

**THTR 352b – Intermediate Acting II - 63069D**

**Units:** 2

**Term:** Spring 2020

**Day/Time:** Monday/Wednesday, 8am – 10:50pm

**Location:** MCC 109

**Instructor:** Christopher Shaw

**Office:** JEF – 211 , 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

**Office Hours:** By Appointment : email Shawchri@usc.edu

**Contact Info:** Shawchri@usc.edu

(323) 632-4894 ( Cell – Text OK)

### Course Description

Building and sustaining character in Comedy of Manners and High Style. Understanding and speaking heightened language in a manner that is clear, understandable and spontaneous, coupled with exploration and incorporation of the specific physical and behavioral style of the period while maintaining clarity of objective , action and intention. In this course the material will be chosen from Restoration Comedy, or the works of Moliere and a selection of pieces loosely described as Comedy of Manners (Wilde/Shaw/Coward/Maugham etc.) Formalized language presents significant challenges than more prosaic material. A special attention to rhythm, syntax, structure of thought and facility of speech are elements that will be investigated in this course, as well as developing and incorporating the physical customs and style of the the time. Specific exercises coupled with scene work will be used as needed to help solve specific acting problems as they occur. Attention to clarity of event, objective and action in scene work as well as application of techniques and tools acquired in the BA Acting progression is required and expected.

*"It is my belief that acting is action, that action leads emotion and that character is the sum of the actions played"* – Jack Rowe, USC SDA, emeritus professor

This course will ask you to observe others working and presenting scenes and exercises throughout the course , and expect you to challenge yourself to actively learn as much from observing colleagues work as doing the performance and presentation work yourself. It is up to you as a developing artist to take responsibility to learn and absorb even when not always working on your feet – the class is structured like a studio class:

*"Remember that you are learning a craft, that you are presenting work for constructive criticism, not looking for approval or disapproval. Therefore, I ask you not to sit in judgment of your fellow actors. In order to benefit from their work, identify with their problems. When they make technical errors, ask yourself how often you make the same ones, and, when you hear the teachers' corrective answers, apply them to yourself. When something is convincing and involves (engages) you as a spectator, ask yourself how it was achieved and how you could accomplish the same reality. Then you will be learning during the entire session rather than just waiting for your turn to perform."* – Uta Hagen, A Challenge for the Actor © 1991, by Uta Hagen

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this course students should understand and be able to demonstrate facility with the following:

- . Analyze text in the creation of compelling characters and situations.
- . Examine a scene from a play of period style and heightened language in the realm of Moliere, English Restoration or 19th Century comedy, and time permitting, from a more contemporary play.
- . Construct a strong physical and vocal presentation, including clear articulation and use of appropriate dialect.
- . Incorporate the concepts explored through exercises and discussed in class into scene work and presentations including the specific physicality , style and manners of the period and a clear display of clarity and facility with text and language.
- . Define and execute strong intentions on stage.
- . Practice and test concentration on stage.
- . Create and utilize a strong, detailed environment for the character.
- . Employ a variety of tactics, while executing with intention.

**Prerequisite(s):** THTR 352a

## Course Notes

- . In- Class Participation is 15% of grade. ( See definition of participation in “Grading” on this syllabus)
- . Outside rehearsals are mandatory
- . If a scene scheduled to work in class for an in - class rehearsal or presentation is clearly under rehearsed or underprepared, you will be asked to sit down and will loose points for that assignment.
- . Scenes should be 100% off book, lines memorized by second “ pass” of scene in class, or you will be asked to sit down and loose points for that assignment.
- . Use of cell phones in class will result in 10-point overall grade reduction for each incident – I will call you out in front of the entire class, so you have fair warning now. I use my phone to time working scenes, so you will see me utilizing my phone.

## Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

*PDF Files provided*

*The Relapse*, New Mermaids Edition, by John Vanbrugh

*The Constant Wife*, by Somerset Maugham

*The Country Wife*, by William Wycherley

*Required Attire and Equipment:*

**Women –**

- . Corset, lace-up the back over the chest corset (available on Amazon)
- . Long rehearsal skirt
- . High heeled hard sole rehearsal character shoes
- . Fan
- . Handkerchief

Required Attire and Equipment (Continued) :

**Men –**

- . Dress shirt
- . Dress jacket
- . Dress pants (no jeans or kahki's)
- . Hard sole dress shoes (no sneakers)
- . Handkerchief
- . Snuff box (small hinged pill box)

**Other Reading and supplementary materials:**

Various rubrics and guidelines/worksheets on Blackboard and provided as PDF.

**Note:** Additional plays may be suggested and assigned other than the ones listed.

**Description and Assessment of Assignments**

- . Exercise assignments and in-class rehearsals and presentations of scenes are expected to be specifically examined and fully rehearsed & prepared , with written homework component reflected in prompt book and incorporated into the work in the presentation. A clear demonstration of your understanding and application of what was learned in the experience of observing the class work of others is expected to be reflected in your own class work and presentations – this is a large factor in all grading assessments. You will learn by watching others work and by being mentally present in class when others work, as much as you will learn by “doing” and presenting.
- . In class participation is 15% of overall grade, ( See definition of participation in “Grading” on this syllabus)
- . Points for assignments: you will receive 75% of the allotted points per assignment if you present average work. Average work is defined as “ class material has generally been understood , but gaps in understanding and performance remain”. For a higher grade more effort and work is expected.
- . Credit will be given for any in-class exercise performed on or before the scheduled deadline, and in a manner that reflects thoroughness of preparation. This includes the utilization of props, costumes, and confident memorization of text.
- . If a student is concerned about their grade or progress in class, they should make an appointment to discuss this with the professor. Midterm grades will reflect only a “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” score.

**Grading Breakdown**

**Absences/Tardiness:**

Learning in class depends on the layering of intellectual and emotional discovery resulting from the consistent active exploration of **100%** of the Ensemble **No absences or tardies are allowed.** **Cumulative active class participation points will be lost.** *Participation 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 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/ project partner's unavailability, the available partner/s will not be penalized. If problems arise, a discussion with the professor with all involved must be arranged before the day of the scheduled scene or everyone will be held equally accountable. BEFORE ANY SCENE MAY BE REHEARSED ON ITS FEET IN CLASS, THERE MUST BE A MINIMUM OF 2 HOURS OF OUTSIDE REHEARSAL. LINES MUST BE ACCURATELY MEMORIZED BY SECOND "ON FEET" IN-CLASS REHEARSAL ( the first read in chairs not included here as an in-class rehearsal)*

**Assessment of "Participation"** *15% of the final grade is earned through class participation. This will be defined as:*

- *Students are required to be present and on time for all classes and scheduled sessions unless they are genuinely too ill to attend or affected by unavoidable personal or external circumstances. If the student has more than 2 absences or late arrivals during the course they will not be able to fulfill their ability to fully participate in class. Additionally, students must keep the teacher informed of any absence or late arrival IN ADVANCE. Failure to do so also constitutes a lack of participation and points will be deducted.*
- *Printed copies of all scenes, monologues and play scripts must be brought to every class meeting. No electronic copies (laptops, tablets, phones) may be used in class*
- *Appropriate rehearsal clothing and props for ALL EXERCISES AND IN CLASS REHEARSALS required.*
- *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 professor and fellow students on one's own work.*
- *Meeting all assignment deadlines.*
- *Memorization of assigned material.*
- *Availability to fellow classmates to rehearse outside class.*

## Grades

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Style Teaching Segment	10	10
Group Scene A	15	15
Group Scene B	15	15
MID- TERM Scene Presentation ( Final presentation of Scene #1)	20	20
Completed prompt book / actor homework	15	15
Final ( Final presentation of Scene #2)	20	20
Cumulative Active Class Participation / Contribution	15	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

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

## Assignment Rubrics

Available on blackboard

## Assignment Submission Policy

Written work due per schedule below

## Grading Timeline

Per class schedule / at time of presentation of various graded assignments. If a student is concerned about their grade or progress in class, they should make an appointment to discuss this with the professor.

