

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 152: Introduction to Scene Study – 62677
TERM: SPRING 2018
DAY/TIME: Monday/Wednesday, 12 – 1:50pm
LOCATION: MCC 112
INSTRUCTOR: Christopher Shaw
OFFICE: JEF Building 2nd floor #211
OFFICE HOURS: By appointment
CONTACT: shawchri@usc.edu
(213) 821-5558 (o)
(323) 632-4894 (c - Text OK)

Course Description and Overview

In this practice-based course, students will apply and practice their fundamental skills in acting using various exercises and scenes from contemporary plays. By learning and rehearsing through specific techniques and methodology, the class will function as an artistic ensemble. Rehearsals will emphasize active application of the ‘actor’s homework’, further exploring the idea of action, objective, and that “character” comes out of what you “do”. An analysis of the text from the actor’s point of view (What do I want? What do I want the other person to do? Etc.) coupled with a focus of attention on the other actor(s) is a key emphasis of the course. Over the course of the term, students will read, analyze, rehearse, and perform a variety of contemporary scenarios and scenes.

Learning Objectives

- Consolidating the fundamentals of acting
- Working collaboratively as part of an ensemble of actors.
- Analyzing plays as texts designed for performance.
- Exercising the interdependence of intellectual and artistic practice through performance workshops and scenes.
- Exploring an effective and productive way of rehearsing and actively applying the “actor’s homework”
- Creating a specific actor prompt book and journal that contains specific actor’s homework per scene and following specific guidelines for the construction and use of the prompt book.

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.
- Punctuality of arrival and attendance is mandatory. There are no excused absences for this class, since in-class work depends upon the full class ensemble.
- If you are unable to attend a class or will be late for any reason, email the professor immediately.
- Required reading is due on the listed date; always bring the assigned readings to class with you.
- Turn off all cell phones during class sessions.

Preparation and rehearsal outside of class will be required.

Other Reading:

Assigned and provided as PDF

ATTENDANCE:

Absences/Tardiness:

Learning in class depends on the layering of intellectual and emotional discovery resulting from the consistent active exploration of **100%** of the Ensemble **No absences or tardies are allowed.**

Cumulative active class participation points will be lost. *Attendance is weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines*

GRADING POLICY:

Grades are not dictated by the success of acting presentations or the instructor's subjective opinion of talent and artistic preference.

Grades are dictated by

- Participation, preparation, attendance
- Constructive feedback of classmates' acting presentations
- Willingness to experiment and apply the constructive feedback of instructor and students on one's own scenes, presentations, and exercises
- Meeting all assignment deadlines: reading, writing, acting
- Maintaining a clean organized readable "prompt book/journal" throughout the course handed in at end of course for grading, adhering specifically to guidelines provided
- Application and understanding of methods being explored in class and in reading, to scene work and exercises
- Scene and acting exercise preparation and presentation and memorization of lines
- Availability to fellow classmates to rehearse scenes

Note: *If a deadline is missed because of a classmate/ project partner's unavailability, the available partner/s 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 2 HOURS OF OUTSIDE REHEARSAL. LINES MUST BE ACCURATELY MEMORIZED BY SECOND IN CLASS REHEARSAL.*

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

- *Students are required to be on time for all scheduled sessions unless they are genuinely too ill to attend or affected by unavoidable personal or external circumstances. If the student has more than 2 absences or late arrivals during the course they will not be able to fulfill their ability to fully participate in class. Additionally, students must keep the teacher informed of any absence or late arrival IN ADVANCE. Failure to do so also constitutes a lack of participation and points will be deducted.*
- *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.*
- *Availability to fellow classmates to rehearse outside class.*

. **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:

Grading Point Breakdown:

Hagen Studio Exercises (two exercises 10 points each.....	20 points
“Zone” Rehearsal Method Scene Presentation	10 points
Work on prompt book / actor’s homework / journal.....	15 points
Presentation Scene 1	20 points
Presentation Scene 2	20 points
Cumulative Active Class Participation, Contribution	15 points
TOTAL	100 points

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

When the 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.

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.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (THIS WILL CHANGE IT IS A ROUGH PLAN!!) :

(The timeline is subject to change depending on the dynamics, pace and unpredictability of the creative process of any given class – the schedule will change and you will be informed accordingly “We have much to do so we are going to go very slowly”.)

