

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 101- 62606 R Introduction to Acting
TERM: Fall 2018
DAY/TIME: Monday/Wednesday, 12:30 – 2:20pm
LOCATION: DRC 120
INSTRUCTOR: Christopher Shaw
OFFICE: JEF Building 2nd floor #211
OFFICE HOURS: By appointment
CONTACT: shawchri@usc.edu
(323) 632-4894 (c) – (Text OK)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW

The mission of this class is to awaken the imagination, emotion, intellect and creative spirit of the student as they apply to the dramatic arts, and more specifically to the demands, rigor and discipline required of the actor. It will serve as the beginning of the actor's journey in developing specific techniques to uncover the meaning and vision of the playwright, to discover the "who, why, where, when and how" of the characters in a play, and begin to apply a specific and disciplined approach to the required work of the actor. The class will also engage in the process of disciplined rehearsal techniques, the specifics of the actor's personal preparation "homework", and how to actively apply it in rehearsal and performance. The class will emphasize the necessity of learning the craft of acting, which requires a dedicated commitment to the training of concentration, imagination, voice, speech, and movement, as well as an intellectual rigor in dissecting text and uncovering subtext. Students will work on and present acting exercises and scenes and begin to practice a specific, repeatable, structured approach to applying the actor's craft.

Methods Used to Fulfill this Mission:

- Acting exercises and theatre games aimed at developing the actors instrument; imagination, concentration, spirit, intellect, body, breath & voice.
- Exploration of text work, rehearsal technique, and active application of the actor's preparation "homework".
- Maintaining a clean organized readable "prompt book/journal" throughout the course handed in at end of course for grading, adhering specifically to guidelines provided
- Examination of ten-minute plays and short one act plays applying the techniques examined in class
- In class rehearsals and scene presentations

Learning Objectives: An understanding of the core, fundamental techniques of the actor as artist through active engagement and the experiential application of techniques explored in class, and the development of professional work habits.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Rehearsing in the Zone, Maria Cominis Glaudini (in USC Bookstore, or Kendall Hunt)

Mead style blank composition book

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 BA 101 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
- Scene and acting exercise preparation and presentation and *precise* memorization of lines
- Availability to fellow classmates to rehearse scenes

Note: *If a deadline is missed because of a classmate’s unavailability, the available partner/s will not be penalized **if a discussion with me and all involved occurs before the deadline.***

Grading Point Breakdown:

- Neutral scene in-class workshop10 points
 - Work on prompt book / actor’s homework / journal.....15 points
 - In-class rehearsal on scenes (two graded at 10 points each)20 points
 - MID-TERM (Presentation of scenes from one act plays)20 points
 - FINAL (Presentation of scenes from 10 Min Plays).....20 points
 - Cumulative Active Class Participation, Contribution15 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 = 93-100 points
A- = 90-92 points
B+ = 87-89 points
B = 83-86 points
B- = 80-82 points
C+ = 78-79 points
C = 75-77 points
C- = 70-74 points
D+ = 68-69 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.

Further Grading Notes (continued) :

- *Actor prompt book/journal is to be maintained throughout course and handed in at end of semester for grading (details and guidelines to be provided)*
- ***No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises shall be accepted***
- ***Availability to rehearse with scene partner outside of class and precise memorization of lines is mandatory.***

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

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

Week 1:

Tuesday 8/21

- Introduction to theatre games and exercises
- Course overview and expectations, requirements, text books

Thursday 8/23

- Review syllabus
- Warm up
- Introduction to theatre games and exercises
- **Homework:** Reading: *Rehearsing in the Zone* : Introduction – Page 39

Week 2:

Tuesday 8/28

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Brief in class discussion of reading (participation expected as part of grade)
- Short Film: The Origins of Acting and “The Method”
- Action as verb / Active analysis

Thursday 8/30

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Action as verb / Active analysis
- **Homework:** Reading: *Rehearsing in the Zone* : Pages 41 – 71

Week 3:

Tuesday 9/4

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Brief in class discussion of reading (participation expected as part of grade)
- In- Class workshop: neutral scenes applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods.
- **Homework:** rehearse neutral scenes, review PDF Document “ Actor Prompt Book”

Thursday 9/6

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Review PDF “ Actor Prompt Book”
- In- Class workshop: neutral scenes applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods.
- **Homework:** rehearse neutral scenes, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Week 4:

