with a rich sense of circumstances and character, strong dramatic choices, a clear sense of stakes and commitment to the character's goals/tasks/intentions, and fully integrated physical and vocal action.
- To perform the scenes for the rest of the class, exhibiting the degree of preparation and polish expected in a full theatrical production.

DECORUM

We will be doing work that requires more intense and intimate interaction between partners than the work done in Acting Fundamentals. For that reason, it is critical that we create and maintain an environment of respect and mutual support and that we hold ourselves to high standards of professional and personal conduct. I will challenge you and encourage you to challenge each other, but we must never forget that everyone's emotional and physical safety are paramount.

MATERIALS

Most of the materials we use in class will be provided by me. However, I will expect you to read the play from which your scenes are selected. I will try to arrange for a copy of the plays to be placed on reserve at the library, but I would advise you to obtain your own copy as well.

Any props you need for rehearsal or performance, please bring from home.

You must have an active UTEP email address and check it regularly. You should also have regular access to Blackboard. These will be my primary means of communicating with you outside of class. Please note that I will not respond to emails sent from personal email accounts. If you want to contact me, use your UTEP email address.

ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT

The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at UTEP provides students with disabilities accommodations and support services to help them pursue their academic, graduation, and career goals. If you are dealing with a mental, physical, emotional, or sensory disability, you are encouraged to contact them for a confidential consultation. For more information, visit <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>.

ATTENDANCE

Because this course requires work with a partner, attendance is critical. As such, absences, as well as consistent tardiness, will have a severe impact on your final grade. I overlook two absences and begin to lower the final grade for any absences beyond that.

Please understand that if you aren't here, your scene partner is unable to work. They must sit there, stewing in frustration. Don't do this to them. If you know you will need to be absent, please inform me as soon as possible. It's easier to make arrangements if advanced notice is given. But please be mindful that in-class assignments often cannot be made up. If you are running late to class, please send me an email as soon as you can safely do so. (Pull over if you're driving.)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any incident of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero on the assignment and possible disciplinary action. This includes cheating and plagiarism. Please check the UTEP Student Handbook for more information on academic dishonesty.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Phones, tablets, and computers will not be needed for this class. Keep them out of sight. If you are using a device during class, I will ask you to put it away, and it will be awkward for everyone involved.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Performance Attendance & Responses (10%)

You are expected to see both department theatre productions this semester, *The Humans* and *Oedipus El Rey* and to write a one-page response to each, focusing on the performances.

Responses should be submitted through the 'Assignments' folder on Blackboard by the dates indicated in the course schedule.

In-class Exercises (30%)

Along with the two assigned scenes, there will be several other performance exercises in class. You will not be assigned a score for your performance in any of these individual exercises—and, in fact, I don't want you to feel pressure to 'perform well' in any of them—but your active involvement and commitment to these exercises will form a significant part of your work in class.

First Scene (30%)

You will be assigned a scene from a contemporary play, which you will learn and rehearse with a partner and perform around the middle of the semester.

Final Scene (30%)

You will be assigned a scene from a contemporary play, which you will learn and rehearse with a partner and perform at the end of the semester.

| ASSIGNMENTS | POSSIBLE POINTS |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Performance Attendance & Responses: | 10 |
| In-class exercises: | 30 |
| Scene 1: | 30 |
| Scene 2: | 30 |
| TOTAL: | 100 |

Grading Scale

A = 90-100 points

B = 80-89 points

C = 70-79 points

D = 60-69 points

F = 0-59 points

“A” – Indicates consistently high quality work. Student masters all assigned work, completes work on time, shows originality and initiative, does more than required, and makes quality contributions in class.

“B” – Indicates high quality work above. Student masters portions of the work, is alert and shows an interest in the work, completes work on time, and offers good discussion points in class. Student demonstrates good, but not exceptional, commitment to the work.

“C” – Indicates a quality of work that is acceptable but could use improvement. Student satisfactorily completes most assigned work but may show limited interest in the work, have difficulty staying on schedule, or require better preparation. Student may demonstrate a lack of commitment to the work.

