

THTR 480a

Fall 2020:

Location:

Instructor:

Office:

Office Hours:

Final Exam:

Contact Info:

I.T. Help:

Performance For Camera (63120)

Thursday, 9am — 11:50am

ONLINE

Gabriella Santinelli

ONLINE

By Appointment

Thurs, Nov 19th || 8am — 10am

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consult@usc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Structured to address the intersection between the rigorous technical demands of on-camera acting and the actor's creative, expressive, artistic and career aspirations. Students will be introduced to concepts that deepen their understanding of the similarities and differences between acting live on stage versus acting for the camera, and develop a heightened awareness of their evolving authentic essence, to hone a unique brand for confident professional entry into the entertainment industry.

OVERVIEW

This professional-level "studio" type class introduces the fundamentals of screen acting by exploring the distinctions between stage and screen acting. Prepared classwork identifies the technical implications of these differences. Assigned scenework will be based upon an ongoing collaborative exploration of each actor's unique essence.

Controlled exposure to on-camera performance dynamics prompts students to define and implement strategies for mastering the parameters specific to on-camera acting, 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 one written quiz will be based), viewing iconic and inclusive film clips, exploratory exercises, and bespoke scenework.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Transcend theoretical knowledge and technical application to create memorable, repeatable screen performances
- Develop professional work habits to fully prepare for an audition or a job in TV and Film

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

1. Confidently slate, audition and act on camera, using text that definitively showcases the actor's innate essence/type
2. Master on-camera skills and techniques used by seasoned screen actors
3. Prepare scripts and roles for optimal professionalism in the workplace

Prerequisites

ONE from THTR 252a or THTR 105

Course Notes

This course will be held solely online. Class meetings will be held via Zoom.

Assignments for next week's class meeting will become available on Blackboard immediately after class ends.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Desktop or laptop with up-to-date version of Zoom required for all students.

REQUIRED READING (available at USC Bookstore, Amazon, etc)

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

Acting in Film, Michael Caine. Applause

RECOMMENDED READING For further reading, consider the following texts to enhance your on-camera technique

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

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

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

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

The Principles of Psychology, Vol.1, Chapter 4: Habit, William James. *PDF available online

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

1. **printed (hard) copy of scenes for marking with a pencil: absolutely NO rehearsing or "auditioning" from devices**
2. **multi-colored pen/pencils** (min. four colors): e.g. https://smile.amazon.com/dp/B01N4S92UB/?coliid=I1BLPGKIVMNH2R&colid=3UMCSJTXHOZC2&psc=1&ref_=lv_ov_lig_dp_it
3. ***In lieu of SD cards to review screen work, ZOOM VIDEO RECORDINGS will be made readily accessible after class**

DESCRIPTION OF GRADING CRITERIA & ASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS

Grading Breakdown

In-Class Participation	15%
In-Class Exercises	15%
Mid-Term Scenework	15%
<i>Find Your Niche</i> Presentation	15%
Written Quiz	15%
<u>Final Scenework</u>	25%
Total	100%

- **IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION (15%):** Intellectual engagement is integral to the learning process. Attendance is requisite to engage in acting exercises. However, thorough preparation of academic course materials (reading w/ supporting podcasts & film clips) will lead to balanced, inclusive class discussions, which comprise an essential aspect of this course.
- **IN-CLASS EXERCISES (15%):** Exercises will be chosen by A. the professor (e.g. "Actor's Essence" surveys, audition technique & audition sides) and/or B. the students. Exercises will be presented each week throughout the semester. *For each chapter of Secrets of Screen Acting (p.201-210), there is a corresponding list of exercises. Students will prepare the exercise of their choice to spearhead technical skillsets and develop the screen acting discipline of *rehearsing on one's own*.
- **MIDTERM SCENEWORK (15%):** Considering input from Actor's Essence surveys, and individualized discussions of each actor's casting type, scenes will be assigned, then performed, incorporating on-screen techniques learned thus far.
- **FIND YOUR NICHE PRESENTATION (15%):** The culmination of our exploration into each actor's unique "brand", students share specific casting "niche" upon which to base a confident entry into the entertainment industry.
- **QUIZ (15%):** A firm awareness of on-the-job etiquette and technical aspects of filmmaking are of utmost importance for the screen actor. The quiz will be short answer. Students will choose to answer TEN out of FIFTEEN questions, allowing them to expand upon their knowledge and come to their own insights about the actor's role within the making of a film.
- **FINAL SCENEWORK (25%):** Students will be cast in a TV Pilot (wherever possible) or in individually curated scenes, capitalizing on each actor's type. Successful scenework will demonstrate the actor's understanding and implementation of the newly acquired "Secrets of Screen Acting", to the best of their ability, given the requirements of the mise-en-scene.

