

Acting Fundamentals – Syllabus

THEA 2303 – Spring 2020

Instructor: Rafa Pérez

Email: rperez10@utep.edu

Office: Wise Theater Box Office (from inside theater)

Hours: MW 10:30 – 11:30 or by appointment

Course Description

This class aims to imbue all students with necessary knowledge to approach a script, analyze it and create a fully realized character. Students will learn to identify and apply common techniques and terms used in the industry in order to confidently participate in theatre and rehearsal. By the end of the course students will be able to detail and plan three-dimensional characters, interpret written text and demonstrate application of the techniques learned in class.

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Recognize and describe Stanislavski's method;
- Develop a sense of trust and play as we build ensemble;
- Dissect a script and determine character given circumstances, needs and obstacles;
- Employ rehearsal techniques on their own as taught or discussed in class;
- Collaborate with peers in rehearsing and perform scenes;

Recommended Texts:

- *An Actor Prepares*; Routledge; ISBN: 9780878309832
- *A Natural History of the Senses*; Diane Ackerman; ISBN: 9780679735663
- *On Method Acting*; Edward Dwight Easty; ISBN: 9780804105224
- *The Viewpoints Book*; Anne Bogart & Tina Landau; ISBN: 9781559362412

Course Requirements:

- Complete readings on time, take notes, and *be ready* and *actively participate* in class discussions and activities. (Note: in-class assignments/activities cannot be made up)
- Use of Blackboard for readings, assignments and class announcements.
- Research, memorize, rehearse and develop a contemporary scene to be worked on with a partner and performed at the end of the semester.
- Warm up and be ready to work and play every time you rehearse in class. (and out)
- Keep a journal of notes on class discussion, class rehearsal and any notes you take outside of class.
- Be respectful to all students, their opinions and their work.
- Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse OUTSIDE of class.
- Attend performances of *Monsters We Create* and *Into the Beautiful North* and turn in a 1-page response/critique to each.

Monsters We Create runs Feb. 12th – Feb. 16th.

Into the Beautiful North runs Apr. 24th – May 3rd. All tickets on sale now!

Grading (100pts):

- Attendance and Participation – 20
- *Monsters We Create* Attendance – 5
- *Into the Beautiful North* Attendance – 5
- *Monsters We Create* Critique – 10
- *Into the Beautiful North* Critique – 10
- Journal/Prep Work – 20
- Class exercises/Scene work – 20
- Final “performance” – 10

A	B	C	D	F
100 – 90 Points	89 – 80 Points	79 – 70 Points	69 – 60 Points	59 & below

Classroom Etiquette:

- Cellphone/tablet use is not allowed in class, note-taking must be done on pen and paper. Please shut off all technology upon entering the classroom. (I do not want to see any headphones or earbuds either.)
- Be the ideal audience member and focus on the action on stage whenever anyone is working. Golden rule.
- Respect the work, yourself and your classmates.
- Respect your scene partners’ boundaries and avoid any physical contact unless it has been cleared with your scene partner and myself.
- I encourage you to challenge each other, but never try to push anyone to something outside of their comfort zone.
- Hold off on gathering your belongings until class is dismissed. This can be disruptive to our work.

Feedback:

Please refrain from providing any unsolicited or negative feedback to others’ work. As actors, we are constantly observing humanity and I remind you to observe without any judgment. Instead maybe consider why a person would do or say such a thing. When feedback is to be given, it should be based on what can be *observed* in the scene or rehearsal, e.g.: “You really affected him the way you did this...”, “I really felt it when you...” or “I didn’t get what you were doing when you...”. Always begin feedback with what is *working*.

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. There may be moments, such as in the event of researching something, that I will allow the use of said technology.

Attendance and Participation

Because of the nature of the course, you are required to attend EACH class session on time and READY TO PARTICIPATE. If you know you will be going up for in class rehearsal, I expect you to be fully ready to take the stage and show us what you’ve been working on when your turn comes.

If you know you are going to miss class ahead of time, for any reason, please notify me promptly by email. I will see what I can do about any make-up work. I will require reasoning and documentation for missing class and this will count as an “unexcused” absence unless otherwise specified.

Consistent tardiness and failure to attend class will affect your final grade. You are allowed TWO “unexcused” absences, every absence after that will lower your grade by 10%. 2 late arrivals equal an absence. Accrue 6 absences and you will fail the course. The only excused absences allowed are university events; simply bring me a letter from a university head such as a department chair or the head of athletics. Use your “unexcused” absences wisely.

Should class be cancelled for any reason, I will be sure to let you know the session prior. If for some reason I cancel last minute, you can expect an announcement from me on Blackboard.

Late Work Policy

Late work is unacceptable. Nothing in my class can be “made-up”. If you are going to miss a day any homework or assignments are due, or if you anticipate something preventing you from turning work in on time, please notify me *in advance* and as soon as you are aware. I’m more willing to give you an extension ahead of time than if you ask me after you’ve missed a deadline.

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 contact me as soon as possible to discuss possible accommodations. As I will respect your individual's 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.

Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities Policy

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities 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. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. For more information, visit <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/> or see pages 5-12 of the Student Handbook. You may also contact The Cass office at (915) 747-5148 for help and accommodations.

Scholastic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as ones' own. And, 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. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.