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**Acting Fundamentals Syllabus**

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**Instructor:** Roderic “Greg” Thompson  
**Email:** RGThompson2@UTEP.edu

**Office Hours:** By Appointment Only  
**Class Meets:** Mon/Wed 10:30am-11:50am

**Required Text/Materials:**

- Active Blackboard (including the app)
- Adobe Reader – <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
- Microsoft Word – Can be obtained for free from the university.

**Primary Texts:**

- ACT NOW: A Practical Look at the Craft of Acting – on Blackboard
- In addition, each student will be responsible for getting copies of any scripts assigned for in-class work - unless otherwise indicated.

**Course Objectives:**

- Create a greater understanding and respect for the craft of acting.
- Understand and develop a facility with basic acting skills, including but not limited to: pursuit of objective, analysis of given circumstances, and personalization.
- Learn to apply these skills to scripted material.
- Develop increased emotional availability.
- Have 2 contrasting, contemporary monologues appropriate for auditions.

**Grading:**

*Attendance & Attitude: 30% • Final & Written Work: 25% • Preparation & Class Work: 30%*  
*Production Attendance/Review & Discussion Boards: 15%*

A = 90 – 100

B = 80 – 89

C = 70 – 79

D = 60 – 69

F = 59–

**Tests/Homework:** In addition to some text work, this semester will consist of reading assignments, research and memorization homework. Successful completion of these assignments is required.

**Communication:** I rely heavily on announcements/email for communication. You **MUST** check your messages daily. We will store our plays and documents on Blackboard.

**Late Work:** Late work is unacceptable. Nothing in my class can be “made-up”. If you are going to miss a day or an assignment, please speak with me in advance and we can discuss.

**Attitude:**

- It is important that students come to class with a curious and open mind.
- It is imperative students wear loose fitting clothing to class to allow freedom of movement.
- Actors must cultivate a willingness to take risks, to fail, and to share their creativity and talent with others in the class.

**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. **Please note, if you set your bag down and then go to the restroom and are not present for the start of class, you are late.** You are required to attend each class on time and participate in discussions.

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In this class, *absent and late are the same thing*. Consistent tardiness and/or failure to attend class will affect your final grade. You are ALLOWED TWO ABSENCES, every absence after that will lower your grade by one letter grade, (i.e., if you have a B as a final grade, it will be lowered to a C). There will be a sign-in sheet every class, make sure you sign it, or you will be counted absent that day. The only excused absences allowed are university events and documentable medical events; simply bring me a letter from a university head, such as a department chair or an attending Physician. Use your allowed absences wisely.

**Technology in the classroom:** Personal cell phone use is prohibited during class. If you are expecting an important phone call or message, please let me know prior to the start of class. You may use your tablet or computer for taking notes, but if it becomes evident you are not using your technology for notes, I will ask you to put it away. 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.

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

**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 them and/or me ASAP. 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, no questions asked.

**Attire:** Wear clothes you can move comfortably in, to every class. You may occasionally be asked to work BAREFOOT - be prepared to take off shoes and socks without complaint. No hats, hoods, head wraps, etc. No large earrings, loud jewelry, or tongue piercings. No JEANS. 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 that prevents working barefoot, let me know at the start of class.

- Exception: on your performance days, you may wear whatever outfit you deem appropriate for the circumstance of the monologue/scene, as we will discuss during the semester.

**The Discussion Board:** The Discussion Board will pop up on Blackboard, mid-way through each unit. Why mid-way? I want you to have a couple weeks with the Unit material so you can fully engage in the conversation, making use of what you are learning.

To complete each Discussion Board assignment, you must add 4 individual entries, whether you start a new thread, add a comment to one of your existing threads or comment in someone else's thread in any combination, that are substantial and pertinent to the topic. Each entry counts 25 pts. for a total of 100. Every entry you make on the board counts - Blackboard tracks all of them.

If that is still confusing, you have to have four separate, or individual entries, whether you start a new thread, add to one of your existing threads or add to someone else's thread – each of those count as one entry.

**Attendance/Participation & Extra Credit:** UTEP Department of Theatre & Dance Required Attendance/Participation: You must "attend/listen to" or participate in two UTEP virtual or live productions. Following your attendance or participation, write and submit a written response to the production, highlighting the experience; what you saw, how the production affected you and any insights into the production and its place in society. It must follow the format for written work and be no less than 450 - unless otherwise noted.

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**Department Events:** <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/theatre-dance/events/>

**Viewing/Reviewing For Extra Credit:** You may choose to watch additional UTEP productions, other theatre productions live or broadcast (with the exception of high school productions), or any of the productions on **DigitalTheatre+** through the UTEP Library and write a one-page review of the production(s), highlighting what you saw, how the production affected you and any insights into the production and its place in society, you may have.