IMPORTANT NOTE on FINAL EXAMS

- All undergraduate classes must meet for the Final Examination as established by the University, and will take place according to the USC Final Examination Schedule.
- Final Examinations may not be held on the last day of classes.
- **CHECK NOW to troubleshoot any conflicting final exam schedules, as full attendance during our live performance final is crucial to your success, as well as to the success of your scene partner(s).**

GRADING SCALE for SDA

A indicates work of EXCELLENT quality; "EXCELLENT" indicates a clear understanding of the material, coupled with original and creative insight.

B indicates work of GOOD quality; "GOOD" demonstrates a clear understanding of the material.

C indicates work of AVERAGE quality; "AVERAGE" indicates a general understanding of the material, but with some gaps.

D indicates work of BELOW AVERAGE or POOR quality; "POOR" indicates identifiable gaps in understanding the material.

F indicates INADEQUATE work, or FAILURE; "FAILURE" is the result of not completing assignments coupled with poor understanding of the material.

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

ADDITIONAL GRADING CRITERIA

When the average falls between two grades, the final grade will be weighted toward the positive end of the scale for students whose attendance and participation in class have been good, but will be weighted toward the negative end of the scale for those with poor attendance and participation.

The SDA GUIDELINES on GRADING

- 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.)
- **No late assignments, projects, exams, papers, or exercises shall be accepted**, unless extensions have been arranged between student and teacher in advance, or unless exceptional circumstances occur.

ATTENDANCE & 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.
- **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:** There shall be no unexcused absences. An unexcused absence will result in a ZERO for In-Class Participation and In-Class Exercises.
- **TARDIES:** Late arrivals will not be allowed to join class.

Course Schedule — Weekly Breakdown (*subject to change; refer to Blackboard for Podcast links & Film clips)

Week 1 / CLASS 1 (Thurs, Aug 20)

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 (5 tracks / 25 mins), ETIQUETTE (5 tracks / 25 mins)
- **Film Clips:**
 - *Casablanca*
 - *A Few Good Men*

Week 2 / CLASS 2 (Thurs, Aug 27)

Preparation for Class 2:

- **Complete and tally "Words of Essence" Survey**
- **Read SoSA:** Chapter 7 "Typecasting"
- **Choose & Prepare:** ONE EXERCISE from SoSA Acting Exercises #1-#4 (p.203-204) OR #31 - #36 (p.207) OR create an exercise from Checklist A or from a PODCAST
 - *Throughout the semester, actors choosing to work in pairs need only execute one combined exercise*
 - *Please ask Gaby any questions you may have, at any time, regarding anything —> email is best for this*
- **Podcasts:** VERSATILITY (6 tracks / 30 mins)
- **Film Clips:**
 - *Fences*
 - *Sophie's Choice*

Week 3 / CLASS 3 (Thurs, Sept 3)

Preparation for Class 3:

- **Read SoSA:** Chapter 6 "Sound and Vocal Levels"
- **Read Checklist D:** Voice (SoSA p.196-197)
- **Choose & Prepare:** ONE EXERCISE from SoSA Acting Exercises #26 - #30 (p.206) or create an exercise from Checklist D
- **Podcasts:** VOCAL LEVELS (9 tracks / 45 mins)
- **Film Clips:**
 - *Erin Brockovich*
 - *The Big Sick*
 - *Girl, Interrupted*
 - *The Morning Show 1 & The Morning Show 2*

