

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 352A – Intermediate Acting II : 62952

Units: 2

Term: Fall 2021

Day/ Time: Tues/ Thurs 8:00 am – 10:50 am

Location: PED 208

Instructor: Christopher Shaw

Office: JEF Building 2nd floor #211

Office Hours: By Appointment

Contact Info: shawchri@usc.edu

cell (323) 632-4894 (text preferred)

Course Description

Building and sustaining character with special focus on stylized realism , subtext and heightened language. This course will aim to challenge the actor to explore developing characters that are further away from themselves due to period, theatrical style, heightened language, physicality, and internal and external life circumstances. Specific exercises as a bridge into scene work will be used. The course will explore physical and behavioral transformation in service of the demands of a character in a play as well as exploring material with heightened language. The course will also include class rehearsal, performance and critique. A continuation of the application of basic principles of acting is expected while exploring the broadening of range and versatility.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course students should understand and be able to demonstrate facility with the following:

- . Application of techniques and skills explored to create, develop, and sustain a role in a play that demands heightened character or transformational character behavior, including vocal and physical transformation in support of the demands of a role, and/or utilization of heightened language
- . Analysis of text leading to the creation of compelling characters and situations in a stylized text
- . Examination of a scene from a play with heightened language and or characters.
- . Entering the world of the play based on thorough exploration/investigation of the text leading to specific choices that support character transformation.
- . Application of basic principles of acting while broadening range and versatility.

Prerequisite(s): 101. 252a, 252b

Course Notes

- . **Required Attire:** For the first half of the course please wear solid black movement clothing that does not conceal the lines and shape of your body , ***the material should have “lycra” stretch*** to it as you will at times be doing work that will “expand” the clothing. The attire should be solid black, no bold logos, images , pictures or text on the clothing (small branding tags ok) . Think “ Yoga, Gym, Dance” type attire that allows for flexibility of movement and body. (Target store “Champion” brand is good for this)

Course Notes (continued)

- . In- Class Participation is 15% of grade. (See definition of participation in “Grading” on this syllabus)
- . Outside rehearsals are mandatory
- . If a scene is scheduled to work in class, for an in – class rehearsal or presentation and is clearly under-rehearsed or under-prepared, you will be asked to sit down and will loose points for that assignment.
- . Scenes should be 100% off book, lines memorized by second “pass” of scene in class, or you will be asked to sit down and loose points for that assignment.
- . Use of cell phones in class will result in 5-point overall grade reduction for each incident – I will call you out in front of the entire class, so you have fair warning now. I use my phone timer to time working scenes, so you will see me utilizing my phone.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

TBD – Provided

Description and Assessment of Assignments

- . Specific Exercises and their presentation in class, and in-class rehearsals and presentations of scenes are expected to be specifically examined and fully rehearsed & prepared , with written homework component reflected in prompt book and incorporated into the work in the presentation.
- . Excercises will be clearly described or a PDF will be provided as reference of expectations.
- . A clear demonstration (through active application) of your understanding and application of what was learned in the experience of observing the class work of others and assimilating the techniques and theories actively explored in exercises in class , is expected to be reflected in your own class work and presentations – this is a large factor in all grading assessments. You will learn by watching others work and being mentally present in class and then applying what you learn to your own work and in-class presntations.
- . You will learn as much by observing and sharing your understanding of other’s class work as you will learn by “doing” and presenting.
- . In class participation is 15% of overall grade, (See definition of participation in “Grading” on this syllabus)
- . Credit will be given for any in-class exercise performed on or before the scheduled deadline, and in a manner that reflects thoroughness of preparation. This includes the utilization of props, costumes, and confident memorization of text.
- . If a student is concerned about their grade or progress in class, they should make an appointment to discuss this with the professor. Midterm grades will reflect only a “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” score.

Grading Breakdown

Absences/Tardiness:

Learning in class depends on the layering of intellectual and emotional discovery resulting from the consistent active exploration of **100%** of the Ensemble **No absences or tardies are allowed. Cumulative active class participation points will be lost.** *Participation is weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guideline*

Grading Policy:

Grades are not dictated by the success of acting presentations or the instructor's subjective opinion of talent and artistic preference.

