

THTR 101
INTRODUCTION TO ACTING
Units: 4
Semester: Fall 2020
Days: Monday & Wednesday, 8am-9:50am
Location: Online
ZOOM LINK: (found on class Blackboard page)

Instructor: RODNEY TO
Office Hours: (Per request)
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“Acting is a craft, not unlike cobbling. A cobbler uses various techniques she/he has learned over the years to make or repair a pair of shoes. Since each pair is unique, some techniques will work and others will not. The same can be said about each acting experience. I will present to you an array of methods, techniques, and anecdotes that I have found useful in my own experience. My hope is that by the end of the course, you will have a solid understanding of what methods and tools work for you as an actor. This class is not about one’s talent. Instead, it is about your willingness and commitment to learning and growing as an artist.” - Unknown

Course Description and Overview

This course is an introduction to the study, discipline, and appreciation of Acting. It is intended to be the outset of the acting student’s discovery of various techniques, skillsets, and emotional levels that will comprise their unique contribution to the characters they will portray in their work and hopefully, expand their curiosity, appreciation, understanding, and compassion of the world at large. Through readings, games, voice/speech/movement exercises, constructive discourse, & witnessing productions, students will gain the essential foundational acting tools necessary to continue on their journey to becoming professional actors.

Learning Objectives

Throughout this course, students will:

- Be able to speak on the experts of the craft (Hagen, Meisner, Stanislavski, etc.) who have laid the foundation for many standard acting techniques employed today and differentiate their techniques and pedagogies.
- Utilize a myriad of basic theater games and identify their practical use in fostering technique, physicality, accessing emotion, and/or encouraging ensemble work essential to the theatre.
- Have comprehensive knowledge of the fundamental language (terminology and definitions, references, etc.) involved in Theatre, TV, & Film acting.
- Keep a personal journal which will log the student’s personal daily discoveries throughout the semester.
- Gain understanding of the true discipline that is essential to the life of an actor. We will focus on the *process* which is paramount, the *result* being inconsequential.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Respect for Acting (*abbreviated as R4A here)

by Uta Hagen

with Haskel Frankel

Note about R4A: I encourage the student to obtain a hard copy (either hard or soft cover) of the book rather than a digital copy, which will continue to be an invaluable resource for years to come. This is *not* required. It is available in the campus bookstore, but also (cheaper) online via Amazon.

Journals

Students are required to keep an online journal in this class using Blackboard, which is available for all enrolled students. The link to this Journal is under the 'CONTENT' section on your Blackboard page. **Only the student and instructor have access to reading your personal entries.** Nothing will be read by or to the class without your permission. *Respecting your privacy is very important.*

You will be prompted when to make a specific entry. Entries may be made at the end of class, but not every class. In addition, random entries will be prompted by me throughout the semester and *may* be subsequently read in class and incorporated into class exercises.

Also, feel free to journal anytime throughout the semester without prompting. I encourage you to take your own initiative in this regard. Hopefully, you will find it useful and gratifying. Again, nothing personal will be read without your permission.

You will be graded on the consistency of your mature journaling in this course.

USC Technology Support Links :

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

GRADING: Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

Grading Criteria:

- No Acting class should be a talent competition. You will *not* be graded based on your "talent". You *will* be graded on your efforts in uncovering and fostering it.
- The quality of work for all components (see *Grading Breakdown*) is determined by the willingness & thoroughness of the effort, class contributions, comprehension, process, follow-through, rehearsal, and the imagination displayed.

Grading Scale:

A work of excellent quality / A = 100-95, A- = 94-90

B work of good quality / B+ = 89-87, B = 86-83, B- = 82-80

C work of average quality / C+ = 79-77, C = 76-73, C- = 72-70

D work of below average quality / D+ = 69-67, D = 66-63, D- = 62-60

F work of poor, inadequate quality / F = 59 and below

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 in-class participation. Grades will be weighted towards the negative end of the scale for those with POOR in-class participation.
- I am available to discuss work and progress at anytime.

Grading Breakdown:

Written Assignments/Analyses from R4A	15pts
Scenes/Scene work	30pts
Written analyses from plays (TBA)	20pts
Final Scene Work, & Scene	20pts
Journal	5pts
Weekly participation (discussions, contributions, etc.)*	10pts

Total Points **100pts**

* **Participation:** I can't emphasize enough how much you will (also) learn from your cohort - from sitting and watching, to contributing to discussions. Being available to your fellow actors/classmates is not only respectful, but necessary in an acting class. **Therefore no absences or late arrivals will be allowed.** Participation is weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines.

Assignment Submission Policy

Games, rehearsal, scene work, class scenes, and presentations will be presented in class via Zoom. Written assignments will be either emailed or posted on Blackboard per my instruction. If a video assignment is requested, files will be uploaded and submitted through Google Drive which is provided free to all enrolled students.

LATE SUBMISSION POLICY

Assignments are expected to be completed by the due date & time. Late assignments will NOT BE ACCEPTED. I am going to treat you like mature professionals-in-training. I expect a lot from you, as you should expect from yourselves.

Timeliness in regards to both attendance and assignment deadlines really scores "bonus points" with me. Keep that in mind.