**DigitalTheatre+:** <https://0-www-digitaltheatreplus-com.lib.utep.edu/education/>

**Required Format for Written Work:** Written assignments are required, as assigned. Each assignment must be a minimum of not less than 450 words - unless otherwise noted. It must be single-spaced, font size 11pt, typed and submitted in Word.doc or PDF format - no other format will be accepted.

*In the top right corner of your paper* ➡

Topic of Assignment or Title of Production

Your Name

Due Date

Course Name - M/W or T/R

Greg Thompson

**Naming Your File:** You must label and save the file using the following format: First Initial/Last Name.Title.doc or .pdf (Word will add the .doc, Acrobat will add .pdf for you). So, *for example*, my file for this assignment will look like this, once I save it: GThompson.Title.doc or GThompson.Title.pdf

**Submitting Your Work:** All assignments must be submitted to me through email - you must use your UTEP email address to ensure your email will not get kicked back.

**Email your work to me at:** RGThompson2@utep.edu

**In the email subject line:** you MUST type only the name of the assignment and attach the **Word.doc** or **PDF** to the email. Do NOT copy it into the body of the email. Do NOT submit it through Blackboard.

**Extra Credit:** Your first Extra Credit submission will eliminate your lowest grade, completely. Your second will add 3 points to final grade.

**Deadline for Extra Credit and Required Viewing/Participation** is May 6<sup>th</sup>, 5:00pm. May 7<sup>th</sup> is Dead Day, so there are no exceptions to this deadline.

**Final/Final Project:** Finals for this course will be performative. Details are below.

**A note on subject matter:** The performing arts have a power to stir strong emotions, or possibly touch on subjects you might not feel comfortable seeing on stage. If you have concerns about viewing or discussing specific subjects, please see me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. As I will respect your individual rights to choose what shows you want to see, I expect all discussions—including any that may occur outside of class—to be conducted in a respectful and professional matter.

**Statement on Disability:** *The Center for Students with Disabilities at UTEP provides students with disabilities accommodations and support services to help them pursue their academic, graduation, and career goals. If you are dealing with a mental, physical, emotional, or sensory disability - whether permanent or temporary - contact them for a confidential consultation. For more information, visit*

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*http://www.UTEP.edu/CSD/Pages/default.aspx or see pages 5-12 of the Student Handbook. You may also contact The Cass office at (915) 747-5148 for help and accommodations.*

**Statement on Academic Dishonesty:** It is the official policy of the university that all suspected cases or acts of alleged scholastic dishonesty must be referred to the Dean of Students for investigation and appropriate disposition. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion and the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an exam for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or attempt to commit such acts.

**Technical Support:** Need help with Blackboard? Go to Tech Support Room 300 in the Library, immediately. If you do not understand, do not wait until you are having problems. Contact: Help Desk email, [helpdesk@utep.edu](mailto:helpdesk@utep.edu), by phone 747-5257. Hours are M-F 7a-8p, Sat 9a-10p and Sun 12-4p.

**Syllabus Change Policy:** Except for changes that substantially affect the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

**Syllabus Calendar and Course Map:** Below you will find the course laid out, week by week. You will also find a Course Map on Blackboard. The map is break out of assignments and dates, to help get and stay organized.

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**Acting Fundamentals Calendar Spring 2021**

THEA-2303-002/CRN:23127 • M/W -10:30am - 11:50am

Instructor: Greg Thompson • Email: [RGThompson2@utep.edu](mailto:RGThompson2@utep.edu)**Week 1 – What is Acting?**

January 20 – “Getting to know you...” We will discuss the class and schedule.

**“What is Acting?”** (Written Assignment 1) **Due: January 27<sup>th</sup>***Share your POV regarding acting, to your understanding of the craft.**Avoid critiquing the craft or practitioners of the craft. See above for format for writing/submitting written work.***Read ACT NOW!** - pp 6-10**January 19<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> - Late Registration (Fees are incurred)****Week 2 – Let’s start at the Very Beginning**January 25 – **Auditioning/Cold Reads** (Assignment Due: What is Acting?)**Read ACT NOW!** - pp 32-40January 27 – **The Callback** - “You Like Me, You Really Like Me”**Written Assignment 1 Due:** “What is Acting?”**Discussion Board 1 Opens on BB: Complete by February 10<sup>th</sup>****Week 3 – It’s alive...**February 1 – **Scene Work** - Toward a Stronger Cold Read - Technique**Read ACT NOW!** - pp 41-44• Monologue 1 - **Due February 22**