Week 4 / CLASS 4 (Thurs, Sept 10)

Preparation for Class 4:

- **Read SoSA:** Chapter 2 "Different Screens, Different Effects"
- **Read Checklist C:** The Picture (SoSA p.196)
- **Choose & Prepare:** ONE EXERCISE from SoSA Acting Exercises #5 - #7 (p.204) or create an exercise from Checklist C
- **Podcasts:** SIZE OF SHOT (8 tracks / 40 mins), EXAM SCENework (4 tracks / 20 mins)
- **Film Clips:**
 - *Losing Isaiah*
 - *Parasite*
 - *The Morning Show (Boardroom)*
 - *Simon Sinek Ted Talk* (18 mins)

*submit MidTerm Scenework Proposals via email w YouTube links to proposed scenes by 6pm Thur, Sept 10

Week 5 / CLASS 5 (Thurs, Sept 17)

Preparation for Class 5:

- **Read SoSA:** Chapter 3 "The Frame"
- **Choose & Prepare:** ONE EXERCISE from SoSA Acting Exercises #8 - #12 (p.204)
- **Podcasts:** FRAMING (9 tracks / 45 mins)
- **Headshots:** USPS Postage Stamps
- **Film Clips:**
 - *Django Unchained*
 - *A Few Good Men*

Week 6 / CLASS 6 (Thurs, Sept 24)

Preparation for Class 6:

- **Read SoSA:** Chapter 4 "The Camera"
- **Checklist B:** The Camera (SoSA p.195-196)
- **Choose & Prepare:** ONE EXERCISE from SoSA Acting Exercises #13 - #17 (p.205) or create an exercise from Checklist B
- **Podcasts:** CHEATING TO CAMERA (6 tracks / 30 mins), SPATIAL AWARENESS (5 tracks / 25 mins)
- **Film Clips:**
 - *Star Trek*
 - *LA LA Land*

Week 7 / CLASS 7 (Thurs, Oct 1) — MID-TERM SCENEWORK

Preparation for Class 7:

- **Read SoSA:** Chapter 10 "Rehearsals and Technicals" & Chapter 11 "Directing Actors For The Screen"
- **Film Clips:**
 - *I, Tonya*
 - *Manchester By The Sea*
 - *Schitt's Creek - On Set*
- **Class Work:** MidTerm Scenework: View clips from approved scenes; then perform scenes and compare w/ original actors

Week 8 / CLASS 8 (Thurs, Oct 8)

Preparation for Class 8:

- **Read SoSA:** Chapter 5 "Reactions And Business"
- **Checklist F:** Reactions and Business (SoSA p.198)
- **Choose & Prepare:** ONE EXERCISE from SoSA Acting Exercises #18 - #25 (p.205-206) or create exercise from Checklist F
- **Podcasts:** REACTIONS (8 tracks / 40 mins)
- **Film Clips:**
 - *L.A. Takedown vs Heat*
 - *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*
 - *Master & Commander*
 - *At Close Range*
 - *Schitt's Creek - Sebastien Raine*

Week 9 / CLASS 9 (Thurs, Oct 15)

Preparation for Class 9:

- **Read:** ACTING IN FILM, Michael Caine
- **Choose & Prepare:** ONE EXERCISE from SoSA Acting Exercises #47 - #51 (p.208-209) or a Podcast
- **Podcasts:** BUSINESS & CONTINUITY (7 tracks / 35 mins)
- **Film Clips:**
 - *Game of Thrones*
 - *Six Degrees of Separation*
 - *Dead Calm*

- **Acting In Film Master Class with Michael Caine** (60 mins): This video is NOT the entire book (*the book is a transcription of his Master Class). *WATCHING THIS VIDEO IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR READING THE BOOK.*

Week 10 / CLASS 10 (Thurs, Oct 22)

Preparation for Class 10:

