

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 252 A – 62812 D

TERM: Fall 2018

DAY/TIME: Monday/Wednesday, 11am – 12:50pm

LOCATION: PED 202

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 deepen the approach and method by which the actor moves towards artistry and performance through vigorous preparation, dedicated process, and rigorous specificity. Using American plays and theatre of the 20th Century, Post WW2 to 1970 in the genre of “realism”, we will focus on the skills required to achieve excellence in performance and an understanding of the approach to acting that was applied and developed for this period in theatre. It is incumbent upon the actor’s journey of exploration to uncover the meaning and vision of plays and playwrights from this era in order to discover the “who, why, where, when and how” of each character as defined by themes, society and popular acting techniques, then and now. It is imperative the student actor understands the craft of acting from that time, which required a disciplined approach to voice, speech, movement, as well as an intellectual rigor in dissecting text, subtext, and style. 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. 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.

This course will stress both the actor's ability to use "self" (body, mind, and experience) in a believable, honest way, as well as his/her willingness and resilience to transform that "self" beyond its pre-established boundaries to serve the story. As such, please be aware that you may sometimes be asked to extend yourself beyond your familiar comfort zones in order to best access a full range of creative expression. Finally, we will build skills to collaborate fluidly and generously.

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 American plays and theatre of the 20th Century, Post WW2 to 1970 in the genre of “realism”
- In class rehearsals and scene presentations

PLEASE NOTE: All students must read ALL plays from which scenes are assigned.

Learning Objectives: An understanding and application of the core, fundamental techniques of the actor as artist as it applies to American plays and theatre of the 20th Century, Post WW2 to 1970 in the genre of “realism”. The deepening of the actor’s craft through active engagement and the experiential application of techniques explored in class, and the development of professional work habits.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

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

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

* e-book also available at <https://he.kendallhunt.com/rehearsinginthezone>)

Other Reading:

Assigned and provided as PDF and plays listed below (some of which may be provided as PDF)

Note: Begin reading these plays NOW, so you have two choices to submit for potential scenes by Week 4, Monday Sept 12: (in some cases I might cast you in a different play than your suggested choices based on what I feel is a role and material that will best support your growth in the class)

Picnic by William Inge

Bus Stop by William Inge

When You Comin' Back Red Ryder? by Mark Medoff

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansbury

A Hatful of Rain by Michael Gazzo

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 252 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 new approaches to working as being explored in class, and willingness to 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'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:

- Studio Exercise 15 points
- Work on prompt book / actor's homework / journal.....15 points
- In-class rehearsal on scene 1 applying "Zone" technique.15 points
- MID-TERM Scene (Presentation of scene 1)20 points
- FINAL SCENE20 points
- Cumulative Active Class Participation, Contribution15 points
- TOTAL100 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.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

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

Note: Begin reading these plays NOW, so you have two choices to submit for potential scenes by Week 4, Monday Sept 12: (in some cases I might cast you in a different play than your suggested choices based on what I feel is a role and material that will best support your growth in the class)

Picnic by William Inge

Bus Stop by William Inge

When You Comin' Back Red Ryder? by Mark Medoff

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansbury

A Hatful of Rain by Michael Gazzo

Week 1:

Monday 8/20

- Discuss student expectations, course goals, requirements, deadlines, required texts, reading
- Introduction to theatre games and exercises (name game , warm up / open gesture / Slava)
- **Due Wednesday 8/22 Homework:** Reading "*A Challenge for the Actor*" Uta Hagen, Prologue pg. xii through "Part One: The Actor " pg. 3 - 50 (*Quiz Date TBA*)

Wednesday 8/22

- Review syllabus
- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises (name game, "master / slave")
- In-class discussion of reading (participation expected as part of grade)
- **Due Monday 8/27 Homework:** Homework: Reading "*A Challenge for the Actor*" Uta Hagen, "Part Two: The Human Techniques " Pages 53 - 128

Week 2:

Monday 8/27

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In-class discussion of reading (participation expected as part of grade)
- Monologues
- **Before Wednesday Class 8/29 -- Homework:** Reading: "*A Challenge for the Actor*" Uta Hagen "Part Three: The Exercises", Pages 131 – 151

