

THTR 105 Introduction to Screen Acting (62609)

Spring 2020: Friday, 8:00am — 10:50am

Location: SHR 105

Instructor: Gabriella Santinelli

Office: SHR 105

Office Hours: By Appointment

Final Exam: Mon, May 11th || 11am — 1pm

Contact Info: Gaby: santinel@usc.edu || 424.234.0256

Course Description

Structured to address the dynamics of acting in relation to film/television; and to prompt students' understanding of the similarities and differences between acting on stage vs film.

Overview

This on-camera, workshop-style class introduces students to the fundamentals of screen acting through exploration of the distinction between the media of stage and screen. Class work identifies the technical implications of these differences.

Controlled exposure to on-camera performance dynamics prompts students to define strategies and techniques for dealing with the parameters unique to acting for the camera, and to incorporate them into the fundamental process of actualizing effective on-camera performances.

Classwork will consist of discussion of prepared assignments: reading and listening (upon which two written quizzes will be based), viewing film clips, exploratory exercises from the textbook, and scenework.

Learning Objectives

- A theoretical understanding and practical experience of all that is described in the course overview
- The development of professional work habits

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Confidently slate, audition and act on camera, using dramatic text that maximizes the actor's innate essence/type.
2. Master the skills used by professional screen actors.
3. Mark scripts for optimal professionalism in the workplace.

Prerequisites: ONE from THTR 252a or THTR 120a

REQUIRED READING (books available at amazon, etc)

Secrets of Screen Acting, Third Edition (2015), Patrick Tucker. Routledge (***aka SOSA**)

Acting in Film, Michael Caine. Applause

How To Avoid The Cutting Room Floor, Jordan Goldman. <http://editorsadviceforactors.com>

A Practical Handbook for the Actor, Melissa Bruder, etc. Vintage

RECOMMENDED READING

Auditioning For Camera: An Actor's Guide, Joseph Hacker. Routledge.

Acting: The First Six Lessons, Richard Boleslavsky. *PDF available online. *Lesson Three

REQUIRED MATERIALS (students MUST bring these items to each class meeting)

1. **printed / hard copy of scenes. Absolutely NO rehearsing with scripts on electronic devices.**
2. **multi-colored pen** (min. four colors): e.g. https://smile.amazon.com/dp/B01N4S92UB/?coliid=I1BLPGKIVMNH2R&colid=3UMCSJTXHOZC2&psc=1&ref=lv_ov_lig_dp_it
3. **Purchase one new 32GB or 64GB digital "SD Card" and bring to every class meeting.**

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

FOR SDA Assignments: Grades will be assigned according to the above criteria. Students can check their progress at any time by scheduling an appointment with the instructors during office hours.

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.

Grading Breakdown

In-Class Participation	30%
Written Quizzes (x2 =15% each)	30%
Mid-Term Scenework	15%
Final Scenework	25%
Total	100%

Grading Scale – Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

A	95-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-94	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-86	C-	70-72	F	59 and below

The SDA GUIDELINES on GRADING as published elsewhere in this handbook are:

- Each course shall contain at least three assignments, projects, exams, papers or exercises which shall be evaluated during the semester and which shall provide an analytical record of each student's progress in the course.
- Attendance shall be weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines. Studio Courses must delineate how participation will be graded (in class exercises, scene study, etc.)
- **There shall be no unexcused absences.**
- No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises shall be accepted unless advance extensions have been arranged between student and teacher, or unless exceptional circumstances occur.

Assignment Submission Policy

The due dates for all assignments are listed on the Course Schedule.

Additional Policies

- **ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION:** Attendance and participation in class is mandatory because acting is primarily an experiential process. According to School of Dramatic Arts guidelines, **no unexcused absences are allowed.** An excused absence is due to serious illness, grave emergency or significant acting work with appropriate S.O.T. leave of absence. You must inform the instructor of your absence in advance of the class meeting. You are responsible for all work missed. An extended absence, even if excused, could seriously affect your work and grade in class. Please consult with your instructor immediately if such a situation arises.
- **TARDIES:** Late arrivals will not be allowed to join class.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown (*subject to change; please refer to Blackboard for Podcast links)

Week 1 / CLASS 1 (Jan 17)

Preparation for Class 1:

- Read Secrets of Screen Acting (SOSA): Preface / Introduction / Chapter 1 “Screen Versus Stage”
- Checklist A: Etiquette (SOSA p.195)
- Podcasts: BASIC MYTHS DEBUNKED (9 tracks / 45 mins), ETIQUETTE (12 tracks / 60 mins)

Week 2 / CLASS 2 (Jan 24)

Preparation for Class 2:

- Read SOSA: Chapter 7 “Typecasting”
- Podcasts: VERSATILITY (8 tracks / 40 mins)
- Complete and tally “Words of Essence” Surveys (*complete a minimum of 50 surveys)

Week 3 / CLASS 3 (Jan 31)

Preparation for Class 3:

