** THTR 120a-62625D BFA Acting 1**

TERM: Fall 2019

DAY/TIME: Tuesday/Thursday, 8AM - 9:50AM

**LOCATION: MCC 109**

**INSTRUCTOR: Mary Joan Negro**

**TITLE: Associate Professor of Theatre Practice/**

**Head of Undergraduate Acting**

**OFFICE:** **JEF Building 2nd floor #204**

**OFFICE HOURS:** **By appointment**

**CONTACT:** [**negro@usc.edu**](mailto:negro@usc.edu)

**(213) 740-8927 (o)**

**(818) 284-8820 (c)**

**Course Description:**

**The mission of this class is:**

* To awaken the imagination, emotion, and intellect of the student by making him/her aware of the transforming power and universality of theatre.
* To serve as the beginning of the actor’s journey of exploration to uncover the meaning and vision of any play and playwright to discover the “who, why, where, when and how” of each character in the play and how each character serves the vision of the play.
* To impress upon the student the vital importance of commitment to the ensemble through constant rehearsals needed to learn the craft of the theatre which requires an ongoing disciplined commitment to the training of voice, speech, and movement, as well as an acute commitment to the intellectual rigor required when dissecting text, and uncovering subtext.
* To remind the student of the need for discipline and time management skills in a professional career by insisting that the students set their own schedules for working. NO SCHEDULES are set for when the students work. The students who work, work! Those who don’t, don’t!
* To heighten the understanding of the powerful role of the audience upon which the actor relies to fulfill his creative function.
* To be of service in guiding the actor to define his own philosophical and artistic vision

**The class is dedicated to exploration offering hope, inspiration, guidance, and courage.**

**Methods Used to Fulfill this Mission:**

* Theatre exercises and games targeting text and sub-text
* Voice/Speech/Movement exercises that support and enhance text
* Acting work on “5-Act Play” exercise
* Acting work on “What-A-To-Do”
* Acting work on “neutral” scenes
* Intellectual examination/table readings of ten-minute plays and short one act plays
* Attending SDA Productions
* Student constructive analysis of SDA productions

**Learning Objectives**

A practical understanding of all that is described in the course overview above, plus the development of professional work habits

**Required Reading**

Course Reader (in USC Bookstore)

**Supplementary material**.

*The Mystic in the Theatre: Eleonora Duse* by Eva Le Gallienne

**Course Notes**

Any communication between faculty and students that is needed to clarify information imparted in class or that serves as a reminder for assignment deadlines **will be done via email**. BLACKBOARD will NOT be used for this purpose**.**

**Assignment Submission Policy**

* ***No late assignments, projects, papers, presentations,exams shall be accepted or graded***
* ***No emailed papers accepted. All written assignments must be hard copies and turned in*** ***at the start of class on the deadline day. Written assignments may be turned in before the deadline***

**Description and Assessment of Assignments**

***Grades are* *not dictated*** by the success of acting presentations, the instructor’s subjective opinion of talent. or artistic preference.

***Grades are dictated***by

* In-class active student analysis of text
* Constructive feedback of classmates’ acting presentations and perceptible support of classmates work i.e. meeting a professional standard of behavior in class and rehearsals
* 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
* Memorization of lines
* Availability to fellow classmates to rehearse outside class in all agreed upon rehearsal with ensemble

**IMPORTANT**:

In addition to in-class contact hours, all courses must also meet a minimum standard for out-of-class time, which accounts for time students spend on homework, readings, writing, and other

academic activities. For each unit of in-class contact time, the university expects two hours of out of class student work per week over a semester**.** Be aware that this is the minimum requirement for “homework”. **If you are training to be an actor or are exploring the acting profession as a possibility for post university life, you will soon realize that this minimum requirement is woefully inadequate. BE ADVISED!**

(Please refer to the [*Contact Hours Reference*](http://arr.usc.edu/forms/ContactHoursReference.pdf) *guide*.)

**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 Breakdown**

Personal Readings………………………………………......... 5 points

Class work on speech/voice/acting exercises, (5 Act Play) *…...* 10 points

Class work on “What-A-To-Do” ……………………………... 15 points

MID-TERM (Presentations of “What-A-To-Do”) ……………...10 points

In-class acting work on “neutral scenes …………………………15 points

Presentations of neutral scenes + written component) ……….. 15 points

Discussion/Analysis of One-Act Plays…….…….……………. 10 points

Written Critique of SDA Production……….............................. 5 points

FINAL (specifics TBD) ………………………………………. 5 points

Cumulative Active Class Participation………………………… 10 points

**TOTAL …………….. 100 points**

**Grading Scale**

*The final course grade is determined according to the following 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 (identifiable gaps in the understanding of class material)

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

* *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.*
* *If your work in class is unsatisfactory, you will be warned before the deadline for dropping the course with a grade of W.*

**Grading Timeline:**

As soon as humanly possible with the understanding that feedback is most valuable when the exercise being assessed is fresh in the mind of the student. *I will be happy to discuss your work, in person, at any time.*