Week 2 (continued)

Wednesday 8/29

- Warm-up, theatre games, acting exercises
- In-class discussion of reading (participation expected as part of grade)
- Monologues
- Discuss Hagen Studio Exercises “Destination” and “Three Entrances”
- **HOMEWORK due for Wednesday Class 9/5:**
Prepare Hagen Destination or Three Entrances Studio Exercise as assigned
Read Plays for scene choices

Week 3:

Monday 9/3(Off- Labor Day) HOMEWORK

Prep Wednesday Class 9/5 : Prepare Hagen Destination or Three Entrances Exercise as assigned
Read Plays for scene choices

Wednesday 9/5

- PRESENT Hagen Studio Exercises
- HOMEWORK due for Monday 9/10: Reading “ Rehearsing in the Zone” Pages:
Introduction to Page 66
- Homework – By Saturday 9/8 submit choices to me of two plays of interest for scene work

Week 4:

Monday 9/10

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- Complete Hagen Studio Exercises
- In-class discussion of reading “Rehearsing in the Zone” (participation expected as part of grade)
- In- Class Workshop of Rehearsing in the Zone
- Scene assignments

Wednesday 9/12

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- Discuss Prompt Book, Review PDF Document
- First Scenes, First Read in Chairs
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen. Rehearse scene applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Week 5:

Monday 9/17

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, First Read in Chairs
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen. Rehearse scene applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Week 5 (continued)

Wednesday 9/19

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - “Stop / Start” using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method.
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen, Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Week 6:

Monday 9/24

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - “Stop / Start” using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method.
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen, Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Wednesday 9/26

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - “Stop / Start” using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method.
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen, Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Week 7:

Monday 10/1

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - “Stop / Start” using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method.
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen, Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Wednesday 10/3

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Pass of Scene 1 Presentation with notes
- Class feedback and constructive criticism
- Homework: Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Week 8:

Monday 10/8

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Pass of Scene 1 Presentation with notes
- Class feedback and constructive criticism
- Homework: Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Week 8 (continued)

Wednesday 10/10

- Warm-up
- Final Presentation of Scene #1 **(MID-TERM)**
- **Homework** – By Friday 10/12 submit choices to me plays of interest (from the plays we have read) for Second Scene : (in some cases I might cast you in a different play than your suggested choices based on what I feel is a role and material that will best support your growth in the class)
- Weekend :Scenes Assigned

Week 9

Monday 10/15:

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, First Read in Chairs
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen. Rehearse scene applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Wednesday 10/17

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, First Read in Chairs
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen. Rehearse scene applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Week 10

Monday 10/22:

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, First Read in Chairs
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen. Rehearse scene applying *Rehearsing in the Zone* methods. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Wednesday 10/24

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - “Stop / Start” using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method.
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen, Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Week 11

Monday 10/29:

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - “Stop / Start” using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method.
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen, Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Wednesday 10/31

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - “Stop / Start” using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method.
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen, Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Week 12

Monday 11/5:

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - “Stop / Start” using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method.
- Homework: Read full play from which scene is chosen, Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Wednesday 11/7

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Pass of Scene 2 Presentation with notes
- Class feedback and constructive criticism
- Homework: Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Week 13

Monday 11/12:

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Pass of Scene 2 Presentation with notes
- Class feedback and constructive criticism
- Homework: Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Wednesday 11/14

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Pass of Scene 2 Presentation with notes
- Class feedback and constructive criticism

- Homework: Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Week 14

Monday 11/19:

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Pass of Scene 2 Presentation with notes
- Class feedback and constructive criticism
- Homework: Rehearse scenes using *Rehearsing in the Zone* method. Work on prompt book per PDF guidelines provided

Wednesday 11/21 (OFF THANKSGIVING BREAK)

Week 15

Wednesday 11/28

- Warm—up
- **Final** Presentation of Scene #2

Wednesday 11/28

- Warm—up
- **Final** Presentation of Scene #2

FINAL DAY OF CLASS:

Wednesday, November 28, 2017

FINAL EXAM:

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!*

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/departments/departments-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.