



## Acting Fundamentals THEA 2303

*"The trick is to take the work seriously, but not take yourself seriously at all."*

-Judi Dench

Instructor: Jay Stratton  
Class: M, W 10:30-11:50  
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Required Texts: we will read three plays over the course of the semester which will be available on blackboard.

### Course Objectives

After this course, you will:

1. Have a greater understanding and respect for the craft of acting.
2. Understand and develop a facility with basic acting skills including but not limited to: pursuit of objective, analysis of given circumstances, and personalization.
3. Be able to apply these skills to scripted material.
4. Have increased emotional availability.
5. Have a contemporary monologue appropriate for auditions.

### Grading

#### Written Script Responses (15% total – 3 at 5%)

You will read three assigned scripts outside of class and write a response for each. Guidelines will be posted on blackboard.

#### Midterm Scene (20%)

You will be assigned a scene with a partner. You will rehearse the scene both in and out of class. You will perform the scene as your midterm in front of the class.

#### Midterm Scene Analysis (10%)

You will write a brief of analysis of your scene. Guidelines will be posted on blackboard for this analysis.

#### Live Production Response for a Departmental or UDT production (10%)

Each student is required to see any one of *Borderline*, *Rocky Horror*, or *Zoot Suit* and write a brief response paper. Guidelines will be posted on blackboard.

#### Final Monologue (20% of grade)

You will prepare and deliver a final contemporary monologue.

*Syllabus may be subject to change with appropriate notice*

### Participation and Attendance (25% 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. Attendance is a driving factor in your participation grade.

### **Grading Scale**

You will be assigned a letter grade on each of the above assignments. (A=4.0, B=3.0 etc.) 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	=	2.50 - 3.49
C	=	1.50 - 2.49
D	=	0.50 - 1.49
F	=	Less than .50

### Extra Credit

Extra Credit: As described above, you are required to see one departmental play and write a response.

You may earn extra credit by seeing any additional show and writing an additional response. This includes any departmental show, UDT show, As You Like It, or any outside show above the high school level.

You may also earn extra credit if you attend the Martín Balmaceda Viewpoints masterclass and write a 350 word response on any takeaways from the experience.



## Class Policies

**Attendance:** This class has mandatory in-person attendance. Your grade will be affected by any unexcused absences or lateness.

That said, the key to excused absence is written communication.

- If you are sick, you should not come to class and immediately send an email.
- If you have tested positive for covid, do not come to class and immediately send an email.
- If you (hopefully not) get into a car accident or have some other issue, immediately send an email.
- If you have any health or family crisis issue, attend to your needs and send an email.

In all these instances, the attendance issue will be excused.

If you need to be absent, you are still responsible for missed work. Absences do not change the due dates of assignments.

**Communication:** I rely heavily on email for communication. You must check your student email daily. We will also utilize Blackboard to centralize documents.

Note that most class assignments are required to be turned as an attachment to email. If you are not able to submit work this way, contact me immediately and we will work out an alternative.

**Touching:** Acting often requires touching. That said, permission for touch will be sought and boundaries will be respected. No violence or intimacy between actors will be required in this class. Students may choose to incorporate contact into their scenes or choose not to.

**The Space:** Please respect the space and keep it clean. No food or drink is allowed in the studio during class. Water, however, is encouraged.

**Phones and Devices:** You may use an electronic device to take class notes, but please do not use devices for any non class purpose.

If you need to work out of a script or side, you must have paper or book version of that material. You will not be allowed to read off tablet or phone.

**Attire:** Please wear clothes you can move in and do yoga in to every class. This includes sweats, shorts, loose clothing, t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc. Please do not wear jeans. Please do not wear hats or head coverings except for religious purposes.

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**Late Work:** All written and online work is due on by the start of class on the listed due date. Work may be turned in at any time via email or in class as a hard copy. Written work turned in after the due date will be penalized 1 full letter grade. Written work turned in more than one week late will be penalized 2 full letter grades.

**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.