**USC**School of Dramatic Arts

**THTR 597 - Theatre Practicum**

**Spring 2018**

**Location: Bing Theatre**

**Instructor: Natsuko Ohama**

**Office: JEF**

**Office Hours: By appointment**

**Email: nohama@usc.edu**

**Phone: 213.740.3614**

**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 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, second year MFA students have spent the Fall semester rehearsing a two-play repertoire. Now, in the Spring, they must bring their work to a culmination and perform Macbeth for the public. Performances begin in February 2018, in the Bing Theatre.

The initial impetus of the training and education in the MFA program has i) emphasized a personal connection between the actor and the material (text, choreography, sound, movement, etc) to be interpreted, and ii) asked the students to utilize these practices to satisfy the demands of two existing realistic plays from the 20th Century. Now the bar is raised again. Dealing with fully produced Shakespeare production, characters, and language requires a further application of the core elements of the training - voice, body, imagination - in an experience that will tax the skill level of the student to a greater degree than ever.

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.

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.

We will work together to create a Pinter Project as well as workshopping *The Syringa Tree*, using elements of speech, dialect and text work.

**Learning Objectives**

* To challenge the student actor with the demands of performing in a fully produced classical play in a large venue (500 seats).
* To exercise the craft of creating a cohesive, authentic, and impactful character – with work/performance of Macbeth in the Bing Theatre- using vocal, physical, emotional, analytical, and interpretative tools.
* To contribute to the strength of the class ensemble, through dedication and application of core principles, creating a Pinter project.

**Required Reading**

*Macbeth* - William Shakespeare (Arden version)

*The Complete Works of Harold Pinter*

*The Syringa Tree* by Pamela Gien

**Description and Assessment of Assignments**

Each actor is given a role in each play - 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.

**Attendance**

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.

**Schedule**

Evening rehearsal as well as Saturday rehearsal. Not everyone will be called for every rehearsal, the schedule will proceed in accordance with the rehearsal process and will be relayed by our stage manager.

**Final Exam**

The performance of *Macbeth* in the Bing Theatre

Pinter and *Syringa Tree* work

Final exam date: Wednesday, May 2, 2-4pm.

**Grading & Evaluation**

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

**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 Service*s* 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.

**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.