Find and prepare a one-minute Contemporary Comic Monologue

February 3 – *There are no characters, and the words don’t matter.*• **Spring Census Day Note:** This is the last day to register for classes. **Payments are due by 5:00 pm.****Week 4 – Luxuriating In The Life**February 8 – **Scene Work** - How do you build a relationship? (**Off Book - Graded**)**ACT NOW!** - Read pp 45-46February 10 – **Scene Work** - Where does the life/energy come from?**(Assignment Due On Blackboard: Discussion Board 1)****Week 5 – Living the Life**February 15 – **Scene Work** - Get Ready For The Big Finale**20<sup>th</sup> Class Day Note:** Students who were given a payment deadline extension will be dropped at 5:00 pm if payment arrangements have not been made.February 17 – **The Big Finish** - Final Presentation of Scenes**ACT NOW!** - Read pp 26-28

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February 19 – **Graduation application deadline for degree conferral**

**Week 6 – Don't You Want Me, Baby...**

February 22 – **Auditions** - Share Monologue 1

February 24 – **The Callback** - Monologue 1 - “Just like you did it, only better”

**ACT NOW!** - Read pp 47-52

**“What is Acting?”** (Written Assignment 2) **Due: March 10<sup>th</sup>**  
*In ONE SENTENCE, share your POV regarding acting, to your understanding of the craft. Note: You do not need to write 450 - 600 words. Boil your ideas down to one sentence. See above for format for writing/submitting written work.*

**Week 7 – Making a Scene**

March 1 – **Workshop Monologue 1**

**ACT NOW!** - Read pp 60-65

March 3 – **Workshop Monologue 1**

**Discussion Board 2 Opens on BB: Complete by May 17<sup>th</sup>**

•**Monologue 2 - Due March 22**

Find and prepare a one-minute Contemporary Dramatic Monologue

**Week 8 – All of Me...**

March 8 – **Workshop Monologue 1**

March 10 – **Workshop Monologue 1**

(**Written Assignment 2 Due: “What is Acting?”** In One Sentence)

**Week 9 – Pick Your Friends Carefully**

March 15 – **Workshop Monologue 1**

March 17 – **Workshop Monologue 1**

(**Assignment Due On Blackboard: Discussion Board 2**)

**SPRING BREAK – March 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> - Study Hard!**

March 21 – Mid-Term Grades Due

**Week 10 – Devising Structure – A Road Map**

March 22 – **Auditions** - Share Monologue 2

March 24 – **The Callback** - “Just like you did it, only better...”

**“What is Acting?”** (Written Assignment 3) **Due: April 7<sup>th</sup>**

*In ONE WORD, share your POV regarding acting, to your understanding of the craft. Avoid critiquing the craft or practitioners of the craft. Note: You do not need to write 450 - 600. Boil your ideas down to one word.*

**Week 11 – The Scenic Route**

March 29 – **Workshop Monologue 2**

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March 31 – **Cesar Chavez Holiday** - No Classes (\*Tentative\*)  
**Workshop Monologue 2** if we have class

April 1 – **Spring Drop/Withdrawal Deadline**

Note: Student-initiated drops are permitted after this date, but the student is not guaranteed a grade of W. The faculty member of record will issue a grade of either W or F.

April 2 – **Spring Study Day**

**Week 12 – Practice Makes Perfect**

April 5 – **Workshop Monologue 2**

April 7 – **Workshop Monologue 2**

(**Written Assignment 3 Due: “What is Acting?”** In One Word)

**Week 13 – Telling Stories**

April 12 – **Workshop Monologue 2**

April 14 – **Workshop Monologue 2**

April 16 – **Deadline** to submit candidates’ names for commencement program

**Week 14 – What’s Your Story**

April 19 – **Workshop Monologue 2**

April 21 – **Workshop Monologue 2**

**Discussion Board 3 Opens on BB: Complete by May 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Week 15 – You Are The Story**

**Your Final** for this class will include a final performance of your scene and your choice of one of your two monologues. The next three classes are for you to polish your work.

April 26 – **Prepping for Finals**

April 28 – **Prepping for Finals**

**Week 16 – Any Last Words**

May 3 – **Prepping for Finals**

May 5 – **The Finale Begins**

(**Assignment Due On Blackboard:** Discussion Board 3)

May 6 – Spring - **Last Day of Classes**

May 7 – **Dead Day**

**Week 17 – FINALS - SPECIFIC DATE/TIME TBA**

May 10-14 – **Finals**

May 15-16 – **Spring Commencement**

May 20 – **Grades posted to student records; students notified of grades academic standing**

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