NETIQUETTE POLICY

The online learning modality for the Arts & Entertainment Industry is somewhat of a new frontier for everyone. We are discovering how to best navigate these newer practices together. While certainly not ideal, let's embrace this as an opportunity.

- I will be expecting that you do your best to treat this as a traditional classroom. Do your best to find a quiet space in your home where you can sit up comfortably and focus with little-to-no distractions or disturbances. Ideally, you have a little bit of room to move around as well. No outdoor spots unless you discuss it with me first. I am acutely aware (and sensitive to the fact) that everyone's circumstances vary, so if you're unable to find a reasonable working spot for class, please contact me privately to discuss.
- Even though we will be online and in your homes this semester, students must wear proper rehearsal clothes - loose fitting, comfortable clothing that you are ok moving around in and (possibly) getting a little dirty - no pajamas. Be professional, mature, and respectful: wear nothing revealing or distasteful.
- Please log-on from a desktop (or laptop) if possible. Oftentimes, I find when students log-on from their phone or tablet, the smaller nature of these devices lends itself to the student being too casual, less alert and easily distracted.
- Remember safety at all times. Do NOT drive while in class. Yes, I've seen it all. You will be logged- off and marked with an unexcused absence if you attempt to take class while driving or exercising or shopping or cleaning or babysitting - you get the idea.
- No 'other' technology during class. Phones must be on silent and put away. Unless I invite you to do so, phones may only be taken out during breaks. I am aware when you are reading your phones unnecessarily - trust me.
- Except for water, no food or drinks are allowed in class.
- No pets or any other distractions such as toys, video games, etc.
- Do not share personal class dealings and discoveries outside of class. We will be working hard to establish trust with each other. Respect is paramount. Communicate freely, honestly, and frequently, but always be respectful, mindful, mature.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

*****THIS WILL CHANGE AS NEEDED. WILL NOTIFY OF ALL CHANGES*****

	Topics/Daily Activities	Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 8/17	Intro to course	Bring in 3 personal objects	
8/19	Warm up, discussion, game	Read assigned chapters from R4A	Written Analysis #1 (Emailed to RODNEY, due Wed 8/26 before class begins)
Week 2 8/24	Warm up, discussion, game / Intro Hagen's 9Qs	Behavior Exercise (Prepare 1 min behavior) / DO NOT JUDGE. Answer Hagen's 9Q's	Email the 9Qs after u present behavior (after class) on Wed 8/26
8/26	Warm up, discussion, game / Present behavior exercises	Read assigned chapters from R4A	Written Analysis #2 (Emailed to RODNEY, due Wed 9/2 before class begins)
Week 3 8/31	Introduction to Stanislavsky's ACTION	Read Stanislavsky handout.	
9/2	Continue ACTION (discussion & exercises)		Written Analysis #3 on ACTION. (Journal entry by Wed, 9/9)
Week 4 9/7	LABOR	DAY	NO CLASS
9/9	Neutral Scenes: Why we do them? How? What questions?)/ Example in class	Choose scene w/ scene partner	Rehearse 1st Neutral Scene w/ scene partner

Week 5			
9/14	Present 1st Neutral Scene	Choose scene & partner	Rehearse 2nd Neutral Scene
9/16	Present 2nd Neutral Scene (Neutral scenes cont'd)	Read Play #1, OUR TOWN by Wilder	Play Analysis #1 due Sunday, 9/20. Emailed to Rodney by 12n, SUNDAY!
Week 6			
9/21	Discuss OUR TOWN	Pick SM monologue/Uta 9Qs	9Qs emailed to Rodney (TBA)
9/23	Continue OUR TOWN discussion	Rehearse SM monologue of choice	
Week 7			
9/28	OUR TOWN monologues	Continue reading R4A	Written Analysis #3 on R4A textbook (Emailed to RODNEY, due Mon,10/5)
9/30	OUR TOWN monologues (cont'd.)	Read play #2 (TBA)	
Week 8			
10/5	Discuss Play #2	Play #2 Analysis / Questions for Guest Speaker	Play #2 Analysis due Monday, 10/12
10/7	GUEST SPEAKER/ DISCUSSION (TBA)	Begin reading Play #3 (TBA)	
Week 9			
10/12	Discuss Play #3	Written Play Analysis #3/ choose scene partner & scene	Analysis Due TBA / REHEARSE w/ scene partner
10/14	Play #3 cont'd. / Scenework in class	Begin Reading Play #4	

Week 10 10/19	Discuss Final Project	REHEARSE	
10/21	Begin Table Work for Final Scenes	REHEARSE	
Week 11 10/26	Continue Table Work for final scenes	REHEARSE	
10/28	CONTINUE WORK ON FINAL	REHEARSE	
Week 12 11/2	CONTINUE WORK ON FINAL w/ Rodney	REHEARSE	
11/4	CONTINUE FINAL RUN-THRUS (times will be assigned)	REHEARSE / Prepare Biz Questions for Rodney	
Week 13 11/9	Wrap up week / Business Lecture	Continue to rehearse FINAL scenes!	
11/11	Wrap up week/Business lecture(cont'd)		

Final Examination Date: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 8am to 10am.

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, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplcity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/ notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.