Grades are dictated by

- Participation, preparation, attendance
- Constructive feedback of classmates' acting presentations
- Willingness to experiment and apply the constructive feedback of instructor and students on one's own scenes, presentations, and exercises
- Meeting all assignment deadlines: reading, writing, acting, scene and exercise presentations
- Application and understanding of methods being explored in class and from assigned reading to scene work and exercises
- Availability to fellow classmates to rehearse scenes

Note: *If a deadline is missed because of a classmate/ project partner's unavailability, the available partner/s will not be penalized. If problems arise, a discussion with the professor with all involved must be arranged before the day of the scheduled scene or everyone will be held equally accountable. BEFORE ANY SCENE MAY BE REHEARSED ON ITS FEET IN CLASS, THERE MUST BE A MINIMUM OF 2 HOURS OF OUTSIDE REHEARSAL. LINES MUST BE ACCURATELY MEMORIZED BY SECOND "ON FEET" IN-CLASS REHEARSAL (the first read in chairs not included here as an in-class rehearsal)*

Assessment of "Participation" *15% of the final grade is earned through class participation. This will be defined as:*

- *Students are required to be present and be on time for all classes and scheduled sessions unless they are genuinely too ill to attend or affected by unavoidable personal or external circumstances. If the student has more than 2 absences or late arrivals during the course they will not be able to fulfill their ability to fully participate in class. Additionally, students must keep the teacher informed of any absence or late arrival IN ADVANCE. Failure to do so also constitutes a lack of participation and points will be deducted.*
- *Appropriate rehearsal clothing, costumes and props for ALL EXERCISES AND IN CLASS REHEARSALS.*
- *Openness to new methods of working and eagerness to attempt them.*
- *Constructive feedback on classmates' acting presentations.*
- *Energized support of all classmates' work.*
- *Willingness to experiment and apply the constructive feedback of professor and fellow students on one's own work.*
- *Meeting all assignment deadlines.*
- *Memorization of assigned material.*
- *Availability to fellow classmates to rehearse outside class.*

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Family Monologue	10	10
Buffon / Grottesque Character	10	10
Research Packett	5	5
In Class Rehearsal Sc #1	10	10
Scene #1 Presentation (MID TERM)	20	20
In Class Rehearsal Sc #2	10	10
Scene / Project # 2 Presentation (FINAL)	20	20
Participation	15	15

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

For all assignments points will be determined as follows:

100% - Excellent: clear understanding of the class material is coupled with original and creative insight and confident preparation

85% - Good: class material has been understood clearly and performed competently

75% - Average: class material has been generally understood, but gaps in understanding and performance remain

50% - Poor: there are identifiable gaps in the understanding of class material, as well as deficiencies in basic requirements such as memorization, blocking, etc.

0% - Unacceptable: work was not completed on time, with no communication with professor or student partners

Assignment Rubrics

Available on blackboard where applicable

Grading Timeline

Per class schedule / at time of presentation of various graded assignments. If a student is concerned about their grade or progress in class, they should make an appointment to discuss this with the professor. Midterm grades will reflect only a "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" score.

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.

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).

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.

Additional Policies

- No food or eating is allowed in class at any time.
- Please use restroom before class and during break, **do not interrupt the flow of class with leaving class** unless for an emergency
- If you are outside of studio while class is in session for any reason, **WAIT** until the work is finished to re-enter studio.
- There is absolutely no technology allowed during class No cellphones, no computers. no texting, no social media – **TURN THEM OFF AND PUT THEM AWAY**
- Use of cell phones in class will result in 5-point overall grade reduction for each incident – I will call you out in front of the entire class - so you have fair warning now.
- Students must be in proper rehearsal clothes at the start of class if presenting a scene. (exception being the added materials for the grotesque character)
- Please refrain from distracting unfocused unprofessional behavior during class – you are expected to practice the focused respectful behavior displayed in the professional world and in keeping with the mature professional culture of SDA. Behave as an observing participant the way you would want the class to behave when you are working.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

