**CREATIVE PRODUCTION**

**#575**

**Fall 2016**

**DAVID WARSHOFSKY**

DRC (2nd floor)

213-740-4710

323-646-9525

warshofs@usc.edu

**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**

* To exercise the craft of creating a cohesive, authentic, and impactful character - in three entirely separate plays - using vocal, physical, emotional, analytical, and interpretative tools.
* To contribute to the strength of the class ensemble, through dedication and application of core principles.

**Course Description**

One of the goals of the MFA in Acting program is to subject each student to the demands of becoming a member of an ensemble. After two years of working as a cohort in classes, workshops and various performance situations, the third-year students spend the Fall and Spring semesters creating and performing a three-play repertoire. The performances begin in February 2017, and run through early March in the Scene Dock Theatre. This year’s repertoire consists of UNCLE VANYA by Anton Chekhov, translated by Sharon Marie Carnicke, directed by Abigail Deser; ANGELS IN AMERICA, PART ONE: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES, by Tony Kushner, directed by John Rubinstein; and ANTIGONE X by Paula Cizmar, based on the play by Sophocles, directed by Anita Dashiell-Sparks.

Resident theatre companies in the USA have dwindled down to a precious few. The vast majority of acting students coming out of universities, conservatories and schools are immediately thrown into a “free-lance” situation where the work comes sporadically with great spaces in between. The formative practical experience that professional repertory companies used to provide has now been taken on by MFA actor-training programs like ours. The 3-play rep provides the students with an invaluable opportunity to practice their hard-earned craft, an experience they are unlikely to receive in the professional world.

Not only does the student gain an opportunity to play different characters in a multi-rep situation, they get to play characters that the world of commercial theatre and film would never hire them for. Nothing stretches an actor more than to struggle with a character that’s 180 degrees removed from his or her “type.” And it’s in this kind of “miscasting” that some of the most revelatory performances are created.

What the actor learns from working as a member of the ensemble is every bit as important as what he or she learns in terms of character-building technique. A true ensemble player must not only listen and attend to the other actors, but has the responsibility to support the work of the other actors. It’s the melding of individual talents into a coherent and responsive ensemble that creates the potential for extraordinary theatre.

**Assignments**

Each actor is given a role in each play – ideally, a leading role, a supporting role, and a small role – so that no actor has a significantly larger share than the others. Each actor must attend required rehearsals which are held afternoons and/or evenings Monday through Friday and Saturday mornings (approximately 20 to 25 hours a week). Because we are scheduling rehearsals so that they don’t interfere with classes, the rehearsal times are determined each semester. Each actor is responsible for learning the text for each role, doing the appropriate research, and coming to rehearsal on time and prepared to work.

**Schedule**

Brush-up rehearsals for the three plays begin on the first day of the Spring semester and continue until the performances begin in early February, at which point the plays go into a performing rotation in the Scene Dock Theatre through to early March. Each play has 8 performances before a paying audience. The 3 directors work out the rehearsal schedule and the rotation of plays for performance.

**Final Exam**

is the performance of the three plays.

**Grading & Evaluation**

A is excellence; B is good to adequate; C is failure.

**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.

**Texts**

UNCLE VANYA by Anton Chekhov, translated by Sharon Marie Carnicke

ANGELS IN AMERICA, PART ONE: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES, by Tony Kushner

ANTIGONE X by Paula Cizmar

**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.