Week 1: 1/8 – 1/12

Warm - up, acting exercises, “creating the ensemble”, open gesture, crossing threshold

Discuss student expectations, course goals, requirements, deadlines, required texts, reading

- **Homework for Before Wednesday :** Reading “*A Challenge for the Actor*” Uta Hagen, **INCLUDING** Prologue pg. xii through “Part One: The Actor ” pg. 3 – 50
- **Homework:** Reading #1 “*A Challenge for the Actor*” Uta Hagen, “Part Two: The Human Techniques ” and the initial section of “The Exercises” **Pages 53 - 151**
- Present monologues
- **Weekend Assignment:** Prepare Hagen “ Destination Exercise” for presentation (for this please review Hagen pages 131 – 151). Enter 6 steps (Hagen) into Journal **MUST REHEARSE IT 10 TIMES AND TIME IT AND REFINE IT – SHOULD BE NO MORE THAN 3 MINUTES**

Week 2: 1/15 (1/15 no class: Martin Luther King Day) – 1/19

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises & in class discussion of reading
- Present “Destination Exercise” in class (order of students presenting will be provided)
- **Weekend Assignment:** Prepare “Three Entrances” Exercise, Read PDF “Rehearsing in the Zone”

Week 3: 1/22 – 1/26

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises & in class discussion of reading
- Complete “Destination” exercise, Present “Three Entrances” studio exercise
- Active Analysis
- **Homework** TBD

Week 4: 1/29 – 2/2

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises

- Explore “Rehearsing in the Zone”, in class workshop
- Present Open Scenes using “Rehearsing in the Zone” rehearsal method.
- Assign first scenes
- **Homework** : Read play for scene you are assigned, begin preliminary Prompt Book work

Week 5: 2/5 – 2/9

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- First pass per team Scene #1 in chairs.
- In class rehearsals/workshops
- **Homework**: Rehearse scenes, Read all full plays from which scenes are being used, work on prompt book per guidelines provided

Week 6 : 2/12 – 2/16

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In class rehearsals/workshops
- **Homework**: Rehearse scenes, Read all full plays from which scenes are being used, work on prompt book per guidelines provided

Week 7 : 2/19 (no class, President’s Day) - 2/23

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In class rehearsals/workshops
- **Homework**: Rehearse scenes, Read all full plays from which scenes are being used , work on prompt book per guidelines provided

Week 8 - 9 : 2/26 - 3/9

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- **MIDTERM** Presentation of Scene # 1
- Assign Scene #2
- **Homework**: Rehearse scenes, Read all full plays from which scenes are being used ,work on prompt book per guidelines provided

Week 10 : 3/12- 3/18 SPRING BREAK!

Week 11-16: 3/19 – 4/25

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- First Pass in chairs Scene #2
- **Homework**: Rehearse scenes, Read all full plays from which scenes are being used ,work on prompt book per guidelines provided
- Various assignments TBD

****Discuss expectations and guidelines for Final**

REQUIRED TEXTS:

A Challenge for the Actor, Uta Hagen, (in USC Bookstore and Amazon)

The Plays that your scenes are from TBD

**FINAL DAY OF CLASS:
Wednesday April 25th**

FINAL EXAM:

Friday, May 4th, 11am-1pm , 2018

The Final is dictated by the creative process of the class so specifics will be discussed later in the semester.

Additional Policies

- *Except for water, no food or drinks are allowed in class at any time.*
- *Please use restroom before class and during break, do not interrupt the flow of class with leaving studio unless for an emergency at which point you must inform instructor by raising hand and entire class will take the one 2 minute break at that time*
- *There is absolutely no technology allowed in the classroom. No cellphones, no computers. No texting , no social media – TURN THEM OFF AND PUT THEM AWAY Anyone caught using cellphone in class will be held responsible for destroying the working atmosphere in the classroom and graded accordingly*
- *All students must help with the set up and strike of every class*
- *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*
- *Students must be in proper rehearsal clothes (whatever they may be and understand that they change throughout the semester) at the start of class. NO FLIP FLOPS UNLESS THE SCENE OR CLASS TAKES PLACE AT THE BEACH!*

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 or <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.

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, the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options/ 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>.

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/> 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.