ALL SCHOOL EVENT

EDI @SDA: Professional Development/Mandatory EDI Training

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

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.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown. NOTE: Since this is a live studio style class where we work on the craft live during class time this schedule is always subject to change

Week 1:

Tuesday 8/24

- Discuss student expectations, course goals, requirements.
- Review syllabus
- Physical work in space, body centers
- Discuss Family Member Character Portrait Monologue Assignment
- Discuss Iconic KNOWN Character from History (Political, Governmental, Internationally known, or from Society / Media)
- **HOMEWORK** Due Thursday 8/26 Homework:
 - 1) *Begin to develop Family Member Character Portrait Monologue (See PDF on Blackboard)*
 - 2) *Search for iconic character including ideas: what is their specific POV of the world, 30,000 ft ariel view? Collect images, video clips, photos (See PDF on Blackboard)*

Thursday 8/26

- Physical work in space, including body centers and qualities of movement
 - Discuss Family Member Character Portrait Monologue Assignment
 - Discuss Iconic KNOWN Character from History (Political, Governmental, Social) or Society / Media
 - **PRESENT** Image of and research on Iconic character – share with class – images and video etc
 - **HOMEWORK** Due Tuesday 8/31 Homework:
 - 1) *Develop Family Member Character Portrait Monologue Presentation (See PDF on Blackboard)*
 - 2) *Work on Iconic character work-sheet, more research, more “trying on the character/ mimicry/impersonation ” (See PDF on Blackboard)*
-

Week 2:

Tuesday 8/31

- *(Continued from last class...)* **PRESENT** Research - Image of and research on Iconic character –Show images, video clips if possible
- Exercise: Replicate another walk and body center (of classmate)
- Exercise: All walk and “take on” family member, snippets of dialogue, voice, gesture
- Michael Chekhov imaginary body exercise
- **Workshop** Family Member Character Portrait Monologue (bits)
- **HOMEWORK for 9/2 :**
 - 1) *Family Member Character Portrait Monologue Presentation (See PDF on Blackboard)*
 - 2) *Work on “Iconic Character” worksheet. Begin to develop realistic portrayal of Iconic character based on watching video, replicating voice, finding body center, body, physicality , POV on world , patterns of speech, find some dialogue and phrases to replicate, bring in some clothes, wigs, hats, glasses? What? Reference work sheet/ homework.*

Thursday 9/2

- **PRESENT: Family Member Character Portrait**
 - Body center / Mask work
 - Michael Chekhov imaginary body exercise
 - **WORKSHOP:** In-class workshop Iconic Character: Presentation of developing character / body, body center, voice: first from an honest and realistic standpoint, “embodiment / inhabit” - bits of text **NOTE:** Have images and video clips available to play on device as reference
 - **HOMEWORK : Create Costume, Hair, Make-up for and** Prepare to present a sections of dialogue/ section of original speech / monologue , (taken from real life or composed)That is a believable realistic portrait of the real iconic, historically known character due Tuesday 9/7
-

Week 3:

Tuesday 9/7

- Warm-up (and into essence of character)
- **PRESENT (In costume, hair, makeup)** realistic study of iconic character
- In class work-shop on “bouffon/ grotesque” : *create The Body*
- **HOMEWORK :** Find detailing for transformation of body shape, costumes , accessories: glasses, hats, facial hair , wigs , etc that EXAGGERATE and mock the Iconic character , what are their central positions on society, the world? How can you capture that amplify it and “make fun of “ it / mock it ?
Sources: *Hollywood Toys and Costumes , Amazon, Goodwill*

Thursday 9/9

- PRESENT work in progress on “Iconic/bouffon/grotesque” character and in class workshop on it
 - In class work-shop on “bouffon/ grotesque” : *create The Body*
 - **HOMEWORK:** Examine potential material , scenes / scene assignments
-

Week 4:

Tuesday 9/14

- **PRESENT:** Iconic Character as Bouffon / Grotesque
- Examine potential scenes / scene assignments
- **HOMEWORK:** TBD