- **Read SoSA:** Chapter 8 "Acting"
- **Checklist E:** Acting (SoSA p.197 - 198)
- **Choose & Prepare:** ONE EXERCISE from SoSA Acting Exercises #37 - #38 (p.207-208) or create exercise from Checklist E
- **Podcasts:** ACTING (9 tracks / 45 mins)
- **Film Clips:**
 - *Marathon Man*
 - *Love Actually Christmas Present Scene / Love Actually Karen and Harry*
 - *Kramer vs Kramer Apartment*
 - *Kramer vs Kramer Restaurant*
 - *The Hours*
 - *The Producers*

Week 11 / CLASS 11 (Thurs, Oct 29)

Preparation for Class 11:

- **Read SoSA:** Chapter 13 "The Shoot"
- **Choose & Prepare:** ONE EXERCISE from SoSA Acting Exercises #56 - #57 (p.209-210) or a Podcast
- **Podcasts:** PREPARING TO ACT (6 tracks / 30 mins), THE SHOOT (4 tracks / 20 mins)
- **Film Clips:**
 - *Stage Fright*
 - *Shaina's Sequence*
 - *Hugo*

Week 12 / CLASS 12 (Thurs, Nov 5) **COMPLETED NICHE WORKSHEETS DUE**

Preparation for Class 12:

- **Read SoSA:** Chapter 9 "Auditions" and Chapter 12 "Announcers"
- **Checklist G:** Auditions and Interviews (SoSA p.199) and **Checklist I:** Final Thoughts (SoSA p.199 - 200)
- **Choose & Prepare:** ONE EXERCISE from SoSA Acting Exercises #39 - #46 (p.208) or #52 - #55 or create an exercise from Checklist G & I or a Podcast
- **Podcasts:** AUDITIONS (10 tracks / 50 mins)
- **Film Clips:**
 - Rachel McAdams' audition for *The Notebook*
 - Henry Thomas' audition for *E.T. The Extra Terrestrial*
 - Rose Byrne's audition for *Get Him To The Greek*

Week 13 / CLASS 13 (Thurs, Nov 12) **WRITTEN QUIZ**

Preparation for Class 13:

- **Read SoSA:** Chapter 14 "The Editor and Editing" and Epilogue
- **Checklist H:** The Editor (SoSA p.199)
- **Choose & Prepare:** ONE EXERCISE from SoSA Acting Exercises #58 - #59 (p.210) or create an exercise from Checklist H
- **Podcasts:** THE EDITOR AND EDITING (6 tracks / 30 mins); EYE FLASHES / BLINKING (5 tracks / 25 mins)
- **Film Clips:**
 - *Doubt*
 - *Silver Linings Playbook*
 - *Good Will Hunting*

FINAL EXAM – Thurs, Nov 19 || 8-10am ONLINE **FINAL SCENEWORK**

Important Dates:

Fri, Sept 4: Last day to withdraw class without a "W" on transcript, or change P/NP to letter grade

Fri, Nov 6: Last day to drop with a mark 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. Secrets of Screen Acting Podcasts are shared with students by the Professor via Dropbox *for educational purposes only*. Students are strictly forbidden from sharing, posting or selling the podcasts on to third parties.

USC technology rental program

We realize that attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university's equipment rental program. To apply, please [submit an application](#). The Student Basic Needs team will contact all applicants in early August and distribute equipment to eligible applicants prior to the start of the fall semester.

USC Technology Support Links

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

ZOOM ETIQUETTE

- ★ Students must attend class as normal. Absences / tardiness will impact grades in the usual way.
- ★ Students should attend online classes online in a private space. Public spaces should be avoided.
- ★ Students should also remain in one place for the duration of the class and avoid having to move venues.
- ★ Students must appear on video, rather than voice-only.
- ★ Students are expected to follow normal classroom etiquette. No eating. No web-surfing. No texting.
- ★ Notes must be taken on paper, not on the computer or other electronic devices.
- ★ Please log on individually, not in groups.

Synchronous session recording notice

Synchronous sessions will be recorded and provided to all students asynchronously.

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC has a policy that prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

SCampus Section 11.12(B)

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

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 micro-aggressions 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/sssa

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