Course Description and Overview
This course includes individual and group exercises, games, and techniques to free the actor physically and emotionally and to stimulate creativity, imagination, and self-expression through improvisation and theatre games.

Learning Objectives
Using improvisation techniques, physicalization of a role, and vocal exploration each student will develop an emotionally receptive physiology, gain expression tools, and flexibility in creating a range of characters. Students will enhance communication skills, diversity awareness, and compassion through group storytelling. Sharing our own life experiences and point of views while “playing” in ensemble scenarios will promote experiential and lasting love of learning.

No Prerequisite, AND you can take this course twice!

Recommended Readings and Supplementary Materials
The UCB Comedy Improvisational Manual by Matt Messer, Ian Roberts, and Matt Walsh
Improvisation for the Theatre by Viola Spolin
The Ultimate Improv Book by Edward J. Nevraumont, Nicholas P. Hanson, & Smeaton
The Physicalization of a Role by Debra De Liso

Grading
15 % Class Participation in theatre exercises and games each week (including the practice of “Yes, And!” actively listening in character, supporting your fellow players suggestions.)
10 % Comprehension of Games (includes forwarding the plot through character actions.)
15 % Application of Improvisation Foundations (maintaining focus in character, creating clear objectives, specific voice and body language, clear storytelling.)
10% - Midterm – “Freeze Tag Marathon” Evaluation of skill level in comprehension, application of improvisation techniques and game rules.
10% - Character Assignments (5 pts. Family Member Monologue, and 5 pts. Stranger Observation)
10% - Self- Assessments (5 pts. each, first assessment of your skills and final assessment)
10% - Individual Improvement from self-observation and instructor’s directed study.
10 % - Ensemble work – Inclusion of classmates in each scene.
10% - Final Performance / Self Evaluation of your own work
**Grading Scale for SDA:** A indicates work of excellent quality; B of good quality; C of average quality; D of below average quality; and F indicates inadequate work.

**Excellent**  
A = 96-100 points  
A- = 91-95 points  

**Very Good**  
B+ = 88-90 points  
B = 85-87 points  
B- = 81-84 points  

**Good**  
C+ = 78-80 points  
C = 75-77 points  
C- = 71-74 points  

**Satisfactory / Threshold**  
D+ = 68-70 points  
D = 65-67 points  
D- = 61-64 points  

**Unsatisfactory to Poor**  
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:

**Regular Weekly Attendance** is the only way to get high points for participation, comprehension, and application in Improv class. This is an activity course; missing even one class will lower your participation grade. **No unexcused absences. Arriving at the start of class ready to work is part of your participation grade.** Students may make up ONE missed class by attending another section of Improv taught by the instructor. If you are to be absent, e-mail the instructor to verify the reason and schedule one make-up class. Please inform the instructor immediately if you have any injuries or any conditions that might prevent you from participating fully in the class. **No cell phone use in class unless instructed.**

**Weekly Course Schedule**  Challenge Yourself! Improv is playwriting on your feet!

Beginning classes will start with a movement and vocal warm-up. Wear loose clothing and gym shoes. Keeping an acting techniques journal. This will help you identify your individual strengths and challenges, habits and goals will help you define all the improvisation tools that work for you.

**Class One - Breaking the Ice** (classes one - five will focus on individual’ self-observation & skill building work)  
Circle Share- Who are YOU? Where are you from? Where are you going?  
Actor’ Warm up- body and voice read thru syllabus as characters.  
“Super Hero Name Game”- memorization of classmates & gesture exploration  
“Acting fundamentals” warm-up relaxation/concentration /imagination –  
“Four Questions” – animal/color/body of water/door out of room  
If time permits learn Improv Foundations with **“Speed Dating”** and **ABA** practice exposition details for solid scene work, then learn **“Freeze Tag.”**
**Homework** ~ Read through the handouts by next class, any questions about what is expected of you? Feel free to email or ask during or after class.

**Class Two – Tuning Up the Senses ~ Ninja Warm-Up**
The one and only Lecture— Improv Foundations – Keep the handout handy.
Warm-up “Mirror Exercise” Change lead without seams, re-visit Freeze Tag- quick starts “Bus Stop” – Who Am I? Character physicalization
Begin character exploration with “Panel of Experts” practice vocal and physical variety/plot points/practice the foundations of storytelling with “Typewriter.”

**Class Three – Hear, Taste, Touch, Feel, Speak – Splash-Bang! Warm-up.**
“Blindfold Exercise” Without eyesight, how well do we perceive the world? How well do we trust our partners? “Rain Storm” – How well do we listen?
If time permits we will explore “Sitting for A Portrait” character studies based on visual clues, defining a psychological gesture and “Alphabet Story” shared storytelling.
Homework ~Think of a topic you can “RANT” about. This will be a “stand-up improv.”

