**MFA I ADVANCED ACTING**

***PERSONALIZATION***

**#520a**

**Fall 2016**

**DAVID WARSHOFSKY**

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**Office Hours**

Available by appointment. Call or email as above. Mentorship is an essential element of the instructional technique in the MFA program; make it a point to make an appointment.

**Course Goals/Learning Objectives**

*“An actor’s tool is himself, but this use of himself is informed by all the things which inform his mind and body – his observations, his struggles, his nightmares, his prison, his patterns – himself as a citizen of his times and his society.* ***Technique is a means to free the artist****.”*

*--Joseph Chaiken*

The goal of this course is to begin the physical understanding of what personalization is and how it applies to the text of a play and eventually transitioning the information into intensive formal scene study focusing on contemporary American playwrights.

**Course Overview**

To begin the practical understanding and application of the craft of acting. What acting is and what it isn’t. How to break down a piece of text (i.e. “table work”) then moving though personalization--making the connection between yourself, your story, and the so-called “character” that you are attempting to portray. We will utilize active text analysis with particular focus on verbs (what you are doing) and objectives (what you want).

In this class we will explore the idea that the individual actor is infinitely more interesting and imaginative than any finite character that he or she might play.

**Final Exam**

TBD

**Required Text**

*Love and Information* by Caryl Churchill

**Suggested Reading**

Any plays from the following playwrights:

Annie Baker

Stephen Adly Guirgis

Note: All plays you read this semester (in Salon or otherwise) have potential for scene study material. Think about this…as you will be making your own choices of what scenes to work on.

**Class Meetings**

M/W – 3:00-5:50pm

DRC Massman

**Grading Policy**

A work of excellent quality

B work of good quality

C work of average quality

D work of below average quality

**Your grade is assessed according to**

Class Work – 50%

Midterm – 25%

Final – 25%

**Course Assignments & Class Schedule**

**WEEK FIRST CLASS SECOND CLASS**

1 **Formal Orientation Read play together**

2 **Table Work**   **Exercises**

3 **Assigned scenes**   **SAFEO**

4 **SAFEO**  **SAFEO**

5 **Show/work scene 1** **Show/work scene 1**

6 **Show/work scene 1** **Show/work scene 1**

7 **Show/work scene 1** **Show/work scene 1**

8 **Show/work scene 1****Show/work scene 1**

9 **Show/work scene 1** **Run-thru of Scene 1**

10 **Show/work scene 2 Show/work scene 2**

11 **Show/work scene 2 Show/work scene 2**

12 **Show/work scene 2 Show/work scene 2**

13 **Show/work scene 2 Show/work scene 2**

14 **Format Culmination** **Rehearse Culmination**

15 **Rehearse Culmination Rehearse Culmination**

**Attendance, Tardiness, Absences**

We expect the highest level of commitment from MFA actors. Lateness is not tolerated without prior notice. Unexcused absences are not permitted. Communication with the instructor is essential in case of emergency or illness. Violation of these requirements will result in disciplinary measures.

**School of Dramatic Arts Private Teaching Policy**

A faculty member holding a full-time appointment may not accept for private instruction where a fee is charged any student who is currently enrolled in any USC School of Theatre course. This policy is established for your own protection as well as for that of the student, since the appearance of a conflict of interest is immediately established if the student studies privately with you for a fee at the same time that you will be called upon to give that student a grade in a course taught within the School or cast that student in a School production. It is in the best interests of all concerned to not even suggest the possibility of a conflict of interest. This policy is in keeping with the University’s Code of Ethics, established March 2004, which states that we “recognize that the fundamental relationships upon which our university is based are those between individual students and individual, professors; thus, such relationships are especially sacred and deserve special care that they not be… exploited for… personal gain.”

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

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 (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or [http://scampus.usc.edu](http://scampus.usc.edu/)) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

**Statements 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. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct,<http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

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/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety 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 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 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/academicsupport/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/*](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.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.