

# USC School of Dramatic Arts

## **SDA #115 Movement I**

**Fall 2020 – Mondays and Wednesdays – 8am until 9:50am**

**Location:** Online

**Instructor:** Stephanie Shroyer

**Office:** MCC 204

**Office Hours:** Mon. 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. (by appointment please). Students are encouraged to use this as an opportunity to speak privately with the instructor about individual in-class progress

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

### **Course Description:**

Movement I begins the actor's physical training of the body as a principle instrument for expression and communication. Awareness and control of the physical instrument is explored through mind-body techniques and improvisation. The work focuses on defining and developing a core physical discipline that provides the philosophical and aesthetic spine of the physical training program in the subsequent 3 ½ years. Concentration emphasizes the notion of play; infusing movement with breath; breath with imagery; and imagery leading to impulse for physical action.

### **Learning Objectives**

- a. At the conclusion of this course the student will have constructed an individualized physical warm-up for the actor.
- b. At the conclusion of this course the student will have demonstrated shared vernacular that precedes the construction of a group physical warm-up.
- c. To observe, analyze and hypothesize the physical trajectory for addressing inhibitive learned/habitual physical patterns of oneself.
- d. To observe, analyze and hypothesize the physical trajectory for addressing inhibitive learned/habitual physical patterns of another.
- e. To devise, rehearse and present an original two-person scene according to the physical principles presented in Movement I.

### **Learning Aspirations**

- a. To cultivate a pervasive “questioning” state of mind predicated on a commitment to taking responsibility for self.
- b. To hone a flexible and communicative physical instrument capable of sending and receiving impulse.
- c. To develop mindfulness concerning individual tension and resistance patterns.
- d. To develop the ability to observe, identify and subsequently explore within and embody form.
- e. The ability to commit to imagery and exhibit sustained intent throughout all effort.

**Prerequisite(s):** Admittance to the BFA in Acting for Stage, Screen and New Media

**Co-Requisite (s):** THTR 120A, THTR 140A and THTR 125

**Concurrent Enrollment:** THTR 120A, THTR 140A and THTR 125  
**Recommended Preparation:** N/A

### Course Notes, Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- Required Text: Course reader- Movement for the Actor by Lucille S. Rubin.
- Instructor may supply handouts and excerpts from suitable texts as needed.
- Notebook/Journal suitable for daily notations of curiosities and progress and collecting class notes/handouts.
- The Syllabus is posted on Blackboard. Necessary day to day updates and communications will be done via USC email.

### Description and Assessment of Assignments (& Due Dates)

- Various out of class observation assignments throughout semester as necessary for class work.
- Present at our second class meeting a contemporary American, Naturalistic monologue to assess baseline patterns of tension. **Due Aug. 19<sup>th</sup>.**
- Keep a movement observation journal. Content includes but is not limited to; class notes and other acquired pertinent information as well as your thoughts and responses to experience during your process journey. This journal will be useful in written assignments #1 and #2. **Due Wed. Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>.**
- Midterm Exercise: Private Moment Exercise. **Due Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.**
- Written Assignment #1 Observation, Analysis, Hypothesis for Remedy of Held Tension Patterns/Self.  
 To hypothesize a physical trajectory for addressing your inhibitive learned/habitual physical patterns of your physical instrument, write a Personal Observation & Assessment of your movement discoveries, difficulties and questions. Please consider and incorporate associations made between movement, voice, text and acting classes. **Due Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>.**
- Written Assignment #2. Observation, Analysis, Hypothesis for Remedy of Held Tension Patterns/Classmate.  
 Case Study of your choice. Select one individual from performance class. Observe, analyze and assess his/her movement and physical presence on an ongoing basis throughout the semester. Are there differences in “pedestrian” and “performance” tension/expression patterns? Using your growing understanding of concepts explored this semester in 115; hypothesize the strengths and territories in need of attention as exhibited by your case study. Finally, conceptualize a path of attention in the physical work that would address your hypotheses. **Due Mon. Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>.**  
**\*Note about Written Assignment #2: A necessary but often overlooked area of physical training is the ability to see on others what we might not be readily able to observe in ourselves. There is great potential for personal growth by first looking out in order to see in.**
- Final Exam Exercise: Presentation of your dynamically sequenced text accompanied by written documentation of the movement vocabulary explored and utilized in the process. This is the devised, rehearsed original two-person scene begun for midterm and expanded according to the physical principles presented in Movement I. **Due: Wed. Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>, 8-10a.m.**

### Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

100 possible points. All points are awarded and based on prompt and effective completion of the stated requirements.

30 pts	Classwork. Evaluation is based on the student's regular participation, completeness of preparation and concentration during exercises.
20	Journals
10	Midterm: Private Moment Exercise
10	Written Assignment #1: Observations of Held Tension Patterns/self
10	Written Assignment #2: Observation of Held Tension Patterns/classmate
20	Final: Nonsense Project

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Classwork	30	30%
Journals	20	20%
Written Assignment #1	10	10%
Written Assignment #2	10	10%
Midterm	10	10%
Final	20	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Assignment Submission Policy and Grading Timeline

- Assignments due as described above.
- Papers must be uploaded to Blackboard and emailed to me at shroyer@usc.edu.
- Formalized grading of performance and written work can be expected within 3 class sessions from the due date.

