

USC THEATRE #480A
PERFORMANCE FOR CAMERA
SYLLABUS FALL 2021

THTR 480A

Performance for Camera: Auditioning on Camera

Instructor: JOSEPH HACKER

Location: Shrine 105

Fall

M: 9 to 11:50

Tu: 2 to 4:50

W: 2 to 4:50

Th: 2 to 4:50

Spring

Tu: 2 to 4:50

Th: 2 to 4:50

Office Hours: Best after class or

12 noon to 2:00pm T/W/Th by appointment

hackerj@usc.edu / 310 913 0989

Course Description and Overview

This on-camera, exercise intensive, workshop-style class has a two-fold ambition: it explores the dynamics and techniques of screen acting in contrast to acting for the stage; and, as its format, applies these techniques within the context of professional on-camera auditions. In addition, because we live in an increasingly digital world, the issue of “virtual auditioning” is also addressed.

Objectives and Methods

Classes consist of discussions, on-camera exercises and mock auditions. Class work is supplemented by a required reading list. Timely completion of a special midterm project is required. Students are required to keep a class-by-class journal, reflecting in specific detail one or more designated aspects of that day’s class experience.

This course assumes that participants are advanced level and have a solid working knowledge of acting theory and technique. The emphasis, therefore, is on identifying the specific adjustments working actors make when they engage in the audition process. The goal is to provide students with the perspective, knowledge, experience, and techniques necessary to compete successfully for roles in the “real world”.

Limited preparation time, strange surroundings, scant knowledge of scripted material, and poorly versed scene partners are just some of the realities a professional commonly encounters while auditioning...not to mention the demands of the videotape cameras during readings and/or the technicalities of competing for roles via internet submissions.

Controlled exposure to on-camera performance dynamics prompts students to define strategies and techniques for dealing with these parameters, and to incorporate them into the fundamental process of actualizing a worthy audition performance.

Students Are Required: to purchase one new 32GB or 64GB digital “SD Card” Class 10 with a speed of 94/95 (approximately \$40). No Substitutes. We will use it every week including the first.

Students will bring this SD card to each class meeting, including the first



http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/917685-REG/sony_sf32ux_tqn_32gb_sdhc_uhs_1_memory_card.html

NOTE FROM THE DISABILITY SERVICES OFFICE: “Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday thru Friday, 8:30 to 5:00. The office is in the Student Union 301 and the phone number is 213 740 0776.

NOTE: THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF THE CLASS AND THE ACCOMPLISHMENT LEVEL OF THE PARTICIPANTS.

Required Reading

AUDITIONING ON CAMERA JOSEPH HACKER, ROUTLEDGE

Recommended Reading:

AUDITION, MICHAEL SHURTLEFF, BANTAM BOOKS
COMPREHENSIVE CONTEMPORARY ACTING, SHAWN NELSON SCREENPLAY, SYD FIELD, DELL TRADE PUBLICATIONS
DIRECTING ACTORS, JUDITH WESTON, M. WIESE PRODUCTIONS

Absences: One unexcused absence earns a ½ letter grade penalty. All subsequent absences will result in full point reductions.

Course Work and Final Exam: Students will work on camera every week. In addition, students will be required to submit several virtual (self-taped) auditions during the course of the term; and as a final exam. The goal is to meet the challenges of virtual auditioning, accomplishing both performance excellence and technical production competence. The resulting videotape and analysis will be the sole medium for evaluation of this final exam audition. No student can achieve and “A” in the course without earning an “A” on this final digital submission. Evaluations of on-camera mock audition performances will be weighted to the later half of the semester’s work plus the Final. Well defined evaluation criteria will include: Wardrobe; Entry Presence; Demeanor And Command Of The Space; Slate; Q&A Presentation; The Reading; Accomplishing The Chosen Verb; Exit; Callback; and Generated Interest.

Journal: During and following each class students will make entries in a personal audition journal. Each entry will record in specific detail one or more designated aspects of that day’s on-camera or preparation experience. These journals will serve as learning cues in conjunction with video replay analysis. They are intended to encourage disciplined, accurate, and beneficial self-appraisal skills. They will be reviewed for comment and discussion by the instructor periodically, at midterm and at term’s end. No e-mailed papers will be accepted.

Grading Policy:

Grading scale for SDA: A indicates work of excellent quality; B of good quality; C of average quality; D of below average quality; F indicates inadequate work.

Grade Categories/Calculations

1. In-Class Feedback And Participation 10%
2. Written assignments and Personal Journal 15%
3. On-camera exercises and Self Evaluations 25%
4. Final Exam 40%
5. Growth And Effort 10%

Note: for every missed evaluated mock audition, take the average of those performed and reduce grade 1/3 letter grade.

Course final grades wil be determined using the following scale.

