

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 355 Acting in Sitcom
Term— Spring 2018

Tuesday/Thursday 12:00PM-1:50PM

Location: PED 2058

Instructor: Christine Estabrook

Office: TBD

Office Hours: by appointment

Tues Thurs 2:00-3:30 PED 205

Contact Info: email: mestabro@usc.edu,

cell 818-681-6993

Course Description

1. The combination of the class discussion and execution of assigned exercises and scenes will coalesce and enhance the student's recognition of style, and representation of characters in a sitcom.
2. The student actors will be guided and contribute as a ensemble in bringing the writer's vision to fruition. The art of acting relies on the ensemble. Therefore, an actor's self-discipline, affects the success of the class as a whole.

Learning Objectives

1. The student will learn how to bring a text to life through thoroughly investigating the text and targeting the style, giving the student a working vocabulary to be used in approaching sitcom with a cooperative spirit.
2. The student will learn the importance of the actor's responsibility to the the text, and his fellow actors in the class.
3. By using the techniques developed from all Class Work, Exercises, Interpretation of Text, Imagination, Observation, Character Improv, and Action, the students will mount the scenes from each sitcom. The casting is designated by the teacher.
4. Each actor will participate with a total (100%) commitment in contributing to class discussion, class exercises, and constructive feedback concerning the performance of scenes.
5. The scenes will be rehearsed by the students "out of class" as well as "in class".

Recommended Preparation: A practical understanding of all that is described in the course overview plus the development of professional work habits

Prerequisite(s): THTR 101, THTR 3, THTR 252a, and THTR 252b

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

All material will be handed out in class and scripts must be returned.

Supplementary materials

internet information sources, please avoid wikipedia

Description and Assessment of Assignments

*Every sitcom must be read by EVERY student prior to class breakdown.

*There will be no late assignments accepted. Assignments are accepted on the due date.

*Written assignments must be in hard copy and handed to the teacher by the student whose assignment it is on the due date. no assignments sent via internet.

Grades are determined by:

1. Active participation in the classroom regarding the breakdown and analysis of each text.
2. A 100% commitment to willingly participate and cooperate with fellow students involving exercises, discussions of all class material, constructive feedback on scene-work, and incorporation of acting ideas and feedback concerning the improvisations, and plays.
3. A commitment to rehearsing and availability to scene PARTNER as a “work in progress” both inside and outside of the class.
4. The MEMORIZATION of scene assignments as they are a necessity for the in-class scene and monologue work.
5. Written Assignment which will be a one page essay question covering application of the class breakdown regarding a play discussed in class.
6. Grades are never determined by the teacher’s subjective idea of talent.

Grading Points Breakdown:

- Theatre exercise and games..... 5 points
 - Monologue (personal) Improv.... 5 points
 - One-word Scene Exercise..... 10 points
 - Midterm- sitcom monologue. Performed in class. Specifics to be determined by teacher.....15 points
 - “Simple Scene” 10 points
 - “In class”, Acting rehearsal work on assigned scenes from sitcoms..... 25 points
 - Cumulative Active Class Participation 15 points
 - FINAL: scene presentations of assigned scenes from sitcom 15 points
- TOTAL.... 100**

Grading Scale:

Excellent: A (4) = 100-96; A- (3.7) = 95-90 (clear understanding of class material coupled with original and creative insight)

Good: B+ (3.3) = 89-86; B (3) = 85-84; B- (2.7) = 83-80 (class material has been understood clearly)

Average: C+ (2.3) = 79-76; C (2) = 75-74; C- (1.7) = 73-70 (class material has been generally understood, but gaps in understanding remain)

Poor: D (.7-1.3) = 60's (there are identifiable gaps in the understanding of class material)

Fail: F (0) = 59 and below (gaps in completion of work and poor understanding of class material.)

Further Grading Notes:

- If the GPA falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students with excellent/good attendance & class participation and toward the negative end of the scale for those with average/poor attendance & participation.
- 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.

