

**Instructor: John DeMita**  
Associate Professor of Theater Practice in Acting  
Head of Visual and Performing Arts Studies  
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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 AM – 12 PM and  
by appointment (ALL OFFICE APPOINTMENTS MUST BE  
SCHEDULED).  
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### Course Description and Overview

Application and consolidation of the skills, knowledge and techniques acquired in the study of fundamentals of acting encountered in THTR 101.

### Learning Objectives

Theatre 152 will familiarize students with all pertinent aspects of acting: practical, analytical, and philosophical. By the end of this course students should understand and be able to demonstrate facility with the following:

- Examine and analyze a scene from a contemporary American play.
- Analyze a character and his/her given circumstances.
- Create a fully developed character.
- Construct a strong physical and vocal presentation.
- Define and execute strong intentions on stage.
- Perform with emotional authenticity.
- Practice and test concentration on stage.
- Create and utilize a strong, detailed environment for the character.
- Employ a variety of tactics, while executing with intention.

### Class Meetings

- This course entails in-class acting exercises; rehearsals of assigned scenes in and outside of class; in-class performances; and critical assessment and discussion of required readings.
- Students are required to participate fully in all classes; to work collaboratively with their peers; and to show disciplined commitment to acting.
- Students are required to sign up for in-class exercises on a shared Google Document, and are responsible for performance of all exercises on the assigned time and day.
- If you have a religious conflict with any class or class assignment, email Professor DeMita within the first two weeks of the semester.
- If you are unable to attend a class or will be late for any reason, email Professor DeMita **PRIOR TO CLASS**. Failure to do so will count as an unexcused absence.

### Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*, by Melissa Bruder, Lee Michael Cohn, Madeleine Olnek, Nathaniel Pollack, Robert Previto, and Scott Zigler
- *Actions, the Actor's Thesaurus*, by Marina Caldarone and Maggie Lloyd-Williams
- *Respect for Acting*, by Uta Hagen.
- *Supplemental Reading, Downloadable on Blackboard.*

- The professor will assign scenes and exercises. However, if there is material you wish to be considered for in-class work, please bring it to the professor's attention. Once you are assigned a scene or monologue, you will need to acquire the full text of the play, online, in the library, or at a bookstore, and bring it to class. In addition, exercises and written assignments will be available for download on the Blackboard website for the course.

### Journal Requirement

- On an assigned date each month, students must upload to Blackboard a journal entry responding to a specific prompt. This is not a journal about personal or private matters, but concerning the work in class.

### Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

**Performances, exercises and written assignments will be assessed using the following guidelines:**

- Written assignments (character analysis, character biographies, etc.) must be turned in on or before the scheduled due date. **Late work will not be accepted.**
- Written assignments **MUST BE TURNED IN USING TURNITIN** unless a special arrangement has been made between the student and the professor.
- Credit will be given for any in-class exercise performed on or before the scheduled deadline, and in a manner that reflects thoroughness of preparation. **This includes the utilization of props, costumes, and confident memorization of text.**
- If a student is concerned about their grade or progress in class, they should make an appointment to discuss this with the professor. Midterm grades will reflect only a "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" score.

### Assessment of "Participation"

**15% of the final grade is earned through class participation. This will be defined as:**

- Show up on time – students who are more than 5 minutes late are considered tardy. **Three unexcused tardy arrivals will result in a deduction of 5 points from the final grade, unless special arrangements have been made with the professor.**
- Printed copies of all scenes, monologues and play scripts must be brought to every class meeting. No electronic copies (laptops, tablets, phones) may be used in class. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- Appropriate rehearsal clothing and props for **ALL EXERCISES AND IN CLASS REHEARSALS.**
- Openness to new methods of working and eagerness to attempt them.
- In class active student analysis and commentary on text.
- Constructive feedback on classmates' acting presentations.
- Energized support of all classmates' work.
- Willingness to experiment and apply the constructive feedback of professor and fellow students on ones own work.
- Meeting all assignment deadlines.
- **Memorization** of assigned material including in-class rehearsals of scenes. Scenes must be fully memorized by the second in-class rehearsal.
- Availability to fellow classmates to rehearse outside class.

