



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
Fox D071

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Email: strattoncoach@gmail.com
Office Hours: Anytime by Appointment

Required Texts: *Lydia* by Octavio Solis.

In addition, each student will be responsible for getting copies of any plays assigned for in-class work. (I will help facilitate this process as needed.)

Course Objectives

After this course, you should:

1. Have a greater understanding and respect for the craft of acting.
2. Understand and develop a facility with basic acting skills.
3. Be able to apply these skills to scripted material.
4. Have increased emotional availability.
5. Have a contemporary monologue appropriate for auditions.

Grading

Journal (15% total – 5 collections at 3% per collection)

You will keep a journal of your experience in and out of class. You should set aside 25 minutes outside of class once per week to write in this journal. You should also bring this journal with you to class each day as we will sometimes use the journal for in class writing assignments. This journal will be collected 5 times over the course of the semester. Details to follow.

Script Response: *Lydia* (5%)

As a class, we will be reading the above script and discussing the material in class. You will write a brief response to the experience of reading this play. Details to follow.

Rock Star Performance (5%)

You will be performing a single lip sync song as a rock star in front of the class. Details to follow.

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 (5%)

You will write a brief of analysis of your scene. Details to follow.

Live Production Response: *King Lear* (5%)

Each student is required to see this UTEP production and write a brief response paper. Details to follow.

Final Monologue (15% of grade)

You will prepare and deliver a final contemporary monologue.

Final Monologue Analysis (5%)

You will write a brief of analysis of your contemporary monologue. Details to follow.

Participation (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.

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

There are two ways to earn extra credit in this class:

First, I give extra credit to students with PERFECT attendance. For more on this, please see the attendance section of our class policies.

Second, you may earn extra credit by doing additional live production responses.

Every student is required to write a production response for *King Lear*. However, you can earn extra credit by seeing live performances and writing responses for many other productions in the area. Examples include *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Firebird*, *Rock of Ages*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and many others.

To earn extra credit, your response must be at least 500 words and must touch on what you as a performer learned from watching the production. In other words, "I liked it" doesn't cut it. Value of an extra credit response is up to me.

Details on live production responses to follow.

Syllabus may change with appropriate notice



Acting Fundamentals Class Policies

Communication: I rely heavily on email for communication. You **MUST** check your preferred email daily. My favorite way to receive written assignments is a **WORD DOCUMENT** attached to an email. However, I also happily accept hard copies of written work.

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.

In this class, *absent and late are the same thing*. **You may be absent or late 3 times**, no questions asked. On your fourth attendance issue, your final grade will be reduced one letter grade. On your sixth attendance issue, your final grade will be reduced two letter grades. If you have eight or more attendance issues, you cannot receive a passing grade in the course.

At my discretion, an absence may be excused for legitimate medical reasons, professional obligations, or family emergency. The request for an excused absence 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.

At my discretion, a student with **perfect attendance** may be given a *bonus to their final grade!*

The Space: No food or drink is allowed in the studio during class. The only exception is unflavored water. Water is allowed and encouraged.

Phones and Electronics: Phones and electronics in class are a pet peeve of mine. 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. If a phone rings during class, you may be asked to leave and the day will count as absence. Also, I will freak out.

Touching: This course will require touching; however safety is the 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 me immediately. Absolutely no one should be touching anyone in an inappropriate manner. If you feel unsafe for any reason, tell me immediately, and we will adjust the exercise accordingly.

Attire: Wear clothes you can move in to every class. 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 hats, hoods, head wraps, etc. No large earrings, loud jewelry, or tongue piercings. No JEANS. Trust me on this.

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!

If you have a legitimate MEDICAL reason not to work barefoot, let me know at the start of class.

Late Work: Written work is due by the beginning of class the scheduled calendar day. 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.

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