Tuesday 9/11

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In- Class workshop: neutral scenes applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods.
- **Homework:** rehearse neutral scenes, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Thursday 9/13

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Present Neutral Scenes (**Graded 10 Points**)
- **Homework:** Read One Act Plays “ Ascension Day” by Timothy Mason and “Fun” by Howard Korder

Week 5:

Tuesday 9/18

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Table Read of “Fun” by Howard Korder

Week 5 (continued):

Thursday 9/20

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Table Read of “Ascension Day” by Timothy Mason
- **Homework** TBD

Week 6:

Tuesday 9/25

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Cast and hear various scenes read from “Fun” and “Ascension Day” beginning rehearsal in chairs.
- **Homework:** rehearse new scenes from “Fun” or “Ascension Day”, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Thursday 9/27

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Cast and hear various scenes read from “Fun” and “Ascension Day” beginning rehearsal in chairs.
- **Homework:** rehearse new scenes from “Fun” or “Ascension Day”, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Week 7

Tuesday 10/2

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In- Class rehearsal “Fun” and “Ascension Day” scenes applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods.
- **Homework:** rehearse new scenes from “Fun” or “Ascension Day”, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Thursday 10/4

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In- Class rehearsal “Fun” and “Ascension Day” scenes applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods.
- **Homework:** rehearse new scenes from “Fun” or “Ascension Day”, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Week 8 : (MID TERM)

Tuesday 10/9

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Run scenes “Fun” and “Ascension Day” with notes
- **Homework:** rehearse new scenes from “Fun” or “Ascension Day”

Thursday 10/11

- Presentation of Scenes (**MID-TERM Graded**)
- Class feedback and constructive criticism of mid-term presentations
- **Homework:** read various Ten Minute Plays as assigned

Week 9:

Tuesday 10/16

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Cast and hear various Ten Minute Plays, beginning rehearsal in chairs.
- **Homework:** rehearse new Ten Minute play with scene partner, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Thursday 10/18

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Cast and hear various Ten Minute Plays, beginning rehearsal in chairs.
- **Homework:** rehearse new Ten Minute play with scene partner, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Week 10

Tuesday 10/23

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In- Class rehearsal Ten Minute Plays, In Chairs.
- **Homework:** rehearse new Ten Minute play with scene partner, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Thursday 10/25

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In- Class rehearsal Ten Minute Plays, In Chairs
- **Homework:** rehearse new Ten Minute play with scene partner, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Week 11:

Tuesday 10/30

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In- Class rehearsal Ten Minute Plays, applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods and incorporating actors homework / prompt book.
- **Homework:** rehearse new Ten Minute play with scene partner, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Thursday 11/1

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In- Class rehearsal Ten Minute Plays, applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods and incorporating actors homework / prompt book.
- **Homework:** rehearse new Ten Minute play with scene partner, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Week 12:

Tuesday 11/6

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In- Class rehearsal Ten Minute Plays, applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods and incorporating actors homework / prompt book.
- **Homework:** rehearse new Ten Minute play with scene partner, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Thursday 11/8

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In- Class rehearsal Ten Minute Plays, applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods and incorporating actors homework / prompt book.
- **Homework:** rehearse new Ten Minute play with scene partner, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Week 13

Tuesday 11/13

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In- Class rehearsal Ten Minute Plays, applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods and incorporating actors homework / prompt book.
- **Homework:** rehearse new Ten Minute play with scene partner, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Thursday 11/15

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Run Scenes with notes
- **Homework:** rehearse new Ten Minute play with scene partner, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Week 14 :

Tuesday 11/20

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Run scenes with notes.
- **Homework:** rehearse new Ten Minute play with scene partner, begin work on actors prompt book – (the actors homework)

Thursday 11/22 (*Thanksgiving, No Class*)

Week 15 :

Tuesday 11/27

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Present 10 Minute Plays (**Graded**)
- Class feedback and constructive criticism of mid-term presentation

Week 15 (continued):

Thursday 11/29

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- Present 10 Minute Plays (**Graded**)
- Class feedback and constructive criticism of mid-term presentation

FINAL DAY OF CLASS: Thursday, November 30, 2018

FINAL EXAM:

Tuesday, December 11, 2018, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM – DRC 120

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!***

Welcome to Introduction to Acting 101.

I look forward to getting to know each of you through our collaborative and creative exploration.

- Chris

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.