**Note:** *If a student misses a deadline because of a partner's unavailability, the available partner will not be penalized. If problems arise, a discussion with the professor with all involved must be arranged before the day of the scheduled scene or everyone will be held equally accountable. **BEFORE ANY SCENE MAY BE REHEARSED ON ITS FEET IN CLASS, THERE MUST BE A MINIMUM OF 4 HOURS OF OUTSIDE REHEARSAL.***

**FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS, POINTS WILL BE DETERMINED AS FOLLOWS:**

**100% - Excellent:** clear understanding of the class material is coupled with original and creative insight and confident preparation

**75% - Good:** class material has been understood clearly and performed competently

**50% - Average:** class material has been generally understood, but gaps in understanding and performance remain

**25% - Poor:** there are identifiable gaps in the understanding of class material, as well as deficiencies in basic requirements such as memorization, blocking, etc.

**0% - Unacceptable:** work was not completed on time, with no communication with professor or student partners

### Grading Breakdown

Feedback, assessment, and grading of the course will be based on the successful completion of the following assignments by their assigned due dates:

True / Lie Personal Object .....	5 Points (5% of grade)
Uta Hagen Exercise (Written) .....	5 Points (5% of grade)
Uta Hagen Exercise (Performed) .....	5 Points (5% of grade)
Worksheet 1 (Objective, Actions, Obstacles) ...	10 Points (10% of grade)
Worksheet 2 (Add Environment, Biography)....	10 Points (10% of grade)
Scene 1 Performance.....	15 Points (15% of grade)
Scene 2 Performance.....	15 Points (15% of grade)
Journal Entries (4 X 5 Points Each).....	20 Points (20% of Grade)
Cumulative Class Participation .....	15 Points (15% of grade)

Total ..... 100 Points

### GRADING SCALE

- 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+ = 68-70 points
- D = 65-67 points
- D- = 61-64 points
- F = 60 or below

The final course grade is articulated as a Letter Grade. This grade is translated into a G.P.A using the following scale:

**A = 4; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3; B- = 2.7; C+ = 2.3; C = 2; C- = 1.7; D = 1; F = 0.**

When the average 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 has been good, but will be weighted toward the negative end of the scale for those with poor attendance and participation.

### CALENDAR (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Week 1	<p>Introductions. Discuss semester goals.            Designation of Warm-Up Groups and expectations.  <b>READ: "Start with the Facts" from Downloaded Folder.</b>  <b>READ: Chapters 1-3 from "Respect for Acting."</b>  <b>ASSIGN: Personal Object (True / Lie) Exercise.</b></p>
Weeks 2, 3 NO CLASS –	<p>Positive/Negative/Neutral analysis. Objectives, Actions, Obstacles.            Perform Personal Object (True / Lie) Exercise.</p>

MONDAY 1/15	Discuss Reading. <b>READ: "Tactics" and "The Super Objective" from Downloaded Folder.</b> <b>READ: Pages 3-18 from "A Practical Handbook for the Actor"</b> <b>ASSIGN: Uta Hagen Exercise / Written and Performed.</b>
Weeks 4, 5	Perform Uta Hagen Exercise (Scheduled). Discuss Reading. <b>READ: Pages 19-39 from "A Practical Handbook for the Actor"</b> <b>READ: "Naming the Beats" and "Actor Prep for Rehearsal" from Downloaded Folder.</b> <b>DUE 1/19: Uta Hagen Exercise, Written Component.</b> <b>DUE 2/1: Journal #1.</b> <b>ASSIGN: Scene 1, Worksheet 1.</b>
Weeks 5 – 8 NO CLASS – MONDAY 2/19	In-Class group work on Scene 1 (Scheduled). Only one guaranteed observed rehearsal per a scene, determined by student preparation and class progression. <b>DUE 2/12: Worksheet 1.</b> <b>DUE 3/1: Journal #2.</b>
Week 9	Perform Scene 1. Student Conferences. <b>ASSIGN: Scene 2, Worksheet 2.</b>
Week 10	<b>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</b>
Week 11	Environment, Personalization. <b>READ: Chapters 4-7 from "Respect for Acting."</b> <b>READ: Pages 69-86 from "A Practical Handbook for the Actor"</b> <b>ASSIGN: Personal Quotes.</b>
Weeks 12 - 15	Discuss Personal Quotes. Environment Exercises. In-Class group work on Scene 2 (Scheduled). Only one guaranteed observed rehearsal per a scene, determined by student preparation and class progression. <b>DUE: 4/1: Journal #3</b> <b>DUE: 4/16: Worksheet 2.</b>
Week 16	Perform Scene 2. Student Conferences. <b>DUE 4/27: Journal #4</b>
May 7 @ 11 AM	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>

## 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. 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](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/alj>, 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](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/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.