

352a Intermediate Acting

Units: 2 units

T/Th 8am - 9:50am

**Location:** zoom

**Instructor:** Laura Flanagan

**Office:** [lgoldsch@usc.edu](mailto:lgoldsch@usc.edu) / 646-342-5314

**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Contact Info:** [lgoldsch@usc.edu](mailto:lgoldsch@usc.edu) - see above

**Course Description: (From the Catalogue)**

**Building and sustaining character in drama with special focus on realism, subtext, heightened language and period style: 19th and Early 20th Century Realism.**

**Course Description**

All great plays speak to and about how we live and survive as a species: in society, with each other, and with ourselves. They tell us something revelatory and truthful about ourselves that illuminates our present moment. They are not museum pieces of past greatness, nor are they historical documents to be recreated. The research and dramaturgy needed to engage with them deeply as actors is about learning what you need to know about the writing so you can step into it now, and make it live now, in this moment. Thus, every great play is a blue-print for understanding our present moment better. Every great writer gives us insight into ourselves now, not just in the past. As actors our job is to step into the character's shoes and act "as if" we were that person in that situation. If the play happens to be in 19th century and early twentieth century Russia, we must learn how to step into that moment "as if" it were now and to bring the immediacy of our present moment to that imaginative reality. As actors, we need to engage our imagination actively. We need to become psycho-physical athletes, capable of allowing the workings of our imaginations to affect our bodies and our psychology, to spur us to action and engage our deepest desires and intentions.

We will work with Chekhov and his adaptors. We will see how learning how to act his plays allows us greater access to ourselves as performers and helps us interpret and understand how to play his adaptors.

**Learning Objectives**

- Connect to our characters intention deeply and personally and be able to articulate for ourselves what those intentions are.
- In order to do this we will map out our personal active analysis for each scene using the language of Objective, Action, Obstacle and Event, and find clear active language for all.
- Adjust to the onscreen modality of acting, which necessitates authentic connection to the moment, the partner and the action.
- Physicalize our actions within the zoom space.
- Adapt, create, enliven and discover ourselves as performers in the material now on zoom.

**Prerequisite(s):** 252a,b

## Course Notes

This course will take place on zoom, with occasional enhancements from blackboard. The majority of the class will be synchronous learning during a zoom session. Lots of rehearsal will be required. This will take place on FaceTime or Zoom.

## Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

This course requires a good internet connection, and appropriate operating systems for zoom.

## Required Readings (IN ORDER OF HOW THEY APPEAR IN THE SYLLABUS)

- Hagen, Uta: "The First Exercise: Physical Destination" - PDF on Blackboard
- "the Lady with the Lap Dog" by Anton Chekhov; <http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/LadyWith.shtml>. (free link to a version of it on the web..)
- The Plays of Anton Chekhov, translated by Paul Schmidt: <https://www.powells.com/book/plays-of-anton-chekhov-9780060928759>
- *El Nogalar* by Tanya Saracho; <https://www.concordtheatricals.com/s/61606/el-nogalar>
- *Magnolia* by Regina Taylor: PDF available in blackboard

**Recommended Readings:** (these are not required, but I highly recommend them for all Chekhov enthusiasts or those who feel they need more information about the works and the man who wrote them)

- **Reading Chekhov** by Janet Malcolm; <https://www.powells.com/searchresults?keyword=Janet+Malcom+Chekhov>
- **Understanding Chekhov a Critical Study of Chekhov's prose and plays** by Donald Rayfield <https://www.powells.com/book/understanding-chekhov-a-critical-study-of-chekhovs-prose-drama-9780299163143>

*I am offering links to all readings. Those that have to be purchased, I am providing information on how to buy them at alternate booksellers. Powells bookstore in Portland Oregon is not the fastest but it is employing a lot of hard working people in Portland, OR and by supporting them we are supporting local bookstores and many good jobs supported by a responsible company that cares about it's employees. Tanya Saracho's play is only available through Samuel French - which is also a small press. You can of course buy them all from Amazon, but if you'd like to spend your money elsewhere I offer you these alternatives.*

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

- *Journal* - you will keep a journal of your classwork/zoom sessions. After each zoom class you will take a moment to reflect on what you learned, or didn't, during the zoom. This can be hand written if you like (I encourage all time spent OFF SCREEN these days) but you must upload photos of it to your blackboard journal. You can also just type in your blackboard journal. Ideas for questions you might like to think of when you are doing your journal: what I found inspiring today - What lesson was reinforced today - What was I confused by today - what connection did I make to my own work or process today - what do I wish we'd done today instead of what we did. You need not answer all these questions, or any of these questions if you have your own. Use this as a guide. Your journal is an honest reflection on your experience on zoom. It's a chance for you to reflect deeply for yourself and build the connection with yourself that you need for your creative work.