Thursday 9/16

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, First Read in Chairs (section of...)
- **HOMEWORK:** TBD

Week 5:

Tuesday 9/21

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, First Read in Chairs (section of...)
- **HOMEWORK:** TBD

Thursday 9/23

- Warm-up, acting exercises
 - First Scenes, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - "Stop / Start". For this class: Rehearse and Bring in: Moment before, Opening Moment, First 5 beats
 - **HOMEWORK:** TBD
-

Week 6:

Tuesday 9/28

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- First Scenes, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - "Stop / Start". For this class: Rehearse and Bring in : Moment before, Opening Moment, First 5 beats
- **HOMEWORK:** TBD

Thursday 9/30

- Warm-up, acting exercises
 - Scene 1 Presentation with notes / class feedback (5 scenes)
 - **HOMEWORK:** TBD
-

Week 7:

Tuesday 10/5

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- Scene 1 Presentation with notes / class feedback (5 scenes)
- **HOMEWORK:** TBD

Thursday 10/7

- Warm-up, acting exercises
- Scene 1 Presentation with notes / class feedback (5 scenes)
- **HOMEWORK:** TBD

Week 8:

Tuesday 10/12

- Final Presentations of Scene #1 (**MID-TERM**)
- **HOMEWORK:** TBD

Thursday 10/14 **NO CLASS : FALL BREAK**

Week 9 :

Tuesday 10/19

- Begin exploration of plays for Scene #2 , First Read in Chairs
- **HOMEWORK:** TBD

Thursday 10/21

- Begin exploration of plays for Scene #2 , First Read in Chairs
 - **HOMEWORK:** Rehearse and Bring in : Moment before, Opening Moment, First 5 beats
-

Week 10

Tuesday 10/26:

- Scene #2,, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - Bring in : Moment before, Opening Moment, First 5 beats
- **HOMEWORK:** Rehearse and Bring in : Moment before, Opening Moment, First 5 beats

Thursday 10/28

- Scene #2,, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - “Stop / Start”
 - **HOMEWORK:** Rehearse and Bring in : Moment before, Opening Moment, First 5 beats
-

Week 11

Tuesday 11/2

- Scene #2,, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - “Stop / Start”
- **HOMEWORK:** Rehearse and Bring in : Moment before, Opening Moment, First 5 beats

Thursday 11/4

- Scene #2,, IN CLASS REHEARSAL on feet - “Stop / Start”
 - **HOMEWORK:** TBD
-

Week 12

Tuesday 11/9:

- Scene # 2 , First Pass Scene Presentation with notes and student feedback
- **HOMEWORK:** TBD

Thursday 11/11:

- Scene # 2 , First Pass Scene Presentation with notes and student feedback
- **HOMEWORK:** TBD

Week 13

Tuesday 11/16

- Scene # 2 , First Pass Scene Presentation with notes and student feedback
- **HOMEWORK:** TBD

Thursday 11/18

- Scene #2 - 2nd Pass Scene Presentation with notes and student feedback
 - Class feedback and constructive criticism
 - **HOMEWORK:** TBD
-

Week 14

Tuesday 11/23

- Scene #2 - 2nd Pass Scene Presentation with notes and student feedback
- Class feedback and constructive criticism
- **HOMEWORK:** TBD

Thursday 11/25

- Scene #2 - 2nd Pass Scene Presentation with notes and student feedback
 - Class feedback and constructive criticism
 - **HOMEWORK:** TBD
-

Week 15

Tuesday 11/30

- Scene #2 - Final Scene Presentation
- Class feedback and constructive criticism

Thursday 12/2/ **LAST CLASS**

- Scene #2 - Final Scene Presentation
- Class feedback and constructive criticism

FINAL EXAM Tuesday December 14, 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm

The Final is dictated by the creative process of the class so specifics will be discussed later in the semester.

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 GFS 120 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) 814-4618 (Vidoe Phone), (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:

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.symplicity.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 Student Accessibility Services - (213) 740-0776

<https://osas.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.