ACTING IN TELEVISION COMMERCIALS

**USC THEATRE #484**

**FALL 2014**

**SYLLABUS**

**ACTING IN TELEVISION COMMERCIALS**

**Patrick Pankhurst FALL 2014**

**(626)398-1721 (9 am to 9 pm) #63196R, 2 units**

**Hours by appointment 9 to 11:50 am Wednesday**

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**pankhurs@usc.edu**

COURSE DESCRIPTION,

CONTENT AND METHODOLOGY

THE IS A PERFORMANCE CLASS FOUCSING ON ON-CAMERA WORK AND EXERCISES. DISCUSSIONS WILL COVER TECHNIQUE AND PREPARATION FOR THE AUDITION PROCESS. WE’LL LOOK AT THE KEY ASPECTS OF A COMMERCIAL CAREER INCLUDING; AGENT REPRESENTATION, UNION AFFILIATION, THE CASTING PROCESS, SET ETIQUETTE, COMMERCIAL FINANCIAL FORMULAS AS WELL AS ACTOR INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE DIRECTOR. GUEST SPEAKERS, SEASONED PROFESSIONALS IN A SPECIFIC ASPECT OF COMMERCIAL ACTING OR PRODUCTION, WILL HOPEFULLY BE UTILIZED GIVING STUDENTS A FIRST HAND EXPOSURE TO THE PROCESS. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE COURSE, STUDENTS WILL HAVE THE INFORMATION AND TOOLS AND EXPERIENCE TO EFFECTIVELY BEGIN THE COMMERCIAL AUDITION PROCESS IN THE FIELD.

THE STUDENTS IN THIS COURSE SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST SOME PRIOR EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF GENERAL ACTING THEORY AND TECHNIQUE.

THIS COURSE WILL INCORPORATE SIMULATED AUDITIONS, LECTURE, DISCUSSION, AND VIDEO EXERCISES, GUEST LECTURERS (HOPEFULLY), AND/OR FIELD TRIPS, A PRACTICAL/PERFORMANCE MIDTERM EXAM AND PRACTICAL/PERFORMANCE FINAL EXAM IN ADDITION TO CLASS PARTICIPATION AND DISCUSSION AND ONLINE INTERACTION.

COURSE OVERVIEW

**WEEKLY SIMULATED AUDITIONS:** On camera, analyzed and critiqued.

**MID-TERM EXAM:** Date Pending. Practical. All students will perform appropriate commercial material and be graded on their performance. Note: Students taking Theatre #484 on a pass/fail basis must achieve C or better on this examination to obtain a Pass grade.

**FINAL EXAM:** Date Pending. Practical. All students will select or create and perform appropriate commercial material and be graded on their performance. To be administered during the university final exam schedule.

**GRADES:** Grades based on Attendance, Simulated Auditions, Class participation, online interaction, Mid-term and Final exams.

**ONLINE:** Each week class notes will be posted on Blackboard and students will be expected to read and contribute commentary on that week’s class.

**PARTICIPATION:** Strong emphasis on participation is the major part of this on-camera class. Attendance is required and will be taken.

**ABSENCES:** One unexcused absence will be allowed with no penalty providing this absence is not on a test day. Since this course is crafted around actors working with each other professional courtesy is expected. All additional absences will result in grade reductions.

**SUGGESTED READING:** Auditioning on Camera by Joe Hacker, Acting in Commercials by Joan See, Acting in Television Commercials by Squire Fridell, How to Nail Your Commercial Audition by Joe Bays, The Artist’s Way by Julia Cameron.

**NOTE FROM THE OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS:** Students requesting accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed Please make sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. Office hours for the DSP are Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. The office is located in the student union 301 their phone number is (213) 740-0776.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Dishonesty in any form harms the individual, other students, and the School of Theatre. Therefore, USC policies on academic integrity well be enforced in this course. Papers suspected of containing plagiarized material (the unacknowledged or inappropriate use of anothers ideas, wording, or images) will be verified for authenticity by the School of Theatre through internet services. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the academic integrity guidelines found in the current SCampus (www.use.edu/dept/publications/scampus).