A 90-100	C 40 - 49
A- 80-89	C- 30-39
B+ 70-79	D+ 25-29
B 60-69	D 20-24
B- 55-59	D - 10-19
C+ 50- 55	F. 9-

EDI @SDA: Community Day
Wednesday, September 15, 2021

All SDA students are welcome to join an interactive community building experience that explores how we integrate core values of equity, diversity, and inclusion into our educational and artistic journey at SDA. Competencies that will be covered will include, but not limited to, Anti-Racism as Everyday Practice; Equity-Mindedness (w/colleagues from USC Race & Equity Center); and Building Cultures of Consent. More details will follow. NOTE: All School of Dramatic Arts classes will be cancelled this day to support involvement in this effort. All other USC classes will remain in session. We encourage all to participate.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

CLASS #1

“THE AUDITION IS THE WORK, THE WORK IS THE PERK.”

REMARKS:	DEFINE THE COURSE. STAGE VERSUS SCREEN. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY Video Examples: McAdams et al Your Time is Now; 300 Times; et al
EXERCISE:	“PLUNGE INTO COLD WATER” / AUDITION FOR “K” SLATE AND PRESENT YOURSELF. NEXT!
DISCUSSION:	DEFINE THE PROCESS: A SEQUENCE OF DOABLE STEPS. IDENTIFY A PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVE WHAT COMMUNICATES WHO GETS THE PART? WHY? WHAT ARE “THEY” LOOKING FOR? WHAT IS THE ACTOR’S FUNCTION IN AN ON-CAMERA INTERVIEW?
ASSIGNMENT:	“TWENTY YEAR FRIEND” (HANDOUT) “TYPE” PIX NOTEBOOK (HANDOUT) QUESTION: Who best to play you? READ SYLLABUS SUGGESTED READING LIST REQUIRED “NOTES & ESSAYS” PURCHASE REQUIRED: “AUDITIONING ON CAMERA”
READ	AUDITIONING ON CAMERA CHAPTER 1 “YOU AND THE CAMERA” CHAPTER 2 “NERVES AND THE CAMERA”

CLASS #2

“JUST RELAX AND BE YOURSELF”

DISCUSSION:	“TWENTY YEAR FRIEND”
VIDEO DEMO:	“DEALING WITH NERVES”
EXERCISES:	JUST RELAX AND BE YOURSELF

DOING VERSUS BEING.
WHAT THE CAMERA WANTS YOU TO DO.

EXERCISES: WHEN THE CAMERA IS IN THE ROOM, WHO'S NOT THERE? "PERSONALIZING THE CAMERA."
THE MOST IMPORTANT "PERSON" IN THE ROOM.
RECOGNIZING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CAMERA POSTURES AND VOICE PROJECTION.
EYE CONTACT.
FINISHING TOUCH: LOOKING BACK AT WHO'S LOOKING AT YOU.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN A PROFESSIONAL AUDITION. ISSUES UNIQUE TO AUDITIONING. DEFINING "CHARACTER"
THE UBIQUITY OF THE VIDEO CAMERA IN AUDITIONS

ASSIGNMENT: TWENTY YEAR FRIEND CONTINUED
"TYPE" PORTFOLIO
PUT THE CAMERA IN YOUR LIFE OBSERVE FREE ASSOCIATION

READ: AUDITIONING ON CAMERA:
CHAPTER 3 "ON-CAMERA INTERVIEWS"; CHAPTER 5 "YOUR ON-CAMERA ENTRY"

CLASS #3

"TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF"

DISCUSSION: EXAMINING THE PROCESS VS. SWINGING THE CLUB I DON'T KNOW HOW I DID IT... OLIVIER ORSEN WELLS / CYBELL SHEPARD: "DOING" TALK SHOWS

TWENTY YEAR FRIEND CONTINUED "TYPE" NOTEBOOK ISSUES
"THE MAN WHO MISTOOK HIS WIFE FOR A HAT"

DISCUSSION: PRESENTING YOURSELF TO CAMERA
DEFINING THE "FREE ASSOCIATION" TECHNIQUE. OTHER PRESENTATIONAL TECHNIQUES

EXERCISE: Q & A: "TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF"
COMMUNICATING EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS VS. THE FACTS

DISCUSSION: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER / DEFINE THE ENTRY PROCESS
ENTER WITH A VERB PRESENCE
COMMENT WITH HUMOR ...CONFIDENCE
SLATE ... CONTACTING THE DECISION MAKER Q & A ... THE "YOU" WE'LL PAY TO SEE
LOOK BACK AT WHO'S LOOKING AT YOU... FINISHING TOUCH

VIDEO EXAMPLE Langley; et al

MOCK AUDITION: LABORATORY TECHNICIAN
SELECTING A VERB / CHOICES & STRATEGIES IDENTIFYING A REASON BEYOND YOURSELF

ASSIGNMENT: SCENES (MOS): POISON / WOLF
ENTER / COMMENT WITH HUMOR / Q&A / CREATE A REALITY

DISCUSSION: AN AUDITION IS A PERFORMANCE...GET THE PART OR BE

REMEMBERED PROPS

READ AUDITIONING ON
CAMERA: CHAPTER 8
“WARDROBE”