Additional Policies

Attendance is of primary importance in this class. The intellectual and emotional response to a playwrights voice is only understood in an ensemble atmosphere made-up of cooperation and a focus of energy by the entire class regarding the material assigned in the classroom and for outside rehearsal. Therefore, attendance is of the utmost importance. Points will be subtracted from the grade for tardiness and absence. In accordance with the university policy it will not be more than 15% of the grade.

- Except for water, no food or drinks are allowed in class at any time.
- 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 clothing appropriate to the character at the start of class, promptly at 8 AM. NO FLIP FLOPS! Open toed sandals may be appropriate. (consult the teacher).

COURSE WEEK BY WEEK BREAKDOWN:

(The timeline is subject to change depending on the dynamics, pace and unpredictability of the creative process of any given class)

Week 1 (1/9/18, 1/11/18) reading and explanation of syllabus.

improvs and theatre games. (All improvs and theatre games may be used as warmup for the semester.)

explanation of personal monologue assignment

Homework: monologue due week 2

Week 2 (1/16/18, 1/18/18) presentation of personal monologue assignment with constructive class feedback.

Week 3(1/23/18, 1/25/18) presentation of personal monologue assignment with constructive class feedback

Homework: assign partners, one word scene “in class” game

Week 4(1/30/18, 2/1/18) one word scene “in class” game.

Week 5(2/6/18, 2/8/18) breakdown and how it varies from play to sitcom.

Homework: assign “sitcom” monologues, in class presentation and constructive class feedback monologues due Week 6, and Week 7

Week 6 (2/13/18, 2/15/18) present “sitcom” monologue assignment with constructive class feedback

Homework: rehearse monologues outside of class

Week 7(2/20/18, 2/22/18) presentation of sitcom monologues with constructive class feedback

Homework: ASSIGN and rehearse sitcom scenes outside of class. in class presentation/rehearsal and constructive class feedback

Week 8(2/27/18, 3/1/18) presentation of sitcom scenes with constructive class feedback.

Homework: rehearse scenes outside of class

Week 9(3/6/18 3/8/18) presentation of sitcom scenes with constructive class feedback.

Homework: rehearse scenes outside of class

SPRING BREAK (3/11/18-3/18/18)

Week 10(3/20/18,3/22/18) presentation of sitcom scenes with constructive class feedback

Homework: rehearse scenes outside of class

Week 11 (3/27/18 3/29/18) presentation of sitcom scenes with constructive class feedback.

Homework: rehearse scenes outside of class. Explanation of “simple scene”.

Week 12 (4/3/18,4/5/18) “simple scene” presentation

Homework: assign scenes from sitcoms

Week 13 (4/10/18,4/12/18) presentation of sitcom scenes.

Homework: rehearse scenes outside of class

Week 14 (4/17/18, 4/19/18) presentation of sitcom scenes

Homework: rehearse scenes outside of class.

Week 15 (4/24/18, 4/26/18) presentation of sitcom scenes

Homework: rehearse scenes outside of class

Final Exam: May 9 2:00-4:00 PM

IMPORTANT DATES Spring 2018

Jan 15 Martin Luther King Day, university Holiday

Jan 26 Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Feb 19 President’s Day, university holiday

Mar 11-18 Spring recess

April 27 Spring Semester classes end

April 28-May 1 Study Days

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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/student/scampus/part-b>. 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, intimate partner violence, stalking, and harassment are prohibited by the university. You are encouraged to report all incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity*!

Title IX Office <http://equity.usc.edu> and/or to the Department of Public Safety <http://dps.usc.edu>. This is important for the health and safety of the whole USC community. Faculty and staff must report any information regarding an incident to the Title IX Coordinator who will provide outreach and information to the affected party. The sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> fully describes reporting options. Relationship and Sexual Violence Services <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp> provides 24/7 confidential support.

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://ali.usc.edu>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* <http://dsp.usc.edu> 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.