**FINAL EXAMINATION DATE:** TBD. Final performance HOPEFULLY for Professional Guest…. **GENERAL NOTE:** This syllabus could change depending on the class size, experience and accomplishment level of the students.

**Syllabus for Acting in Television Commercials**

**WEDNESDAY 9 am - 11:50 am**

**Class 1:** 8/29. Introduction to the class and Personality Slate/Audition.

**Class 2:** 9/5 Solo Non verbal and one line spots.

**Class 3:** 9/12 More Solo and Non verbal one line spots.

**Class 4:** 9/19. Group and couple spots.

**Class 5:** 9/26. More Group and couple spots.

**Class 6:** 10/3 MOS spots and improvisation exercises

**Class 7:** 10/10 **MID TERM PREP….**  Select and prepare either group or spokes copy for Guest Speaker. Bring in examples of appropriate spots.

**Class 8:** 10/17 **MID-TERM GUEST SPOKESPERSON(tentative).** Performance of selected and prepared commercial spots for Guest Speaker..

**Class 9**: 10/24 MOS spots.

**Class 10:** 10/31 Spokesperson spots

**Class 11:** 11/7. Longer form copy.

**Class 12:** 11/14 Spokesperson copy. What to expect on a set.

**Class 13:** 11/21 Create and perform your own commercial

**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Class 14: 11/28 Selection of material and preparation for final performance.

**Class 15:** 12/5(Date may change) Final performance for Professional Guest

STUDY DAYS DEC 6-9

**FINAL EXAM**: TBD

**ALL OR PART OF THE ABOVE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS A RESULT OF CALENDAR CHANGES, INDIVIDUAL CLASS’ CAPABILITIES, FIELD TRIP OPPORTUNITIES, GUEST SPEAKER AVAILABILITY AND/OR INSTRUCTOR’S OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENTS**

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HOW YOU WILL BE GRADED

**Grade weight scale**

1. Simulated Auditions 50%

2. Midterm Exam & Performance 10%

3. Final Exam & Performance 10%

4. Class Participation (attendance) 10%

5. Effort and Enthusiasm\* 10%

6. Online participation 10%

**Simulated Auditions:** Grades are determined by the following criteria -

1. Improvisation and creativity 25%

2. Delivery of material 25%

3. Ability to take direction 25%

4. Composure and Confidence 25%

**Midterm Exam:** Will be based on a 100% scale; performance and professionalism are most important.

**Final Exam:** Will be based on a 100% scale; Performance and professionalism are most important.

**Supplemental Reading Assignment:** Each student shall choose and agree with the professor on a book to be read. This material is intended to provoke and promote discussions in class and notice will be taken of contributions from these sources.

**Class participation:** Grade will be based on student’s attendance and participation in class discussions, question and answer sessions, active interest in his or her own progression in class as well as working with other students in the audition process.

**Effort and enthusiasm:** Grade will be partially based on the effort put forth by the student as well as enthusiasm exhibited in simulated auditions, class discussions, interaction with guest speakers and simulated auditions. Ours is a collaborative craft and actors have a professional and creative obligation to bring their best to the performance arena.

**GRADE BREAKDOWNS**

A = 96 - 100 points

A- = 91 - 95 points

B+ = 88 - 90 points

B = 85 - 87 points

B- = 81 - 84 points

C+ = 78 - 80 points

C = 75 - 77 points

C- = 71 - 74 points

D+ = 67 - 70 points

D = 64 - 67 points

D- = 61 - 63 points

F = 60 - or below

**PERSONAL AND ARTISTIC GOALS FOR STUDENTS**

Enhance students’ comfort in front of a camera.

Get students to view on camera training as a part of the craft of acting and make them better artists.

Get students to appreciate the value of playing themselves.