



## Stage Combat THEA 3324

*Chico's Tacos!!*

Instructor: Jay Stratton  
Class: M,T,W,TR,F 8:00am-1:00pm

Cell: 347-581-6468  
Email: [jastratton@utep.edu](mailto:jastratton@utep.edu)  
Or [strattoncoach@gmail.com](mailto:strattoncoach@gmail.com)

FFA D270 / FFA D171 (Wise Stage)  
Office: D073 (Basement) Available anytime by appointment

Required Texts: There will be minimal reading in this course; however, research will be necessary for historical presentations.

### Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should:

1. Be able to *safely* perform an unarmed stage fight.
2. Be able to *safely* perform a stage fight armed with a single blade.
3. Be able to *safely* perform a variety of falls on a typical stage deck.
4. Incorporate stage violence into scene work.
5. Have the stamina to perform a scene with fight portions and still be able to use language after.
6. Have a solid understanding on a variety of stage combat terminology and history.

### Class Notes:

- Safety is ALWAYS our first priority. Anytime you feel unsafe for any reason, you may step out of an exercise as long as you may do so without endangering yourself or your classmates.
- Related, anytime anyone calls "HOLD!" immediately stop what you are doing and do not move. This is a safety term that anyone can call at any time.
- This is a practical course designed to teach the basics of stage combat for ACTORS. The emphasis of this course is on storytelling through fake violence. This is not a self-defense or martial course.
- We will accommodate every student's needs in this class to the best of our ability. That said, stage combat will be enormously physical. Expect to get bumped, bruised, and worn out, but NOT injured.
- This class is combined with a few students earning their Shakespeare II credit. We will discuss what this means in class.

Syllabus is subject to change with appropriate notice

## **Grading**

### Led Warmup (5%)

Each student will lead one 10-15 minute warmup activity. You will be graded on your preparedness and your ability to successfully lead the class through your warmup activity. You will also be graded on your warmup's effectiveness in preparing your classmates for the day's combat activities.

### Unarmed Fight (20%)

You and a single partner will learn and perform a fight at speed. This fight will be unarmed. You will be graded on the fight's safety, precision, and believability.

### Final Bladed Fight (25%)

Everyone in class will learn the choreography for a single sword fight. You and a partner will perform the swordfight in the context of a scene of your choosing. You will be graded on the fight's safety, creativity, and believability.

### Historical Presentation (15%)

Each student will offer an historical presentation on some aspect or person from the world of combat. This presentation should be between 10 and 20 minutes. Your presentation should culminate in '3 takeaways' that may be included in the class quiz. You will distribute these takeaways to the instructor and classmates via email.

### Final Quiz (15%)

We will have one written quiz of terminology and history. This quiz may also include any or all of the '3 takeaways' from each student's Historical Presentation.

### Participation (20% of grade)

You will be graded on your focus, willing participation, supportive attitude, and individual progress in daily class work. Respect and enthusiasm for the lessons and the work of your fellow actors is a crucial part of this class work.

## **Grading Scale**

You will be assigned a letter grade on each of the above assignments. Your final class grade is based on a weighted average of these grades (before any modification for attendance) according to the following scale.

A	=	3.50+
B	=	2.76 - 3.49
C	=	2.01 - 2.75
D	=	1.00 - 2.00
F	=	Less than 1.00

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## Stage Combat/ Shakespeare Class Policies

**SAFETY FIRST:** Stage combat is NOT the same as most other classes. There IS a physical element of danger. If you ever for any reason feel physically unsafe either for yourself or your scene partner, you may **step out of an exercise**, step out of a fight, step out a drill, and alert the instructor. The expression “The Show Must Go On” absolutely does NOT apply in this class.

**Communication:** I rely heavily on email for communication. You MUST check your preferred email daily. I will also store class documents on Blackboard.

**Attendance:** The best way to trash your grade is with bad attendance. In the professional world, actors always show up and they are always on time. Nothing less is acceptable. Class starts on time; one minute after is late. There will be frequent class breaks, please report back not later than the end of the break.

**You may be absent 1 time**, no questions asked. Each unexcused absence after the first reduces your final semester grade by 1 full step.

**You may be late 1 time**, no questions asked. Each unexcused lateness after the first reduces your final semester grade by 1 full step.

At my discretion, an absence or lateness may be excused for legitimate medical reasons, professional obligations, or family emergency. The request for an excused attendance issue must be asked for in writing. I may also ask for some kind of proof of the circumstances.

If you have an absence, you are still responsible for missed work. Absences do not change the due dates of assignments.

**Phones and Electronics:** All phones and electronics should be turned off for the duration of class. If you take out a phone, tablet, or other electronic device without permission during class, you may be asked to leave and the day will count as absence. We will take frequent breaks and you are certainly allowed to look at your phones at that time.

If you use a tablet or laptop to take notes, that is entirely acceptable during our lecture portions. Just make certain you are not using your device for another purpose.

**Food and Drink:** Because this class is long, you will need to bring food and drink. Please only eat food or flavored beverages during class breaks and only in designated areas.

**BRING A WATER BOTTLE EVERYDAY.** You may always stop to get a drink of water. You absolutely may eat and drink during the lecture portions of our class in the basement lab.

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**Touching:** This course will require a LOT of touching; however safety is still first priority. ‘Safety’ in this instance refers to both physical safety and respect for personal boundaries. If you have trouble with being touched or touching someone else, tell them and/or me immediately. Absolutely no one should be touching anyone in an inappropriate or non-consensual manner. If you feel unsafe for any reason, tell me immediately, and we will adjust the exercise accordingly.

**Hygiene:** This class is physical and involves touching. Please respect your classmates by coming to class clean and bathed.

**Attire:** This class will be CRAZY physical. Wear clothes you can move in to every class. You may also want to bring a towel or change of clothes as necessary. Be prepared to work BAREFOOT in every class, and be prepared to take off shoes and socks without complaint. You may be asked to participate in yoga or other physical activity. If you are not prepared to do so, you will not participate in class that day. No JEANS. No FLIP FLOPS or other loose fitting open shoes.

For safety, we cannot have anything hanging or dangling off your person. This means nails must be trimmed; long hair must be tied back. No hats, hoods, head wraps, etc. No large earrings, dangling jewelry. Nothing that can catch a hand, thumb, weapon, etc. I recommend against anything either too tight or too loose. Tights, shorts, sweats, t shirts are all great! Heavy trousers, flowing dresses or short skirts can be problematic. Optional: you may want a pair of light gloves for sword work.

If you wear a piece of attire for religious reasons, please come talk to me and give me something in writing; an exception will be made!

**Academic Dishonesty:** University Policy will be strictly adhered to and absolutely no academic impropriety will be tolerated. All transgressions of university policy including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, the unauthorized exchange of information for written assignments or tests, theft via the computer or infringement of the rights of other to academic freedom (i.e. disrupting class, disrespectful comments towards classmates or instructor) will result in a failing grade for this course as well as disciplinary procedures as adopted by the university and described in the current student handbook.

**Disabled Student Statement:** In Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation then the Office of Disabled Student Services located at UTEP need to be contacted. If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Disabled Student Services. You may call [915-747-5148](tel:915-747-5148) for general information about the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the rights that you may have as a UTEP student with a disability.

Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor and the Disabled Student Services Office at The University of Texas at El Paso.

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