

Acting Fundamentals
THEA 2303 CRN:10932
Monday/Wednesday 10:30-11:50pm
Fall 2023

Professor: Samantha Michelle Nava, M.F.A.

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Office: D273 (behind Box Office Window in Wise Theatre Lobby)

Office Hours: Tuesday – Thursday 12:00 – 1:00 pm (or by appointment)

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“Acting is the ability to behave absolutely truthfully under imaginary circumstances.”
Sanford Meisner

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 obstacles, 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
- Knowledge of collaboration and
- A developed sense of observation, imagination, and concentration.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My teaching philosophy is to allow students to experience personal responsibility in a university setting. It will be the student’s responsibility to actively participate in their job as a college student by actively participating in the class for the semester, checking Blackboard daily, being prepared for class, and completing all assignments. My job is to provide a positive environment through lecture, class discussions, and activities that encourages the desire to learn, guide the students through the course, and make sure that the students feel comfortable coming to me to ask any questions or to talk about the class.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS:

There are no required textbooks for our class, but there will be several required articles and plays to read throughout the semester. All will be available on our class Blackboard page.

- *Respect for Acting* by Uta Hagen
- *Audition* Michael Shurtleff
- Plays to read TBD**

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 two UTEP shows this semester.
- Perform scenes and exercises that demonstrate a thorough application of Learning Goals.

COURSE COMMUNICATION

- **Office Hours:** My office hours will be Tuesdays a- Thursdays from 12:00-1:00pm. (or by appointment)
- **Email:** Email through Blackboard **ONLY.** I will make every attempt to respond in a timely manner to your e-mail within 24-48 hours of receiving it. Do not email at utep.edu because it will get lost in the shuffle, I will miss it and will not be able to respond. Please log into our Blackboard class and use the “email professor” link on the left.
- **Text:** You may also text me at 915-843-8792 in an emergency. Please include your name and which class you are attending.

COURSE POLICIES

- It is your responsibility to fulfill all the course requirements to the best of your abilities. If you are unclear about anything on the syllabus, you should seek clarification.
- If you do not feel well, PLEASE STAY HOME, I will provide accommodation if possible.
- Students are expected to maintain a positive classroom environment, which is conducive to learning. To assure all students have an opportunity to benefit from time spent in class, students are prohibited from using cell phones in class unless otherwise approved by the instructor.
- No earphones, ear buds/air pods are allowed on while in the classroom.
- Late work will not be accepted, no exceptions. If a deadline is missed, the student will receive a zero as a grade for that project or assignment.
- Food and/or Drink snacks are permitted; please eat and drink quietly, avoid noisy food or packaging and YOU MUST clean up after yourself before leaving.
- Cell Phones are prohibited from being used while in class unless otherwise spoken to the professor.
- Students must behave in accordance with all rules put forth by the Handbook of Operating Procedures of the University of Texas at El Paso.
- I do not drop students from class; that is your choice and responsibility.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION POLICY

YOU MUST SIGN IN FOR EVERY CLASS, IT IS PART OF YOUR GRADE. A line will be drawn on the sign-in sheet after class starts. If you arrive after the class has started sign in below the line. If you arrive 15 minutes after class has started, you will get no attendance points for the day but are still welcome to stay for the remainder of the class, so you receive your participation points. Attendance does factor into the grading breakdown; therefore, it will affect your grade. (Max points for attendance and participation = 2 per class meeting)

Attendance Grading Break down Students will receive the following points based on their punctuality:

- 1 point- Arrives on time (before class starts) and ready to work at the start of class.
- ½ point- Arrives up to 15 minutes late
- 0 points – Arrives 15 minutes or later to class.

Absences that will be excused for those students representing the university in officially recognized university activities. The students must provide the instructor with written notice from the sponsoring faculty or staff member prior to the event. Additional excused absences may include religious observance, family emergency, and serious illness, these also need documentation of proof.

You have **3 personal days that may be used for a class absence** and no points will be deducted. I don't need to know why! Need a mental health day, maybe you're not feeling well, or maybe you need a day before you get sick. I get it, but **attendance is very important** in this class, you learn as much from observation and participation as from performing. Any additional unexcused absences will have an impact on the final grade.

You can, at any time, inquire about your absences. There will be a notepad that I pass around in class each day, it is your job to make sure you sign in.

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 and must be accompanied by some kind of proof.