**Class Four – Creating a Story Zip/Zap/Zow warm up**
Warm-up ~ “Eclectic Tastes” – using music shorts students will work first with partners then solo, establishing a location, a relationship to partner(s), and an event.
Share your “RANTS” improv one minute without stopping. Learn “Family Dinner” ~ Self-Assessment #1 In class ~ Fill out the handout. What are my strengths and challenges as an improvisational artist based on work in the past three weeks. What techniques will I use to become a believable improv artist?

**Class Five – Creating A Character Red Ball/Green Ball Pass – Space Prop practice-**
Use an imaginary object, pass it, create a different object, pass it.
How we Use Our Own Experiences to be authentic – Emotional Recall/Sense Memory
Finish sharing childhood memories. “Interview a Classmate “~practice active listening and character biographies with “Dating Game.”

**Class Six– Long Form Improv – Trusting Each Other! – Crazy 8s Warm-up**
Group Long form – one monologue, then get a suggestion from audience and build 3 scenes based on an association from the story. Loose the desire to tell a joke, create something funny that comes from truth. Practice “Rules of the stage” – Voice-articulation/projection/blocking. Practice character physicalization work with “Masquerade Party” and “Ad Agency.”
Prep for next week “A Family Member Monologue” from someone in your family. One full page, double-spaced typed.

**Class Seven – Practicing Improv Foundations. Review grading criteria.Hot Spot Circle**
“Elevator Small Talk...Change!”
Share A “Family Member Monologue” from someone in your family.
Consistent Presence – sustaining focus “Late for Class.” Physicalization/Awareness of Others/Stage Area Use/Levels/Confidence Individual If time permits - “RANT!”
Class Eight – Review Rules of Improv – Midterm - Freeze Tag marathon. ABA
Warm-up.
Creating the Where? Who? And What? Add the When? And the important WHY? The
How = genre or style. Learn “Radio Station” Prep for next week~ A character study
“Observation of a Stranger” for at least 10 minutes. Type up a two-page description.
Then create a solo improv scene 1-2 minutes, from that character study.

Class Nine - Random Count Warm-up. Communion with the group.
Share stranger observations-3 person group scenes. CREATE TEAMS.
Strengthen Teamwork/Use of Suggestion/The Presentation. Research family or friend
about a diverse characteristic. Learn about human exceptionality with student created
game “Group Therapy.” None of us are “normal.”
Homework ~ Create your own original improv game. Bring detailed description to class.

Class Ten- Group Warm – up “Babble” - Team lead warm-ups.
Share original improv games with your team. Perform one for the class. Learn
challenging style change with “Style Roller Coaster.”

Class Eleven” Practice Ninja. Learn ”Battle of the Sexes.” Review all games.

Class Twelve – Group warm up “Three Thoughts Out loud.” Teams choose 3 games

Class Thirteen Rehearse for final. Work on consistent presence in character, stage
placement, projection, word clarity, characterization, and furthering the plot in character.

Class Fourteen- Rehearse for final. Hone your ensemble skills, support your teammates.
Homework ~ Write Final Assessment Paper: Summarize your overall experience and
growth in this class, personally and professionally. Has this class helped you in your field
of study? Explain. (Typed, double-spaced, 2 full pages.)
All wear a black t-shirt and jeans to performance next week.

Class Fifteen - Improvisation Performance with Audience! Final Self-Assessment Due
Debra will video-tape our Live Improv Show!

Final Exam – Enjoy watching the playback of our Improv Show. Write an honest and
detailed evaluation of your own work, how you have improved? What areas can you still
improve on? Where have you grown the most?

Final Examination Date:
Monday December 16th 7:00- 9:00 Calendar this date now!
This information can be found online at USC’s site for the Schedule of Classes.
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. 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.

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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

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

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

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

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

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

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. 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

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

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

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

KEY DATES
Friday, Sept. 13: Last day to add, or drop this class without a “W”, or to select “P/NP”
Friday, October 11: Last day to change “P/NP” to letter grade
Thursday – Friday, October 17-18: Fall Recess Friday,
November 15: Last day to drop this class with a mark of “W” Wednesday – Sunday,
November 27-December 1: Thanksgiving Recess Friday,
December 6: Fall semester classes end
Saturday – Tuesday, Dec 7-10: Study days Wednesday – Wednesday,
December 11-18: Final examinations