

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 352a Intermediate Acting
TERM: Fall 2018
DAY/TIME: Tuesday/Thursday, 8:00 AM -9:50 AM
LOCATION: PED 208
INSTRUCTOR: Marya Mazor
TITLE: Adjunct Lecturer, School of Dramatic Arts
OFFICE HOURS: By appointment
CONTACT: mmazor@usc.edu

Course Description and Overview

In this class, students will develop their skills at building and sustaining character through careful text analysis, scene study, and performance of two of the works of seminal playwrights Anton Chekhov and Henrik Ibsen.

Students will:

1. Develop and hone the skills of focus, openness, connection, and characterization by participating in in-class exercises and theatre games.
2. Participate in text analysis both individually and as a group, in order to improve their understanding of text and ability to fulfill the playwright's vision.
3. Practice the art of self-discipline and rigor, understanding that the task of acting requires that one rehearse and engage in constant inquiry, and be disciplined, dedicated, and deeply committed to continuously learning and relearning the craft of acting, with precise attention to the minutest detail of voice, movement, spatial relationship, speech, text analysis etc.

Methods Used:

- Theatre exercises and games targeting character building, connection, text and sub-text
- Voice/Speech/Movement exercises that support and enhance text and give dimension to these three technical components of acting
- Historical research on the political, social, and cultural world of Chekhov and Ibsen
- The in-depth textual examination of *Three Sisters* and *A Doll House*
- Acting work on *Three Sisters*
- Acting work on *A Doll House*

Learning Objectives:

- 1) To train and develop the acting skills and to cultivate the creative talent of each actor-student so that they are able to create, embody, and play a character fully;
- 2) To further the knowledge of each actor-student of two of the world's most influential playwrights;
- 3) To hone the actor's ability to participate in a professional collaborative process.
- 4) To develop the actor-student's ongoing self-discipline and understanding of the craft as one of continuous study, discipline, and constant rehearsal and refinement of all elements including vocal technique, physical movement, text analysis, connection, etc.

Required Readings:

- *The Plays of Anton Chekhov*, as translated by Paul Schmidt
- Signet Classic edition of *Doll House*, translated by Rolfe Fjelde
- Research materials of your own choosing on the historical context of both playwrights, as well as their personal histories

Suggested Reading: *Building a Character* by Constantin Stanislavsky

ATTENDANCE:

Absences/Tardiness: Because rewards from the class are dependent on the layering of intellectual and emotional discovery resulting from the collective and active exploration of all members of the 352a ensemble ***NO absences or tardies are allowed! Cumulative active class participation points will be lost.***

GRADING POLICY:

Grades are not dictated by success of acting presentations or my subjective opinion of talent or artistic preference. Grades are dictated by 100% active engagement in every class, as well as successful completion of oral presentations and written assignments. Active in-class engagement includes:

- 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 instructor and fellow students
- Thorough memorization of assigned material
- Availability to fellow classmates to rehearse outside class
- Meeting all deadlines. **No late assignments, exams, papers, presentations shall be accepted.**
- No emailed papers accepted.

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 Points Breakdown:

Acting Vocabulary Sheet.....	5 points
Oral presentation of Ibsen historical research.....	10 points
Oral presentation of Chekhov historical research	10 points
Class work (analytical and acting) on <i>Three Sisters</i>	15 points
MID-TERM <i>Three Sisters</i> scene presentation	15 points
Class work (analytical and active) on <i>A Doll House</i>	15 points
FINAL presentation of <i>Doll House</i> scenes.....	15 points
Cumulative active class participation	15 points

TOTAL 100 points

Grading Scale:

Excellent: A (4) = 100-96 A- (3.7) = 95-90
Good: B+ (3.3) = 89-86 B (3) = 85-84 B- (2.7) = 83-80
Average: C+ (2.3) = 79-76 C (2) = 75-74 C- (1.7) = 73-70
Poor: D (.7-1.3) = 60’s F (0) = 59 and below

Excellent: clear understanding of the class material is coupled with original and creative insight

- Good:** class material has been understood clearly
Average: class material has been generally understood, but gaps in understanding remain
Poor: there are identifiable gaps in the understanding of class material
Failure: gaps in the completion of work is coupled with poor understanding of class material.

Further Grading Notes: *When 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. I will be happy to discuss your work at any time*

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: 8/20, 8/22

- discuss syllabus/expectations
- discuss course goals, requirements, deadlines, required texts
- introduction to theatre games and exercises

Homework: start Chekhov research for Oral Report

Week 2: 8/28, 8/30

- theatre exercises: character building, subtext
- introduction of Key Vocabulary
- Video: *Vanya on 42nd Street*

Homework: read *Uncle Vanya* (Due: 8/30)
Chekhov historical research/oral report (Due 9/4)

Week 3: 9/4, 9/6

- Chekhov oral report (Due 9/4)
- read *Three Sisters* (Due 9/6)
- bring copy of *Three Sisters* to class
- *Vocabulary Sheet Due 9/6*

Homework: scene selection from *Three Sisters*

Week 4: 9/11, 9/13

- cast *Three Sisters* on 9/11
- start class rehearsals

Homework: Independent Rehearsals: 4 HOURS MINIMUM PER WEEK

Week 5-7: 9/18 through 10/4

- class rehearsals of *Three Sisters*
- Independent Rehearsals of Three Sisters* 4 HOURS MINIMUM PER WEEK
- MIDTERM PRESENTATION/THREE SISTERS (Rubric to be provided by Instructor)

Homework: read *Doll House*

Week 8: 10/9, 10/11

- start analytical work on *Doll House*
- do Ibsen research

Homework: study *Doll House*

Week 9-15: 10/16 through 11/30 (THANKSGIVING BREAK 11/21 -26)

- Cast *Doll House* scenes 10/24

- Rehearse *Doll House* Scenes - 4 HOURS MINIMUM PER WEEK

- discuss expectations and guidelines for Final

FINAL DAY OF CLASS:

Thursday, November 30, 2018

HOMEWORK: Rehearse for Final

FINAL EXAM:

TUESDAY, December 11th 4:30 to 6:30 pm

Additional Policies

- [*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 proper rehearsal clothes (whatever they may be and understand that they change throughout the semester) at the start of class, promptly at 12 noon. **NO FLIP FLOPS UNLESS THE SCENE OR CLASS TAKES PLACE AT THE BEACH!***

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.