If you have an absence, you are still responsible for missed work. **Absences do not change the due dates of assignments.** Once again, in a class where physical participation is this important, it is very important that you take attendance seriously. Please and thank you. I will, also, be out a few days this semester for UTEP business, you will be reminded the week prior. If I have an emergency, I will do my very best to contact all of you via email as soon as I know I won't make it to class. The 15-minute rule does apply. If I am not present by 10:45 please assume there was an emergency, and you are free to leave.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

If you have or suspect a disability and need accommodation, you should contact The Cass Office at 747-5148 or at cass@utp.edu or go to Room 106 Union East Building.

PARTICIPATION AND PREPERATION FOR CLASS

Active participation is vital to your growth as an artist and to your success in this class. You will be expected to come to class on time and be 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.

UTEP SHOW ATTENDANCE AND OBSERVATIONAL PAPER

You are required to attend a performance of *posdata(or what I wish I said)* the June Sadowski Kruszewski Theatre and *Metamorphoses* 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.

A written critical response that observes the acting (analyzing one or two actors) in *posdata(or what I wish I said)* and *Metamorphoses* is required. Responses should relate to course concepts and should not be a summary of the play. Papers are due via Blackboard. No late work will be accepted unless pre-determined with me.

***posdata (or what I wish I said)* paper due November 11th by 11:59PM**
***Metamorphoses* paper due December 15th by 11:59PM**

Ushering opportunities are available for each show that will allow you to see the shows for free, but those spots are taken very quickly. Use the following link to sign up when they are opened. BEFORE signing up you must be able to commit to the full time you would be needed to receive credit.

Posdata (or what I wish I said) sign-up link

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/16eJ50efcSvtKPWQRCYJSirc8bhp0rIhHP6n85OT1RwQ/edit?usp=sharing>

Metamorphoses sign-up link

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HZ4I5HdTVbrMJ0y9ddGDWwc4UdNGZC2SUXzXtKg7NWk/edit?usp=sharing>

If you are acting in the production, then you are excused from writing a paper as rehearsal and preparing for the role is a lot of work. If performing in the production, please provide proof of casting.

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 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.

LATE WORK

I do not accept late work. No Excuses Allowed. I don't have time to catch up on grading late assignment. However, you are more than welcome to do work early and get ahead on assignments.

EXTRA CREDIT

Extra credit points will be given for attending Damn Yankees, any other UTEP Dinner Theatre production this semester or a production outside of UTEP, which I highly encourage.

Max Extra credit points = 3 (1 per additional production seen)

RESPECT:

- All students are in this class to learn. Should a student disrupt that process, the instructor will take the appropriate steps to ensure that all students interact in a safe space that is conducive to the learning process.
- Remember that I am a human being, too. I have many other responsibilities outside of this class, just as students have several responsibilities outside of this one class. Read the syllabus, stick to class/university policies, utilize common etiquette, and respect, and know that I want you to succeed in this course, but I am not responsible for that; you are.
- Work will be graded promptly.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Non-Verbal Performance:** Each student will perform a non-verbal scene with 3 intentional actions 1 of which breaks the fourth wall (more explanation in class)
2. **Laban Efforts** - We will be learning and using the 8 efforts of motion from Laban. You will be performing some text that incorporates all 8 qualities. You will do this twice with notes in between.

3. **Lip-Sync:** Each student will pick a song to Lip-sync in front of the class. This will be performed twice. The second time, each student will score their song with tactics and intentions learned in class, then perform it as a monologue.
4. **Improvisation:** Students will be put into pairs. Each pair will improv a scene that we are not shown in the production that we read.
5. **Scene Work-** in the same pairs each group will perform a scene from the play we are covering in class
6. **Monologue-** Each student will pick a monologue that can be used as an audition piece. These will be performed twice with notes in between,
7. **Reflections-** After each final performance a reflection on the work will be due via Blackboard. Please make sure these are half page to page at the least unless I ask you to answer a specific question or do a very specific thing. I will read all the reflections. I am looking for growth, that's all. We all start at different places with anything.
8. **Final-** Students will choose a monologue for themselves that may be used for future auditions. The final will be run as an audition call. Be sure to choose something from which you have read the play and highlight the skills you have learned in this class.

GRADING SCALE

This is a point-based class, you can earn up to 203 points, but you only need 190 to get an A

200- 190 = A

189- 174= B

173-154= C

153-100=D

99-0= F

“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, students are 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.

