

Acting Fundamentals
THEA 2303
Tuesday/Thursday 1:30-12:50pm
Spring 2023

Professor: Kim McKean
Email: kamckean@utep.edu

Office: Worrell 114
Office Hours: T/TH 12:00-1:20pm
(or by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on the building blocks of an actor's technique. Attention will be paid to developing the following acting techniques: deepening the actor's imagination, interacting responsively with a partner, committing to the circumstances and to a character's individual point-of-view, the value of obstacle, the importance of dramatic action, and learning to deepen the actor's connection with written material in pursuit of a vivid and truthful performance.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course students will demonstrate:

- A facility for basic acting skills
- An ability to apply basic acting skills to scripted material
- An ability to create characters with strong dramatic choices and fully integrated physical and vocal techniques
- Personalization of text and a vivid connection to partner
- A basic knowledge of Stanislavski's terms

Required Texts

There are no required text books for our class, but there will be a number of required articles and scenes to read throughout the semester. All will be available on our class Blackboard page.

Recommended Texts

- *The Great Acting Teachers and Their Methods* by Richard Brestoff
- *The Actor's Wheel of Connection* by Richard Brestoff
- *Sanford Meisner on Acting* by Sanford Meisner and Dennis Longwell
- *The Intent to Live* by Larry Moss
- *An Actor Prepares* by Stanislavski
- *Respect for Acting* by Uta Hagen

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Complete assigned reading on time. Take notes and be prepared to discuss the text.
- Come to class **ON TIME** and ready to work. **Work with positivity and respect.**
- Meet scheduled deadlines and turn in assigned work on time. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- Be prepared to participate in all classroom discussions and exercises.
- **Prepare** and memorize all assigned texts.
- Write a 2-page observational paper relating to course concepts on one UTEP show this semester.
- Perform scenes and exercises that demonstrate a thorough application of Learning Goals.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You will be allowed two unexcused absences during the semester. (Illness/covid-19 infections are excused with proper documentation, such as a positive covid test, and family/medical emergencies are excused with proper documentation). Each unexcused absence after two lowers your grade by 5%. Three tardies are equivalent overall to one absence. If you are going to be absent on a day you are scheduled to work or present, your scene partner and I must be notified within 24 hours. **If a you miss a day they are scheduled to work and it is unexcused without notice, your final grade for that scene drops by 25%. In-class work time will be scheduled to the minute. If you miss a scene without letting me know in advance, I cannot guarantee you will make up that time.**

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All paperwork must be typed, double spaced, and printed.

1. Character Picture Presentation.....	5%
2. Lip Sync Presentation	5%
3. UTEP Show Attendance & Observational Paper	10%
4. Final Response.....	10%
5. Blackboard Assignments.....	15%
6. Monologue Presentation	15%
7. Final Scene.....	20%
8. Participation and Preparation for Class.....	20%

EVALUATION CRITERIA BREAKDOWN

1. PARTICIPATION AND PREPERATION FOR CLASS

Active participation is vital to your growth as artists and to your success in this class. You will be expected to come to class on-time and fully prepared, actively engage in class discussions, and give your all to class exercises. Share your voice! We only get better by asking questions and taking risks. Preparation/memorization of all exercises done in class as well as ability to participate in course discussions about assigned reading for the week will factor into your participation/preparation grade as well.

2. UTEP Show Attendance and Observational Paper

You are required to attend a performance of *Heroes and Saints* in the Wise Family Theatre. Google Forms will be available to sign in after each performance, and you must sign in digitally to receive full credit. Three extra credit points will be given for attending *The Prom*, *The Spring Dance Concert*, *The Spring Dance Festival*, and/or *The Full Monty*. Ushering opportunities are available for each show.

A written critical response that observes the acting (analyzing one or two actors) in *Heroes and Saints* is required. Responses should relate to course concepts and should not be a summary of the play. Papers are due via Blackboard on Friday, March 10th. No late work will be accepted unless pre-determined with me.

