

## SYLLABUS

### **Introduction to Acting 101 (62600D) - 4 Units**

(Fall Semester, 2015)

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#### CLASS TIME AND LOCATION:

Mondays and Wednesdays, 8 - 9:50 am., 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. 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. Finally, we will build skills to collaborate fluidly and generously.

#### 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: Practice plays ("ETUDES") & Contemporary American One Acts

#### 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, (see DUE DATES in Course Week-by-Week breakdown), analyzing productions – one professional (off-campus) and one SDA (student production) 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 and 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 .....	<u>15 points</u>
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 two mid-term papers DUE WEDS, 10/7

Week 8:

- individual MID-TERM interviews 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 2, 2015 (DUE DATE 2nd two written critiques of productions)

- No late papers accepted.

### **DATES TO NOTE:**

#### **Fall Semester 2014 (72 instructional days)**

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Classes Begin	Mon	August 24
Labor Day (no class)	Mon	September 7
Thanksgiving	Wed-Sat	November 25-29
Last Class	Weds	December 2
Study Days	Sat-Tue	December 5-8
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*

#### Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

##### Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity:

<http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the Department of Public Safety

<http://capsnet.usc.edu/departments/public-safety/online-forms/contact-us> .

Important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another

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person. The Center for Women and Men: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage: [sarc@usc.edu](mailto:sarc@usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

### Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali> which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

### The Office of Disability Services and Programs

[http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

### 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.usc.edu/dept/publications/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/scampus))

### *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!*

### **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