Attendance and Participation = 52 points total (earn 2 points max per class meeting; 26 times this semester)

Reflections= 12 points total (2 point per reflection)

Performances = 90 points total (15 points per performance)

Show Analysis Papers = 20 points (10 per paper)

Final = 26 points (Headshot & Resume = 3 points each)

SHOW DATES

posdata (or what I wish I said)

Location: June Sadowski Kruszewski Studio Theatre, UTEP

October 19-21 @ 7:30PM

October 22 @ 2:00PM

posdata (or what I wish I said) Tour Dates

October 26 @ 7:30PM - Location: Paradox Gallery
October 27 @ 7:30PM - Location: Le Fe Culture & Technology Center
October 28 @ 2:00PM - Location: Andress High School
October 29 @ 2:00PM - Location: Rio Vista Community Center

Metamorphoses

Location: The Wise Family Theatre, UTEP
December 1, 2, 8, 9 @7:30PM
December 3 & 10 @ 2:00PM

Ticket Prices

\$18 Adults
\$15 UTEP Faculty/Staff, Alumni, Seniors, Military, Non-UTEP Students
\$12 UTEP Students

Damn Yankees

October 6, 7, 8, 11*, 12*, 13, 14, 15, 19*, 20, 21, 22, 2023

Evening Dinner performances begin at 6:30pm, Matinee Dinner performances begin at 1:00 PM, Matinee (No Dinner) performances begin at 2:00 PM

Description: *Damn Yankees* the Broadway mega-hit musical and winner of seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical, hits it out of the park! The winning score by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross and a devilish book by George Abbott and Douglass Wallop have made this sporty musical comedy a true American classic. Middle-aged baseball fanatic Joe Boyd trades his soul to the Devil for a chance to lead his favorite team to victory in the pennant race against the New York Yankees. As young baseball sensation, Joe Hardy, he transforms the hapless Washington Senators into a winning team, only to realize the true worth of the life that he's left behind. Joe ultimately outsmarts the Devil, returns to his former self, and shepherds the Senators to the World Series. Light, fast-paced, and devilishly clever, *Damn Yankees* is a homerun hit, featuring an irreverent sense of humor and timeless Broadway songs including the classic hits "Whatever Lola Wants, Lola Gets" and "You Gotta' Have Heart".

MENU

Chicken Cordon Bleu, Scandinavian Vegetable Medley, Mashed Potatoes with Cheddar Cheese, Caesar Salad, Apple Crisp à la Mode

WHERE YOU CAN PURCHASE TICKETS

The UTEP Ticket Center – Main Location 2901 N. Mesa El Paso, Texas 79902 Monday-Friday: 8 A.M.-6 P.M.
Saturday: 8 A.M.-4.PM. Closed on Sundays (915) 747-5234

UTEP Ticket Center – Union East Location Union Building East, Room 111 (1st Floor) Hours of Operation Open only Fall & Spring Semesters Monday - Friday: 9am - 2pm (Hours subject to change)

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.

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As members of the University of Texas at El Paso community, we acknowledge that we are meeting on unceded Indigenous land. We would like to recognize and pay our respects to the Indigenous people with long ties to the immediate region: Lipan Apache, Mescalero Apache, Piro, Manso, Suma, Jumano, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe of the Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe, and Tortugas Pueblo. We also acknowledge the nations whose territories include present day Texas: the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, and the peoples of Chihuahua and northern Mexico from whom most/many of our students descend, such as the Rarámuri, Tepehuan, Wixarika and Nahuatlaca peoples. Finally, we recognize all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories here in Paso del Norte, on Turtle Island. The University of Texas at El Paso honors your history and culture, and we seek greater awareness of the myriad ways in which your legacy can guide us in fruitful partnerships and mutually fulfilling relationships.

Helpful Resources:

Technical Support If you do not know how to use Blackboard or have technical issues with Library access – visit the Technology Support Center located in the Library at Room 300. You can contact the Help Desk via email, helpdesk@utep.edu, by phone 747-5257. Hours are M-F 7a-8p, Sat 9a-10p and Sun 12-4pm.

UTEP Writing Center To get help with writing please check out the writing center – their procedure has changed due to the virus, and you must plan accordingly. <https://www.utep.edu/uwc/> Student Health Center

UTEP Student Health Center is here to meet the health care needs of all students so they can focus on their studies. As a student you have paid a medical service fee that allows you to be seen at the clinic as often as needed. Office visits are low cost as well as medications, supplies and any lab tests needed (747-5624).