3. BLACKBOARD ASSIGNMENTS

Throughout the course of the semester, you will have five short assignments on BB. They include:

- Response to “Good Acting” Articles
- Selection of Monologue 1
- Goal and Obstacle for Monologue 1
- Intensifier for Monologue 1
- Scene 1 Choice
- Given Circumstances, Beats, and Tactics for Scene 1
- Goal/Obstacle, POV for Scene 1
- Uta Hagan’s 9 questions

4. LIP SYNC Presentation

You will apply course concepts to a “lip sync” presentation. Evaluation rubric will be provided.

5. CHARACTER PICTURE Presentation

You will apply course concepts to a “character picture” presentation. Evaluation rubric will be provided.

6. MONOLOGUE—Short Contemporary Monologue

You will apply course concepts to a short contemporary monologue. Evaluation rubric will be provided.

7. FINAL SCENE—Contemporary Scene

You will apply course concepts to an additional contemporary scene with a partner. You will be required to read the full play of this scene to get a sense of where the characters are coming from. An evaluation rubric will be provided, and growth over the course of the semester will be taken into consideration, along with application of course concepts. Evaluation rubric will be provided.

8. FINAL Response

2 pages written OR 4-minute audio or video clip analyzing your perspective on acting technique at the end of the semester.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser. You will need to have access to a computer/laptop, scanner, a webcam, and a microphone.

IMPORTANT: If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP [Help Desk](#) as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

COURSE COMMUNICATION

- **Office Hours:** My office hours will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00-1:20pm.
- **Email:** UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24 hours M-F.

SUBJECT MATTER

The scripts and monologues studied in this course deal with mature subject matters. Consequently, some of the discussion in class will require discussion of adult subject matter and language. If you have concerns, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. All classroom discussions must be held in a respectful and professional matter.

RESPECT

The work in this class may elicit a strong emotional response. In order for this work to be done respectfully, it is crucial that the classroom be a SAFE and BRAVE PLACE. Absolutely no bullying, gossiping, or judgement will be tolerated. Any student who is not contributing to a safe, creative, work environment will be asked to leave class and receive an absence for that class period. *Any student who engages in conduct that is harassment of any University community member, including sexual harassment as defined in Section VI. in the UTEP Handbook may be subject to discipline.*

INCLUSIVE LEARNING AND ANTI-RACIST CLASSROOM

In this class, we disavow all racism, xenophobia, homophobia, sexism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, classism, ableism, and hate speech or actions that attempt to silence, threaten, and degrade others. We will work together to develop a learning community that is inclusive and respectful for all people.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any incident of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero on the assignment. This includes cheating and plagiarism. Please visit <http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/> for more information. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student or possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action.

MAKE-UP WORK

Make-up work will be given *only* in the case of a *documented* emergency, illness, and/or covid-19 illness. Note that make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with penalty points. If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you will receive a zero. It is important to reach out to me—in advance if at all possible—and explain with proper documentation why you missed a given course requirement. Once a deadline has been established for make-up work, no further extensions or exceptions will be granted.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF SUBMITTING WORK IN CASE OF TECHNICAL ISSUES

I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. I also suggest you save all your work in a separate Word document as a back-up. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through the course website, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can email me your back-up document as a last resort.

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the [UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the [CASS portal](#).

Grading Scale

A = 90%-100%

B = 80% - 89%

C = 70% - 79%

D = 60% - 69%

F = 0% - 59%

“**A**”—indicates exceedingly high quality work. Masters all assigned work, completes work on time, shows originality and initiative, does more than required, and makes quality contributions in class.

“**B**”—indicates good progress, above the average, 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.

“**C**”—indicates a quality of work acceptable at this level. Satisfactorily completes most assigned work under normal conditions and direction, shows interest in work, and completes work on time.

“**D**”—indicates that although most assignments may be completed there is a need for greater effort to meet the expected level of work for this course, student is hesitant to engage in the work or at times shows little interest, and seldom responds in class.

