

USC School of Dramatic Arts

101 Introduction to Acting

Units: 4 units

M/W 8am -9:50am:

Location: PED 207

Instructor: Laura Flanagan

Office: lgoldsch@usc.edu / 646-342-5314

Office Hours: by appointment

Contact Info: lgoldsch@usc.edu - see above

Course Description: from the catalogue:

Study of diverse genres and disciplines of acting; fundamental techniques necessary for performance; scene study from contemporary text.

Course Description Continued...

This class will be an introduction to a broad range of acting techniques with a focus on building an ensemble. We have all been through a lot this last year and half... we will re-examine and create together what it means to tell a story and embody a character. We will play games and learn about ourselves and each other in an attempt to reconnect to our own heritage as individuals and our collective heritage as artists and theater makers. We will forge a new way together and cultivate our curiosity, harness our passion and expand our empathetic understanding of the human condition.

Learning Objectives

1. Work on the self - listening, awareness, overcoming self consciousness and supporting and expanding our creative impulses.
2. Work on the other - working with partners, building focus, creating the ensemble,
3. Work on the story - familiarizing yourself with common acting terms and understanding them in the context of a devised scene of your own creation, and a scene from an already written play.
4. Using yourself to embody the character in the story through action.

Prerequisite(s): none

Concurrent Enrollment: none necessary

Course Notes:

This course will be physically active. Please wear closed toe shoes (no flip flops) and clothes that you feel comfortable moving around in. Super short shorts and super tight pants or skirts that need constant adjustments are not recommended. Your body should feel comfortable and free to move. This course requires that you are present - you will not be able to be graded for time spent out of class. That said, DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU WAKE UP WITH ANY SYMPTOMS. (See below on more information on this). We must all take care of each other. I will send you back to bed if you look dicey. This course, as with this profession, requires that you take care of your body. Get sleep the night before class. Drink water before and after class; there will be no eating or drinking in the room. Eat breakfast before you get to class. Cell

phones are off for the duration of our class time. We are learning to practice being present. Part of that requires that we practice paying attention to what is in front of us, not what is in cyber space.

Also - this class will require that you rehearse with a partner outside of class. If that is not to your liking, this is not the class for you. Once we begin work on scenes, you will need to find time at least three times a week to meet with your partner(s).

Communication

This course relies on your full buy-in. We rise and fall together. That said, please reach out to me immediately if you have any thoughts or feeling you want to share either with me or with the group. I will respond to any email within 24 hours. If necessary, we will pivot to Zoom meetings - or zoom rehearsals outside of class. Most office hours will be conducted on zoom.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Though this class is scheduled to be in person, we must be flexible as the pandemic ebbs and flows. You will need access to a lap top with zoom if we need to pivot to online teaching at any time.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

All required readings and supplementary materials will be posted online during the semester.

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC policy prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. I prohibit any use of social medial in the classroom. If you post anything about this class anywhere, you will be violating class policy. See below for University regulations.

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. (SeeSection C.1 Class Notes Policy).

Course evaluation

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. You should expect to receive an email update once the system has launched to provide your feedback on this course. In addition, you are always welcome to connect with with me as the instructor to offer any feedback on the course.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

1. Journal - 25%

- after each class you will write in your blackboard journal, reflecting on lessons, experiences, challenges and connections you made in that day's class. Each synchronous class time will be represented by a journal entry. Journal entries are as long or short as they need to be. A successful journal is an honest reflection on what you did or didn't get from that days lesson.

2. Story of My Name - 10%

We will share the stories of our names with the class. You will share how you got your name, where it came from and any other relevant personal history around your first, last and middle name.

3. Action - Private Moment - Exercise - 20%

A hybrid of the famous private moment exercise and the performing an action exercise, this will culminate in a scene of your own creation with a partner.

4. Open Scene - 20%

Adding written dialogue into our repertory of skills, we will begin with simple open scenes and fill them in with given circumstance and action.

5. Work on the play - 25%.

We will work on a contemporary play and or scenes from that contemporary play expanding our skills and getting an introduction to the through-line of action.

Grading Breakdown

Journal	25	25%
Story of My Name	10	10%
Action Exercise	20	20%
Open Scene	20	20%
Playing with the Play	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 on blackboard.

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 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.)

Week 1	Introductions: syllabus, games	SoulWork by Cristal Shanelle Truscott; Stanislavsky in Focus by Sharon Carnicke	Journal entry 1, 2
Week 2	Say My Name	Letters to a Young Poet. Rainer Maria Rilke	Sharing of Your Name Story, Journal Entry 2, 3
Week 3	LABOR DAY (off) Action Exercise	https:// openspaceofdemocracy. files.wordpress.com/ 2017/01/baldwin- creative-process.pdf	Journal Entry 4,5
Week 4	EDI workshop (see below) Action Exercises continued	Stanislavski: Communion Chapter...	Journal 6,7
Week 5	Action exercise with partners		Journal 8,9
Week 6	Acting Exercises with Partners		Journal 10, 11
Week 7	Open Scene introduced		Journal 12, 13
Week 8	Work on Open Scenes		Journal 14, 15
Week 9	Open Scenes performed		Journal 16, 17
Week 10	Introduction to the play	Reading on active analysis	Journal 18, 19
Week 11	Sharing of active analysis scenes from play		Journal 20, 21
Week 12	Work on scenes, games - focus on language		Journal 22, 23
Week 13	Work on scenes, games - focus on language		Journal 24, 25
Week 14	Work on scenes - focus on environment		Journal 26, 27
			Journal 28, 29

FINAL	Monday May 10th 11am - 1pm		
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EDI @SDA: Professional Development/Mandatory EDI Training
Wednesday, September 15, 2021 - week 4

As part of our EDI initiatives and call to action, some workshops will be offered to faculty and staff and to students. Competencies that will be included: Anti-Racism (Faculty/Staff) and Equity Mindedness (Faculty/Staff), and then Theater Intimacy & Building Cultures of Consent (Students, Faculty/Staff). More details will follow. NOTE: All SDA classes will be cancelled to support involvement in this effort.

SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SDA productions, ISPs and Extracurricular Activities* will not excuse you from any class work. There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above. Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

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.

Health and Participation in Class

You are expected to complete your Trojan Check screener daily and, as your instructor, I may ask you to show your daily screening in class. Your health and safety, and the health and safety of your peers, are my top priorities. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, or if you discover that you have been in

close contact with others who have symptoms or who have tested positive, you must follow the instructions on Trojan Check. My hope is that if you are feeling ill or if you have been exposed to someone with the virus, you will stay home to protect others. I will ensure that you can continue to participate in class remotely so that your education is not disrupted.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, USC requires that face coverings (masks) be worn indoors including in classrooms. Face coverings must cover your nose and mouth and be worn throughout the class session. A mask with a valve is not considered an adequate face covering and should not be used, as it can expel exhaled air, increasing the risk to others. Eating or drinking during class is prohibited because of the risk posed by removing your mask for these activities. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in your being asked to leave the classroom immediately. Requests for accommodations related to the face covering and eating/drinking policies should be directed to the Office for Student Accessibility Services (<https://osas.usc.edu/>).

SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

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 microaggressions 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/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

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