SYLLABUS

**Introduction to Acting 101 (62605)**

(Fall Semester, 2014)

Faculty: Tony Abatemarco

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CLASS TIME AND LOCATION:

Mondays and Wednesdays, 12 - 1:50 pm., MCC 109

OFFICE HOURS:

Contact me by phone, email, or after class to set up an appointment.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

The mission of this class is to awaken the imagination, emotion, and intellect of the student actor by making him/her aware of the transforming power and universality of theatre and the skills required to achieve excellence in performance. It is the beginning of the actor’s journey of exploration to uncover the meaning and vision of any play and playwright in order to discover the “who, why, where, when and how” of each character to best serve the vision of the play. It is imperative the student actor understands the craft of acting, which requires a disciplined approach to voice, speech, movement, as well as an intellectual rigor in dissecting text, subtext, and style. Finally, this course will stress both the actor's ability to use "self" (body, mind, and experience) in a believable, honest way, as well as his/her willingness and resilience to transform that "self" beyond its pre-established boundaries.

Methods Used to Fulfill this Mission:

• Theatre exercises and games targeting text and sub-text

• Voice/Speech/Movement exercises that support and enhance text and give dimension to all three techniques

• Visualization exercises

• In-depth examination of 1). Practice plays, 2). One acts, 3). Productions

• Active student analysis and commentary to reading material & play productions

• Active student participation and discussion

• Monologue prep & presentation

REQUIRED TEXTS: None

SUGGESTED READING:

ACTING Under the Circumstances, by Richard Brestoff (USC Bookstore)

ACT ONE, by Moss Hart

THE FERVENT YEARS, by Harold Clurman

Other suggestions will be determined by the spontaneous dictates of specific class exploration.

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Written Assignments:

Double-spaced, typed papers, 2 per half semester - four total, (dates to be announced), analyzing productions (SDA or otherwise) in relation to efficacy in accomplishing

a). theme of play

b). direction

c). acting

Each paper must be NO LESS THAN 250 words.

GRADING POLICY:

*Grades are not dictated* by the instructor’s subjective opinion of a student's innate talent, or the instructor's artistic preference.

*Grades are dictated by*

• In class **active** student analysis and commentary on text

• Constructive participation

• Willingness to experiment and apply the constructive feedback of instructor to one's own work

• Preparation - Meeting all assignment deadlines: reading, writing, acting (***Note: No late work will be accepted without grade reduction applied)***

• Memorization of lines

• Availability to fellow classmates to rehearse scenes

Note: *If a student misses a deadline because of a partner’s unavailability, the available*

*partner will not be penalized. However, a discussion with the instructor with all involved must be arranged before the day of the scheduled scene or everyone will be held equally accountable*

Grading Points:

• Class work on speech/voice/acting exercise …………*……*..10 points

• Acting process work, 1st scenes / monologues………………10 points

• MID-TERM (acted scenes + individual interview) …… …..15 points

• 1st half semester paper /Analysis …….…….………....10 points

• Acting process work, 2nd scenes ………….…..………..15 points

• 2 Written Production Critiques ………………………..10 points

• FINAL (scenes completed, oral exam, final paper) ………...15 points

• Cumulative Active Class Participation …………………….. 15 points

TOTAL ………...100 points

Grading Scale:

The final course grade is determined according to the following scale:

Excellent: A (4) = 100-96; A- (3.7) = 95-90

Good: B+ (3.3) = 89-86; B (3) = 85-84; B- (2.7) = 83-80

Average: C+ (2.3) = 79-76; C (2) = 75-74; C- (1.7) = 73-70

Poor: the D range (.7-1.3) = 60’s; F (0) = 59 and below

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“Excellent” means that clear understanding of the class material is coupled with original and creative insight; “good” means that the class material has been understood clearly; “average” means that the class material has been generally understood, but gaps in understanding remain; “poor” means that there are identifiable gaps in the understanding of class material; “failure” means that gaps in the completion of work are coupled with poor understanding of class material.