“**F**”—indicates failure to produce an accepted quality of work for this course.

Schedule of Classes & Assignments

(subject to change)

**the reading and assignments are due the day they are listed*

WEEK 1:

- T 1/17 Course Overview/Syllabus
What is Acting (The Spokes on the Wheel)
- TH 1/19 Exploring the Spokes in the Wheel with Open Scenework
Open Scene Group 1-4

WEEK 2:

- T 1/24 Exploring the Spokes in the Wheel with Open Scenework
Open Scene Group 5-8
- TH 1/26 **Upload on Blackboard by 1/26 at 10pm:**
Read “Intro to the Work”, “Good Acting”, and “Preparing to Act” Articles
Submit an Audio or Video Clip or 2 page paper responding to these articles

WEEK 3: Working with Partner

- T 1/31 Working with Partners Partner and Group Work
- TH 2/2 Doing vs. Being
Working with Goals/Obstacles
Read for class: Goals/Obstacle Article

WEEK 4: Lip Sync Due

- T 2/7 Goal & Obstacle Lip Sync 1-8
Upload on Blackboard by class today: Selection for Monologue 1
- TH 2/9 Goal & Obstacle Lip Sync 9-16

WEEK 5: Monologue 1

T 2/14 Goal & Obstacle
Monologue 1-4
Prep for class today: Monologue 1 Memorized
Upload on Blackboard by class today: Goal and Obstacle for Monologue 1

TH 2/16 Goal & Obstacle
Monologue 5-8

WEEK 6:

T 2/21 Goal & Obstacle
Monologue 9-12

TH 2/23 Goal & Obstacle
Monologue 13-16

WEEK 7: Intensifiers

T 2/28 Raising the Stakes Adding Intensifiers
Read for Class: Raising the Stakes

TH 3/2 Goal & Obstacle ADDING Intensifier
Upload on Blackboard by class today: Intensifier for Monologue 1

Monologue 1-8

WEEK 8: Intensifier

T 3/7 Goal & Obstacle ADDING Intensifier
Monologue 9-16

TH 3/9 **Midterm Monologue Presentation**

WEEK 9: SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10: Creating Character

T 3/21 Create Character from a Picture/Text/Environment
Physical/Vocal Exploration
Upload on Blackboard by 5:00PM 3/22: Scene 1 Choice

TH 3/23 **Character Picture Presentation**

WEEK 11: Creating Character: Tactic—how do I get what I want

T 3/28 Introduce Given Circumstances and Tactics
Read for Class: Given Circumstances and Tactics
Work Time with Scene Partner 1

TH 3/30 Givens and Tactics Groups 1-2
Prep for class today: Scene 1 Memorized
Upload on Blackboard for class today: Given Circumstances, Beats, and Tactics for Scene 1

WEEK 12: Creating Character: Tactic—how do I get what I want

T 4/4 Givens and Tactics Groups 3-5

TH 4/6 Givens and Tactics Groups 6-8

WEEK 13: Creating Character: Expectation/Point of View

T 4/11 Expectation/Point of View Lesson
Read for Class: Expectation and Point of View

TH 4/13 Groups 1-2 Point of View Work
Upload on Blackboard for class today: Goal/Obstacle, POV for Scene 1

WEEK 14: Point of View

T 4/18 Groups 3-5 Point of View Work

TH 4/20 Groups 6-8 Point of View Work

WEEK 15: Thinking in Character

T 4/25 Thinking in Character Exercises

TH 4/27 Group 1-4 Final Notes

Week 16: Putting it all together

T 5/2 Group 5-8 Final Notes

TH 5/4 Wrap-Up Putting it all Together
Uta Hagen's 9 questions

FINAL

T 12/6 1:00-3:45PM **Final Scene Presentation**

Upload on Blackboard by 12/6: Uta Hagen's 9 Questions about Scene and Final Response: 2 pages written OR 4-minute audio or video clip analyzing your perspective on acting technique.