Midterm grades will reflect only a “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” score.

## 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
- If you are outside the studio while class is in session for any reason **USE the window of the classroom to determine if work is happening on the floor and WAIT** until the work is finished to re-enter
- 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

- **Additional Policies** (*continued...*)
- Use of cell phones in class will result in 10-point overall grade reduction for each incident – I will call you out in front of the entire class - so you have fair warning now.
- 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 takes place at the beach. Wear appropriate footwear for the character and time period.
- Please refrain from side comments and conversations with your classmates or distracting unfocused unprofessional behavior during class – you are expected to practice the focused respectful behavior displayed in the professional world and in keeping with the mature professional culture of SDA. Behave as an observing participant the way you would want the class to behave when you are on the floor working.

### **Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

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

#### Week 1: 1/13 - 17

- Discuss student expectations, course goals, requirements
- View film of “The Country Wife” & “The Favorite”
- Weekend Homework:  
Read PDF readings provided on Restoration and High Comedy

#### Week 2: 1/20 ( **No Class Monday:** Martin Luther King Jr. Day) – 1/24

- Wednesday: Howard Costume Presentation
- Weekend Homework:  
PDF reading “ The Physical Lives of the Characters”  
Read and prepare Operative word / Similitude/ Epigram assignment

#### Week 3: 1/27 - 1/31

- In- class discussion of weekend reading
- In class exercises with language ( Operative word/ Epigram/ Similitude)
- Period and Style workshop “Dance & Etiquite Master” assignment
- Weekend Homework:  
Read The Relapse by John Vanbrugh  
Read The Country Wife by William Wycherly

#### Week 4: 2/3 – 2/7

- In class exercises with language
- Period and Style workshop “Dance & Etiquite Master” assignment
- Assign group scenes
- In – class workshop of group scenes
- Review Character Analysis Sheet
- Homework :  
Begin preliminary Prompt Book work/ Character Analysis Sheet  
Rehearse group scenes out of class

Week 5: 2/10 – 2/14

- Group Scene #2
- First pass of “The Relapse” / “The Country Wife” scenes in chairs.
- In class exercises
- In class rehearsals/workshops
- Homework: Rehearse scenes, work on prompt book per guidelines provided

Week 6 : 2/17 ( **Monday OFF – Presidents Day**) – 2/21

- First pass of “The Relapse” / “The Country Wife” scenes on feet .
- In class exercises
- In class rehearsals/workshops
- Homework: Rehearse scenes, work on prompt book per guidelines provided

Week 7 : 2/24 - 2/28

- In class rehearsals/workshops
- Homework: Rehearse scenes, work on prompt book per guidelines provided

Week 8 : 3/2 - 3/6

- In Class Rehearsals / Workshops
- Homework: Rehearse scenes, work on prompt book per guidelines provided

Week 9 : 3/9 - 3/13

- In Class Rehearsals / Workshops
- MIDTERM Presentation of Scene # 1
- In class reading of “The Constant Wife ” by Somerset Maugham
- Homework: Rehearse scenes, work on prompt book per guidelines provided

Week 10 : 3/16- 3/20 SPRING BREAK!

Week 11- 16 : 3/23 – 5/1

- In-Class Rehearsals Scene #2
- Homework: Rehearse scenes, Read all full plays from which scenes are being used ,work on prompt book per guidelines provided
- Various assignments TBD

Some Recommended Texts (of many):

Acting in High Comedy by Maria Aitken, Applause  
Delicious Dissembling, Suzanne M Ramczyk. Heinemann  
Playing Period Plays, Lyn Oxenford, The Coach House Press

These books are available from Amazon.com  
And can also be found at Samuel French in Hollywood.

**FINAL DAY OF CLASS**

Friday, May 1 2020

**FINAL EXAM**

Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 11am-1pm. MCC 109

The Final is dictated by the creative process of the class so specifics will be discussed later in the semester.

## 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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)