“D” – Indicates a need for greater effort to meet the expected level of work for this course. Student has difficulty completing work fully or on time or has multiple absences or tardies. Student may be hesitant to engage in the work or show little interest or involvement in the class.

“F” – Indicates that assignments are incomplete or so lacking in preparation that the quality is unacceptable for this level of study. Student may be consistently absent or show no interest or involvement in the class.

COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

| Class Meeting | Exercises | Reading | Assignments |
|---|-----------------------|--|---|
| Week 1: Introduction Tuesday, Jan. 22 Thursday, Jan. 24 | TBA | | Begin to study “Nicky & Jamie” scene |
| Week 2: Connecting to the other Tuesday, Jan. 29 Thursday, Jan. 31 | Repetitions | Larry Silverberg, “Point of View” and “Reality of Doing” | Memorize “Nicky & Jamie” scene by Tuesday, Jan. 31 |
| Week 3: Connecting to the other within a scene Tuesday, Feb. 5 Thursday, Feb. 7 | “Nicky & Jamie” scene | Brestoff, “First Impulses” | Scene 1 assigned on Tuesday, Feb. 5. Read scene 1 and acquire full script of play. <i>Round robin of “Nicky & Jamie” scene in class on Thursday, Feb. 7</i> |
| Week 4: Connecting to the circumstances Tuesday, Feb. 12 NO CLASS Thursday, Feb. 14 - World Dance Alliance [This would be an excellent time to get together with your scene partner] | Scene 1 | | |
| Week 5: Connecting to the circumstances, cont’d Tuesday, Feb. 19 Thursday, Feb. 21 | Scene 1 | | Full script of play studied and scene rehearsed with partner by Tuesday, Feb. 19. Scene 1 memorized by Thursday, Feb. 21. |
| Week 6: Connecting to the circumstances, cont’d Tuesday, Feb. 26 Thursday, Feb. 28 | Scene 1 | | Prepare personal ‘As If’ statement for the circumstances of scene 1 by Tuesday, Feb. 26 |

| Class Meeting | Exercises | Reading | Assignments |
|---|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Week 7: Connecting to the circumstances Tuesday, Mar. 5 Thursday, Mar. 7 | Scene 1 | | |
| Week 8: Rehearsal & Production Tuesday, Mar. 12 Thursday, Mar. 14 | Scene 1 | | <i>Present scene 1 in class on Thursday, Mar. 14</i> Scene 2 assigned on Thursday, Mar. 14 |
| Week 9: Spring Break | | | |
| Week 10: Goals & Tasks Tuesday, Mar. 26 Thursday, Mar. 28 | 'Doing' exercises; repetition review | | |
| Week 11: Connecting to the text through goals and tasks Tuesday, Apr. 2 Thursday, Apr. 4 | Scene 2 | | Prepare 'As If' statement relating to goals/tasks for scene 2 for Tuesday, Apr. 2 Response to <i>The Humans</i> due Sunday, Apr. 7, by end of day |
| Week 12: Identifying obstacles and raising the stakes Tuesday, Apr. 9 Thursday, Apr. 11 | Scene 2 | Moss, "Obstacle and Intention" | |
| Week 13: Identifying obstacles and raising the stakes Tuesday, Apr. 16 Thursday, Apr. 18 | Scene 2 | Moss, "Stakes" | |
| Week 14: Subtext, imagination, imagery Tuesday, Apr. 23 Thursday, Apr. 25 | Scene 2 | Moss, "Inner imagery" | Prepare heightened 'As If' statement for scene 2 for Tuesday, Apr. 23 |
| Week 15: Connecting with the audience Tuesday, Apr. 30 Thursday, May 2 | Scene 2 | | Response to <i>Oedipus El Rey</i> due Sunday, May 5, by end of day |

| Class Meeting | Exercises | Reading | Assignments |
|---|------------------|----------------|--|
| Week 16: Connecting with the audience Tuesday, May 7 Thursday, May 9 | Scene 2 | | <i>Present scene 2 in class on Thursday, May 9</i> |
| Finals Week Final: Thursday, May 16, 10:00pm-12:45pm | | | Feedback on final scenes during final exam period |