UTEP University Counseling Center located at 202 Union West can assist you to decide on a career or work through personal concerns. They provide confidential counseling services, assist with stress management, and offer an after-hours crisis support line (747-5302).

Copyright Statement: some materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of the student currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further distributed.

Scholastic Integrity: Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the Handbook of Operating Procedures: Student Affairs. 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 as one's 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. To learn more, please visit <https://www.utep.edu/hoop/section-2/student-conduct-and-discipline.html> I expect all your work to be original, as I do read all your work. Syllabus Change Policy: Except for changes that affect the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

FALL 2023 SEMESTER CALENDAR

Date	Topic	Reading or Assignment	Reflection/Discussion
WEEK 1			
M 8/28	Introduction to Course	Go over the syllabus. Fill out questionnaire. FOR NEXT CLASS: bring in personal object.	
W 8/30	No Class: Town Hall	Location: Wise Theatre	
WEEK 2			
M 9/4	No Class: Labor Day	OFF	
W 9/6	We are a Company: Get to know each other 😊		
WEEK 3		FOR NEXT CLASS: perform a non-verbal scene w/ 3 activities 1 must break the 4th wall.	
M 9/11	Non- Verbal Communication Performance 1	FOR NEXT CLASS: Read: Uta Hagen, The Object Exercises pg 80-94. Apply principles of what you read into next performance.	
W 9/13	Non- Verbal Performance 2 (7)		
WEEK 4			
M9/18	Non- Verbal Performance 2 (7)		Reflection 1 Due by Sept. 22nd by 11:59 PM
W 9/20	Laban Efforts of Movement	Memorize Text; Light & Strong; sustained	
WEEK 5			
M 9/25	Laban Efforts of Movement	Memorize Text; Light & Strong; sudden	
W 9/27	No Class	Watch: National Theatre Movement Direction: Creating Character	Extra Credit Reflection Due Sept. 29th by 11:59 PM
WEK 6			
M 10/2	Laban Effort Performance 1		
W 10/4	Laban Effort Performance 2		Reflection 2 Due Oct. 6th by 11:59 PM
WEEK 7		FOR NEXT CLASS: Read Shurtleff; Guideposts 1 & 2 pg. 33-67	
M 10/9	Relationships		
W 10/11	What are you fighting for?		

WEEK 8		FOR NEXT CLASS: Read Shurtleff; Guideposts 3 pg. 67-73	
M 10/16	The Moment Before	FOR NEXT CLASS: prepare a lip-sync to be performed in class not to exceed 4 minutes	
W 10/18	Lip-sync performance 1		
WEEK 9		FOR NEXT CLASS: Score your song with efforts, tactics and intentions & prepare to perform it as a monologue.	
M 10/23	Lip-sync monologue 2 (7)	FOR NEXT CLASS: prepare a lip-sync to be performed in class not to exceed 4 minutes	
W 10/25	Lip-sync monologue 2 (7)		Reflection 3 Due Oct. 27 th by 11:59 PM
WEEK 10		FOR NEXT CLASS: read Shurtleff Guidepost 4 & 5 pg. 74-81	
M 10/30	Humor & Discoveries		
W 11/1	Paired Improvisation Performance 1		
WEEK 11			
M 11/6	Paired Improvisation Performance 2		Reflection 4 Due Nov.10 th by 11:59 PM
W 11/8	Read Play** together in class.	Discuss headshot and resume.	
WEEK 12		FOR NEXT CLASS: read Hagen Emotion, Sense Memory, and Five Senses pg. 46-64	
M 11/13	Scene Work Performance 1 (7)		
W 11/15	Scene Work Performance 1 (7)		
WEEK 13			
M 11/20	Scene Work Performance 2 (7)		
W 11/22	Scene Work Performance 2 (7)		Reflection 5 Due Nov.26 th by 11:59 PM (Extra time given due to holiday)
WEEK 14			
M 11/27	Give out casting parts and rehearse show.		
W 11/29	Rehearse show.		
WEEK 15			
M 12/4	Rehearse show.		

W 12/6	Final Run of show	Invited audience.	Reflection 6 Due Dec. 8th by 11:59 PM
FINALS WEEK			
1512/11- 12/15	Audition Call with self-chosen piece that is at least 90 secs or more, but more to exceed 2 minutes. Must turn in headshot and resume. (Will be given back)		

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