- *Rehearsal Reports* - You must rehearse three times a week with your scene partner(s). This will require that you fill out a rehearsal report on blackboard for each rehearsal. Each group will submit one rehearsal report for the week. If you fail to turn in your rehearsal reports you will not be able to show your work that week on zoom. The rehearsal report will contain: a. who rehearsed, b. what you worked on, c. for how long, d. what was the focus of the rehearsal, e. what challenges and/or achievements you had.
- *Active Analysis/ Script Book* - This will be due at Midterm and at the Final. The Midterm will contain your active analysis for your Etude. Etude is your improvised version of your scene(s). The final will contain the active analysis for your final performance. The Active Analysis will be taught in week three of class: We will learn to breakdown our script into useable, workable active terms that will help us chart ourselves as actor/ characters through the through line of the play. Then once we go to text in week 6, we will redo our active analysis to reflect more closely the actual text of the play. Write your active analysis in pencil as you will probably be continuously updating and changing it as we work through the play.

### Grading Breakdown

Journal	25	25%
Rehearsal Reports	25	25%
Active Analysis	12.5	12.5%
Midterm Performance	12.5%	12.5%
Final	25	25%

### Grading Scale (Example)

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 Submission Policy

Assignments will be submitted through blackboard and USC email.

### Grading Timeline

Journals will be graded weekly.

Scene analysis

Midterm and Final grades will be available four days after the test.

### Additional Policies

Students are expected to attend all synchronous zoom meetings. Students are expected to arrive on time in the zoom classroom, ready to work. Journals will be checked weekly to make sure that students are keeping up with their work. I will be available for office hours as much as possible for any individual concerns, challenges and needs that come during the course of the class.

### Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

(Please refer to the [Contact Hours Reference](#) guide.)

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
<b>Week 1</b> August 17	T: Introduction to each other, games, welcome back to class. Introduction to Chekhov and why we study him and how he influenced the theater. Th: more games and introduction to Private Moment Exercise and ACT ONE of The Cherry Orchard/ worked and discussed.	<b>"Lady with the Lapdog"</b>  <b>"The Cherry Orchard" - Paul Schmidt Translation</b>	<b>Tuesday: Have read "Lady with the Lapdog"</b>  <b>Thursday: prepare zoom private moment exercise, do your journal assignment, and have read "The Cherry Orchard" for class reading and discussion.</b>
<b>Week 2</b> August 24	T: more Private moment exercises: Begin work on "The Cherry Orchard" - discuss Active Analysis. Th: finish private moment exercise, and continue work on The Cherry Orchard discussion of THE ETUDE		Scene Breakdown: "The Cherry Orchard" / Etude rehearsals in class. First rehearsal report due Thursday. Journal assignments due Tuesday Thursday as well.
<b>Week 3</b> August 31	T: Work on Scenes Th: Work on Scenes	Rehearsal for your scene	Second Rehearsal Report Due Thursday. Journal Assignment Due Thursday.
<b>Week 4</b> September 7	T: Work on Scenes Th: Work on Scenes		<b>Third Rehearsal Report Due Thursday: Journal Assignment Due</b>
<b>Week 5</b> Sept. 14	T: Work on Scenes Th: Work on Scenes		<b>Fourth Rehearsal Report Due Thursday: Journal Assignment Due Group REHEARSAL due as well</b>

<b>Week 6</b> Sept. 21	<b>MIDTERM</b>	<b>Read: Magnolia and El Nogalar</b>	<b>Tuesday: PERFORMANCE OF FULL ETUDE ACT ONE OF THE CHERRY ORCHARD. DUE: Analysis of Your Character's Journey through the play. Talk and reflection afterwards. Thursday: Introduction to Magnolia and El Nogalar...</b>
<b>Week 7</b> Sept. 28	T: Work on Scenes Th: Work on Scenes	"	<b>Fifth Rehearsal Report Due on Thursday/ Journal Due on Thursday</b>
<b>Week 8</b> Oct. 5	T: Work on Scenes Th: Work on Scenes	"	<b>Sixth Rehearsal Report Due on Thursday/ Journal Due on Thursday</b>
<b>Week 9</b> Oct. 12	T: Work on Scenes Th: Work on Scenes		<b>Seventh Rehearsal Report Due on Thursday/ Journal Due on Thursday</b>
<b>Week 10</b> Oct. 19	T: Work on Scenes Th: Perform Final Scenes	"	<b>1. Eighth Rehearsal Report Due on Thursday/2. Journal / Active Analysis of your scene Due on Thursday.</b>
<b>Week 11</b> Oct. 26	T: Back to "The Cherry Orchard" - adding text		<b>Ninth Rehearsal Report Due on Thursday/ Journal Due</b>
<b>Week 12</b> Nov. 2			<b>Tenth Rehearsal Report Due Journal Due</b>
<b>Week 13</b> Nov. 9	T: Back to "The Cherry Orchard" - adding text		<b>Final Rehearsal Report Due! Final Journal Entries Due</b>
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM Final Performance of The Cherry Orchard and related scenes.</b>	<b>TUESDAY NOVEMBER 17th 8am - 10am (possibly subject to change by consensus of class...)</b>	<b>Full Active Analysis of the script -</b>
<b>Week 15</b>			
<b>FINAL</b>			

#### **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)