- Read SOSA: Chapter 6 “Sound and Vocal Levels”
- Checklist D: Voice (SOSA p.196-197)
- Podcasts: VOCAL LEVELS (16 tracks / 80 mins)

Week 4 / CLASS 4 (Feb 7)

Preparation for Class 4:

- Read SOSA: Chapter 2 “Different Screens, Different Effects”
- Checklist C: The Picture (SOSA p.196)
- Podcasts: SIZE OF SHOT (14 tracks / 70 mins), EXAM SCENWORK (5 tracks / 25 mins)

***submit MidTerm Scenework Proposals via email, w/ YouTube links to proposed scenes, by 6pm on Fri, Feb 7**

Week 5 / CLASS 5 (Feb 14)

Preparation for Class 5:

- Read SOSA: Chapter 3 “The Frame”
- Podcasts: FRAMING (8 tracks / 40 mins), SPATIAL AWARENESS (5 tracks / 25 mins)

Week 6 / CLASS 6 (Feb 21)

Preparation for Class 6:

- Read SOSA: Chapter 4 “The Camera”
- Checklist B: The Camera (SOSA p.195-196)
- Podcasts: CHEATING TO CAMERA (8 tracks / 40 mins)

Week 7 / CLASS 7 (Feb 28)

Preparation for Class 7:

- Read SOSA: Chapter 10 “Rehearsals and Technicals”
- Review: BASIC MYTHS DEBUNKED (45 mins), ETIQUETTE (60 mins), VERSATILITY (40 mins), VOCAL LEVELS (80 mins)

Week 8 / CLASS 8 (March 6) — MID-TERM SCENWORK

Preparation for Class 8:

- Read SOSA: Chapter 11 “Directing Actors For The Screen”
- Review: SIZE OF SHOT (70mins), FRAMING (40mins), SPATIAL AWARENESS (25mins), CHEATING TO CAMERA (40mins)

Class Work: Mid-Term Scenework: View clips from approved scenes; then perform the scenes

Week 9 / CLASS 9 (March 13) — QUIZ #1

Preparation for Class 9:

- Read SOSA: Chapter 5 "Reactions And Business"
- Checklist F: Reactions and Business (SOSA p.198)
- Podcasts: REACTIONS (11 tracks / 55 mins)

Friday, March 20 — SPRING BREAK / NO CLASS

Week 10 / CLASS 10 (March 27)

Preparation for Class 10:

- Read: ACTING IN FILM, Michael Caine (*yes, please read the entire book over spring break; it's short*)
- Podcasts: BUSINESS & CONTINUITY (11 tracks / 55 mins)

Week 11 / CLASS 11 (April 3)

Preparation for Class 11:

- Read SOSA: Chapter 8 "Acting"
- Checklist E: Acting (SOSA p.197 - 198)
- Podcasts: ACTING (20 tracks / 100 mins)

***submit Final Scenework Proposals via email, via YouTube link to proposed scenes, by 6pm on Fri, April 3rd**

Week 12 / CLASS 12 (April 10)

Preparation for Class 12:

- Read SOSA: Chapter 13 "The Shoot"
- Podcasts: LEARNING LINES (6 tracks / 30 mins)

Week 13 / CLASS 13 (April 17)

Preparation for Class 13:

- Read SOSA: Chapter 9 "Auditions"
- Checklist G: Auditions and Interviews (SOSA p.199)
- Podcasts: AUDITIONS (11 tracks / 55 mins)

Week 14 / CLASS 14 (April 24)

Preparation for Class 14:

- Read HOW TO AVOID THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR, Jordan Goldman (*yes, read the entire book; it's short*)
- Read SOSA: Chapter 14 "The Editor and Editing" and Epilogue
- Checklist H: The Editor (SOSA p.199)
- Podcasts: THE EDITOR AND EDITING (6 tracks / 30 mins); EYE FLASHES / BLINKING (4 tracks / 20 mins)

Week 15 / CLASS 15 (May 1) — QUIZ #2

Preparation for Class 15:

- Read SOSA: Chapter 12 "Announcers"
- Checklist I: Final Thoughts (SOSA p.199 - 200)
- Review: REACTIONS (55mins), BUSINESS & CONTINUITY (55mins), ACTING (100mins), LEARNING LINES (30mins), AUDITIONS (55mins), EDITOR & EDITING (30mins), EYE FLASHES/BLINKING (20mins)

FINAL EXAM – Mon, May 11 || 11am - 1pm SHR 105 (our classroom) — FINAL SCENEWORK

Important Dates:

Jan 31: Last day to add/drop class without a "W" grade, or to select "P/NP" option.

Apr 3: Last day to withdraw with a grade of "W"

Read The Fine Print

1. The above schedule and procedures are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.
2. It is the responsibility of each student to know and follow all written guidance given by the instructor in this syllabus.
3. Podcasts are shared by the Professor for educational purposes only. Students are forbidden from sharing, posting or selling the podcasts to third parties.

NOTE: All undergraduate classes must meet for the Final Examination as established by the University. You may not hold your final examination on the last day of classes.

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.

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.

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