### Additional Policies

Notes from the Instructor

- The principles introduced in Movement I are processes that take time to absorb and understand.
- Do not become impatient.
- Remain positive and curious about the work.
- Remember the results are not instantaneous.
- Your commitment to a physically oriented process is of much greater importance than definitive result.
- Resist judgment and expectation of any specific outcome.
- Explore.
- Play.
- Be fearlessly inventive within the parameters given.
- Each student works and learns in a unique manner.

### Attendance and Time Requirements

- Students are expected to be in class: dressed, and ready to work by 8:00 a.m. sharp.
- Attendance is mandatory.
- Three episodes of tardiness equal 1 absence.
- Late work will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor and then will be reflected in the grade by docking no less than 2 points per day.
- Check your USC email regularly for scheduling changes and other timely information.

### Classroom Rules

- Unless otherwise directed, students should dress in movement attire. It is of the utmost of importance to be able to observe physique and form. Sweats, sports shorts, fitted yoga pants, leggings, etc. are appropriate. No Jeans!! No belts. No shoes. Certain exercises/explorations will require specific clothing, shoes and props.
- Your THTR 115 Zoom Room should, ideally, provide the ability to move in a somewhat open space. We will work together to develop the workspace your individual environs can provide.
- Keep bottled water handy.
- A towel is recommended.
- Cell phones are to be turned off and put away for the duration of class.

### Course Schedule and Weekly Breakdown

**Weeks one thru five will center on preparing the actor's physical instrument for the work at hand and on defining the parameters for spontaneous free "play" evolving from impulse. "Introduction to the Tool box"**

Week 1	8/17	Introduction. Totem Exercise.
	8/19	Baseline Patterns/Monologues.
Week 2	8/24	Building the warm-up. (Have read pp.1-27 in the course reader)
	8/26	Building the warm-up continued. (new item open in BB content)
Week 3	8/31	Building the warm-up. The Encounter (a creative exercise).
		Foundations: "Breath, Image, Action.
	9/2	Building the warm-up. The Encounter con't
		Foundations: "Trust".
Week 4	9/7	Labor Day. University Holiday.
	9/9	The Warm-up.
		Foundations: "Seeing" & "Play"
Week 5	9/14	The Warm-up.
		Foundations: "Unification". Ensemble. Introduction of Shared Imagery.
		Read pp. 101-121 in the reader by 9/26.
	9/16	The Warm-up.
		"Unification". Ensemble. Introduction of Shared Imagery con't.

**Weeks six thru nine will center on catalysts for the actors' imagery and the dynamic sequencing of impulse into relationship and story.  
"Expanding the Tool box"**

Week 6	9/21	The Warm-up. Foundations: "Space/Reality of Doing": Individual Imagery. <i>Objects.</i>
	9/23	The Warm-up. Foundations: "Space/Reality of Doing": Individual Imagery. <i>Spatial.</i>
Week 7	9/28	The Warm-up. Foundations "Space/Reality of Doing": Shared Imagery. Relationship/Place/Situational givens. Assign Private Moment Object Exercise
	9/30	The Warm-up. "Space/Reality of Doing"
Week 8	10/5	The Warm-up. Foundations: "Space/Reality of Doing": First Share Private Moment Exercises.
	10/7	The Warm-up. "Space/Reality of Doing": First Share Private Moment Exercises. <b>Paper #1 Due.</b>
Week 9	10/12	<b>Midterm Share:</b> Private Moment Exercises (re-work of first share from Week 8).
	10/14	<b>Midterm shares cont.</b> Nonsense Scenes/Partners assigned.

**Weeks ten thru thirteen will center on utilization of acquired tools as communicative means of affecting change in the other.  
"Applying the Tool box"**

Week 10	10/19	The Warm-up. First Share Nonsense Scenes.
	10/21	The Warm-up. Dynamic Sequencing: The catalyst of shape and sound...
Week 11	10/26	The Warm-up. Dynamic Sequencing: The catalyst of environment and objects...
	10/28	The Warm-up. Dynamic Sequencing: The catalyst of spoken word and physical text...
Week 12	11/2	The Warm-up. Dynamic Sequencing: Application to projects.
	11/4	Application to projects cont.
Week 13	11/9	The Warm-up. Dynamic Sequencing of developed texts: Second Share.
	11/11	Semester Wrap-up. <b>Paper #2 Due.</b>

**Final Exam: Final share of the Nonsense Projects. Journals due. Wed. Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>, 8-10a.m.**

\*\*\*Course Schedule subject to change according to the needs and progress of the group\*\*\*

## 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.

### 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](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](https://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](https://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](https://dps.usc.edu)

**USC Technology Support Links**

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

*\*\*This syllabus serves as your contract for course #115, Fall Semester 2020.\*\**