When the mathematical GPA falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students whose attendance and participation in class have been excellent or good and toward the negative end of the scale for those with average or poor attendance and participation.

**Further Grading Notes:**

• If your work in class is unsatisfactory, you will be warned before the deadline for

dropping the course with a grade of W.

• I will be happy to discuss your work at any time

ATTENDANCE, \*ABSENCES, TARDINESS:

Attendance/Absence: Because rewards from the class are dependent on the layering of intellectual and emotional discovery resulting from the collective and active exploration of all members of the ensemble, \*no absences are allowed. Active class participation grade is negatively impacted by absences.

Tardiness negatively impacts everyone in the class and therefore cannot be excused. Active class participation grade is negatively impacted by tardiness.

COURSE WEEK BY WEEK BREAKDOWN:

*(The timeline of these assignments is subject to change depending on the dynamics, pace and unpredictability of the creative process of any given class.)*

Week 1:

• monologue presentation & discussion of students’ expectations

• discuss course goals, requirements, deadlines, required texts

• introduction to theatre games and exercise

Week 2:

• warm-up, theatre games/ exercises

• assign practice plays

• begin cold readings

Week 3:

• warm-up, theatre games/exercises, continued scene work

Week 4-6:

• warm up, theatre games/exercises

• continue work on scenes

• Homework: read

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Week 7: MID-TERM

• warm-up, theatre games and exercises

• MID-TERM presentations of 1ST assigned scenes

• Homework: 1st mid-term paper DUE WEDS, 10/8

Week 8:

• individual interview and constructive criticism of mid-term presentation

• warm-up, theatre games and exercises

• One-act scenes assigned

Week 9-14:

• warm-up, theatre games and exercises

• work on 2nd scenes

Week 15:

• warm-up, theatre games and exercises

• last run-through of *scenes*

• discuss expectations and guidelines for Final

Final Day of Class:

Wednesday, December 4, 2013 DUE DATE for the 2nd written critique of production

(No late paper accepted)

**DATES TO NOTE:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Fall Semester 2014 (72 instructional days)** | | |
| Classes Begin | Mon | August 25 |
| Labor Day | Mon | September 1 |
| Thanksgiving | Wed-Sat | November 26-29 |
| Classes End | Fri | December 5 |
| Study Days | Sat-Tue | December 6-9 |
| Winter Recess | Thu-Sun | December 18 |

FINAL EXAMINATION DATE:

TBA - MCC 109

*The Final will be dictated by and depend on the creative dynamics evolved by the class. The specifics, therefore, will be discussed at a later date*

Academic Integrity: (guideline from the SOT)

“Dishonesty in any form harms the individual, other students, and the School of Theatre. Therefore, USC policies on academic integrity will be enforced in this course. Papers suspected of containing plagiarized material (the unacknowledged or inappropriate use of another’s ideas, wording, or images) will be verified for authenticity by the School of Theatre through internet services. I expect you to familiarize yourself with the academic integrity guidelines found in the

current SCampus (www.edu/dept/publications/scampus )

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*Final Notes:*

• *No Food or Drinks are allowed in class while the class is in session. However, water*

*may be consumed at any time, within reason!*

• *Students must place all extraneous belongings, (backpacks, sweaters, jackets,*

*skateboards, laptops, cell phones, etc.) in the designated corner of the classroom at the*

*start of class. Absolutely NO TEXTING or e-mailing while class is in session.*

• *Students must be in proper rehearsal clothes (whatever they may be and understand*

*that they change throughout the semester) at the start of class, promptly at 12 Noon.*

*NO FLIP FLOPS UNLESS THE SCENE OR CLASS TAKES PLACE AT THE*

*BEACH!*

Disability Services: (guideline from the SOT)

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213- 740-0776.

Welcome to Introduction to Acting 101.

It is my pleasure to get to know each of you through our collaborative and creative

exploration.

Tony Abatemarco