

ACTING FUNDAMENTALS
THEA2303
T/TH 10:30-11:50, Room M404
SPRING 2018

Professor: Kim McKean
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Office: Worrell 114
Office Hours: T 12:00-1:00 or by appointment

Course Description

This course focuses on the building blocks of an actor's technique, employing and building on the central principles laid out by Constantin Stanislavski: Relaxation, Concentration, Imagination, Circumstances, and Action. Attention will also be paid to developing the actor's imagination, interacting fluidly and responsively with a partner, and learning to deepen the actor's connection with written material in pursuit of a vivid and truthful performance.

The first half of the semester will be devoted to a series of exercises designed to prepare and strengthen the actor's basic skills. The second half will focus on applying these skills to the interpretation and performance of dramatic material. Using monologues and scenes drawn from contemporary dramatic literature, the student will practice physical release, concentration, engagement with environment and objects, commitment to the circumstances of a scene and to a character's individual point-of-view, the value of obstacle, and the importance of dramatic action.

Learning Goals

Upon successful completion of this course you should begin to practice and demonstrate:

- A facility for basic acting skills
- An ability to apply basic acting skills to scripted material
- A performance of a contemporary monologue with a rich sense of circumstances and character, strong dramatic choices, and fully integrated physical and vocal action.
- A personalization of text and a vivid connection to partner
- A basic knowledge of Stanislavski's terms

Communication

EMAIL will be my primary means of communicating with you outside of class. You must have an active UTEP email address and check it regularly. You should also have regular access to Blackboard.

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

Evaluation Criteria

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

1. Participation	20%
2. Journals.....	20%
3. Exercises.....	20%
4. Midterm Monologue.....	20%
5. Final Scene.....	20%

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.

Participation

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 and scene work. Class periods will include exercises, scene work, and discussions. Share your voice! We only get better by asking questions and taking risks.

Absences

Absences and tardies will lower your grade significantly—**each absence after TWO lowers your overall grade a whole letter grade. Three tardies are equivalent to one absence.** If you know you will be absent for a specific class period, please let me know so I don't schedule you to work that day.

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. Written work will not be accepted 2 weeks after the due date.

Journals

Journal entries can include questions/discoveries/responses to reading, feedback from class critiques, or something significant you noticed when watching an on-camera performance. Three journals will be collected over the course of the semester. Specific dates are listed below.

Journals should be at least two pages, typed and double spaced.

In-Class Exercises

Includes all work done in class. You will be evaluated on preparation, work ethic, professional standards, and ability to apply course concepts. You are expected to memorize and rehearse your scenes and monologues outside of class.

Midterm

A formal presentation and critique of your monologue. Evaluation rubric will be provided.

Final

A formal presentation of a scene. Evaluation rubric will be provided.

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.

Disability Accommodations

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. For more information, visit <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>.

Subject Matter

The scripts and scenes studied in this course deal with mature subject matters. Consequently, much 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.

Decorum

Please be mindful that this is an introductory-level acting course. You may not know your classmates or understand their personal boundaries and comfort zones. While I encourage you to challenge one another creatively, this is not the place to push your peers physically or emotionally. That kind of work requires an investment of time and trust that goes beyond the scope of this course. Any physical contact that is violent or sexual in nature is not tolerated. In general, you should get permission before making any contact more intrusive than a handshake.

Electronic Devices

No electronic devices allowed in class unless permission is given beforehand. Students using electronic devices in class will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day.

Schedule of Classes & Assignments

(subject to change)

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

Week	Date	IN CLASS	Assignment(s) Due
1	T 1/16	Intro to Acting Fundamentals	
	TH 1/18	Open Scene—Connecting to Circumstances	
2	T 1/23	Open Scene—Connecting to Circumstances	
	TH 1/25	Open Scene—Connecting to Circumstances	
3	T 1/30	Open Scene—Connecting to Circumstances	
	TH 2/1	Open Scene—Connecting to Circumstances Hand Out Open Monologue	
4	T 2/6	Perform Open Scene for Kim, Object Exercise—Personalization Introduce Open Monologue	Bring in an object that has deep personal meaning to you.
	TH 2/8	Open Monologue Work—First Line Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Monologue Memorized • Monologue Circumstance Questions Due
5	T 2/13	Open Monologue Group Workshop	JOURNAL 1 DUE
	TH 2/15	Open Monologue Work 1-6	
6	T 2/20	Open Monologue Work 7-12	UTA HAGAN's 9 Questions Due when you work
	TH 2/22	Open Monologue Work 13-18	
7	T 2/27	Open Monologue Work	Greg Beam Sub
	TH 3/1	Open Monologue Work	Greg Beam Sub
8	T 3/6	Monologue Midterm Prep—Goals for Performance	
	TH 3/8	MIDTERM MONOLOGUE PERFORMANCE	HAND OUT SCENE 1
9	T 3/13	NO CLASS SPRING BREAK	
	TH 3/15	NO CLASS SPRING BREAK	
10	T 3/20	MIDTERM GROUP 1	
	TH 3/22	MIDTERM GROUP 2	

		HAND OUT OPEN SCENE	
11	T 3/27	Rock Star Performance—Connecting to Character	JOURNAL 2 DUE Bring in “Song” Performance
	TH 3/29	Scene Work Open Scene HAND OUT <i>All this Intimacy</i> Scenes	OPEN SCENE MEMORIZED
12	T 4/3	Scene Work Open Scene	
	TH 4/5	SCENE 1: 1-4—Table Read, Approaching a Scene	HAVE READ *ALL THIS INTIMACY* SCENE 1 Prepped and Memorization Started
13	T 4/10	SCENE 1: 5-9—Table Read, Approaching a Scene	
	TH 4/12	Table Reads	
14	T 4/17	SCENE 1: 1-3	SCENE 1 MEMORIZED Action, Listening & Responding
	TH 4/19	SCENE 1: 4-6	Action, Listening & Responding
15	T 4/24	SCENE 1: 7-9	Action, Listening & Responding
	TH 4/26	SCENE 1: 1-3	Perform scenes with notes
16	T 5/1	SCENE 1: 4-6	Perform scenes with notes
	TH 5/3	SCENE 1: 7-9	Perform scenes with notes
FINAL	TH 5/10 10-12:45	FINAL SCENE PERFORMANCE	JOURNAL 3 DUE