**EXTRA-CURRICULAR COMMITMENTS AND ISPS**

**Should you choose to participate in any extra-curricular project, such as an Independent Student Production, the SDA administration and faculty will not make allowances or exceptions for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, home work that is required as preparation for class, or lack of participation in class resulting from your extra-curricular involvement.**

**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 BFA 120a 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*

**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 NO CELL PHONES DURING CLASS*** ***NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES***
* ***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 8:00 am. NO FLIP FLOPS UNLESS THE SCENE OR CLASS TAKES PLACE AT THE BEACH!***

**Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown***(****The timeline is subject to change depending on the dynamics, pace and unpredictability of the creative process of any given class.)***

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|  | **Topics/Daily Activities** | **Readings and Homework** | **Deliverable/ Due Dates** |
| Week 1 8/27, 8/29 | Discuss students’ expectations  Discuss course goals, requirements, deadlines, required texts  Introduction to theatre games and exercises (5 Act Play)  Begin “personal readings” | Assign and prepare“personal readings” |  |
| Week 2 9/3, 9/5 | News on the Rialto  Warm-up: theatre games/exercises (“5 Act Play” and “*What-A-To-Do”)*  Continue “personal readings” | Read neutral scenes and *Plays* in Course Reader |  |
| Week 3 9/10, 9/12 Week 4 9/17, 9/19 | News on the Rialto  Theatre games/exercises (5 Act Play)  Continue “personal readings”  Start staging work *“What-A-To-Do”* | Work/Rehearse *What a to Do*  Work on 5 act play  Read neutral scenes and *Plays* in Course Reader /rehearse |  |
| Week 5 9/24, 9/26 Week 6 10/1, 10/3 Week 7 10/8, 10/10 Week 8 10/15,  10/17 OFF Fall recess | News on the Rialto  Theatre games/exercises  Discussion SDA productions  Class work rehearsals “*What-A-To-Do”*  Presentation of 5 Act Play + presentations of “*What-A-To-Do”* **(MID-TERM)**  Class feedback and constructive criticism of mid-term presentation | Rehearse *What a to Do*  Work/rehearse 5 act play  Read neutral scenes and *Plays* in Course Reader | **MID-TERM presentation of**  ***5act play***  ***What a to Do* projected date**  **Tuesday 10/15**  **(subject to change)** |
| Week 9 10/22, 10/24 | News on Rialto  Warm-up  discussion SDA productions  class work on neutral scene #1  cast neutral scenes  start work on neutral scenes | Rehearse neutral scene #1  rehearse individual neutral scenes |  |
| Week 10 10/29, 10/31 Week 11 11/5, 11/7 Week 12 11/12, 11/14 Week 13-14 11/19, 11/21 11/26 **Week 15**  12/3, 12/5  Last week of classses | warm-up: theatre games and exercises/discussion SDA productions  class work on neutral scenes  presentations of neutral scenes + written component)  11/28 Thanksgiving  Analysis of plays in Course Reader | rehearse neutral scenes  write SDA critique  read and study plays in Course Reader  Thanksgiving recess -read plays in the Course Reader  Read and study plays in Course Reader | **Presentations of neutral scenes + written component projected date Tuesday 11/26 (subject to change**)  **Deadline for written critique of SDA production 11/26** |
| FINAL 12/17 | **Critical analysis of plays in Course reader. Specifics to be determined** | Read and study plays in Course Reader | **TUESDAY**  **12/17 FINAL**  **4:30 pm – 6:30 pm** |

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**FALL 2019**

**IMPORTANT DATES**

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| **Aug. 26** | **Fall semester classes begin** |
| **Sept. 2** | **Labor Day, university holiday** |
| **Sept. 13** | **Deadline for purchasing or showing proof of health insurance** |
| **Sept. 13** | **Last day to register and add classes** |
| **Sept. 13** | **Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” and receive a refund** |
| **Sept. 13** | **Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001** |
| **Oct. 11** | **Last day to change a Pass/No Pass course to letter grade** |
| **Oct. 17-18** | **Fall recess** |
| **Nov. 15** | **Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001** |
| **Nov. 27-Dec. 1** | **Thanksgiving recess** |
| **Dec. 6** | **Fall semester classes end** |
| **Dec. 7-10** | **Study days** |
| **Dec. 11-18** | **Final examinations** |
| **Dec. 19-Jan. 12, 2020** | **Winter recess** |

**Welcome to the BFA 120a Introduction to Acting.**

**It is my pleasure to get to know each of you through our collaborative and creative exploration.**

**Mary Joan Negro**

**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” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](https://policy.usc.edu/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>.

**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 for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

**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. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

**Support Systems:**

***Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call***

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

***National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255***

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)

***Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call***

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/)

***Sexual Assault Resource Center***

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu/)

***Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086***

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu/)

***Bias Assessment Response and Support***

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/)

***The Office of Disability Services and Programs***

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. [dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu/)

***Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710***

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/)

***Diversity at USC***

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu/)

***USC Emergency Information***

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

***USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 –*** *24-hour emergency or to report a crime.*

Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu/)