CLASS #4

**“SON, IF YOU DIDN’T BRING IT WITH
YOU, YOU SURE AIN’T GONNA FIND IT
OUT HERE”**

DISCUSSION: THE CRUCIAL MOMENT: ENTERING THE ROOM
WARDROBE / STRATEGIC CHOICES

EXERCISE: SCENE (MOS) / CREATE A REALITY
POISON / WOLF
Enter with a verb
Comment with humor.
Acknowledge nerves
Slate
Perform

DISCUSSION: ACTING IS DOING. CREATING PHYSICAL PROBLEMS. QUESTIONS &
CHOICES. OLIVIER AND THE SALT LICK

ASSIGNMENT: SCENES: TBA
CHARACTER PORTRAITS PORTFOLIO DUE CLASS #7

READ: AUDITIONING ON CAMERA:
CHAPTER 6: “HOW ON-CAMERA AUDITIONS
GO” CHAPTER 11 “BASIC PHILOSOPHY
CHAPTER 12 “ANALYZING THE STORY/
SCENE” CHAPTER 13 CREATING A
CHARACTER, ETC”

FOR CLASS#7 THREE SELECTED FILMS
RAINMAN; MICHAEL CLAYTON; DEVIL WEARS PRADA

CLASS #5

**“I KNEW YOU WERE RIGHT FOR THE PART
THE INSTANT YOU WALKED INTO THE
ROOM”**

DISCUSSION: ENTRY VERBS / ACTING

PRINCIPALS SCENES: MOCK AUDITION: (AS

ASSIGNED)

ASSIGNMENT: CALLBACK: REVISIT SCENES: SWITCHED
THREE SELECTED FILMS (WEEK #7)
RAINMAN; MICHAEL CLAYTON; DEVIL WEARS
PRADA ANNOUNCE CHARACTER PORTFOLIO

READ: AUDITIONING ON CAMERA
CHAPTER 9 “EYES / THOUGHTS”

CHAPTER 10 "PLACE /
THOUGHTS"

CHARACTER PORTFOLIOS DUE WEEK #7

CLASS #6

**"I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU GIVE A BAD AUDITION....
UNFORTUNATELY, DARLING, THAT'S NOT A COMPLIMENT."**

EXERCISES: MOCK AUDITIONS: CALLBACK SCENES:

SWITCHED DISCUSSION: EVALUATIONS

ASSIGNMENT: THREE FILMS

READ: AUDITIONING ON CAMERA: CHAPTER 7 "STRUCTURE OF DRAMA."

CHARACTER PORTFOLIOS DUE WEEK #7

CLASS #7

"GREAT ARTISTS POSITION THEMSELVES WELL BEFORE THEY LEAP"

(B.A PRODUCTION WEEK)

DISCUSSION: CHARACTER PORTFOLIOS DUE

DISCUSSION: THE BASICS OF DRAMATIC STRUCTURE & HOW IT INFORMS YOUR
CHOICES JOHN TRUBY / SYD FIELDS (MORE)
THREE SELECTED FILMS

"THEY ARE LOOKING FOR THE ACTOR WHO MAKES IT
WORK" A SCENE IS AN EVENT
SERVING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FORM
DEALING WITH " SIDES" / WHAT PAGE NUMBERS TELL
YOU HOW STRUCTURE IDENTIFIES QUALITY IN
SUPPORTING ROLLS

WHEN YOU KNOW YOU ARE "WRONG FOR THE
PART" WHAT TO DO WITH ADJECTIVES
WHERE CAREERS ARE MADE

ASSIGNMENT: "WEAPON X: SARAH & JAKE"

CLASS #8

**"AN ACTOR IS NOT PAID TO SAY THE LINES...
AN ACTOR IS PAID TO NEED TO SAY THE LINES."**

EXERCISES: "WEAPON X: SARAH & JAKE"

DISCUSSION: COMEDY: MAKING IT WORK

ASSIGNMENT: SCENES: "JEFF AND SUE," ET AL

READ: AUDITIONING ON CAAMERA
CHAPTER 14 "COMEDY GUIDELINES"

DISCUSSION: AUDITIONING FOR SITCOMS: SOME GUIDELINES

DEFINING THE
"SITUATION" RAISING THE
STAKES CONTRASTS NOT
CONFLICTS THE
IMPORTANCE OF PACE
WORKING IN PAIRS
"THE DECEPTION"

EXERCISE: "IT'S THE BIGGEST BUILDING IN THE WORLD"
IDENTIFYING WHAT THE CHARACTER INTENDS
TO COMMUNICATE
DEFINING "ENERGY"

ASSIGNMENT: "JEFF & SUE," et al

CLASS #9

"SOMEWHERE, SOMEONE THINKS ITS FUNNY"

MOCK AUDITION: COMEDY; WORKING IN
PAIRS SCENES "JEFF AND SUE" ET
AL

CLASS #10

(B.A. PRODUCTION WEEK)

DISCUSSION: AUDITIONING IN THE DIGITAL AGE / MARKETING
VIDEO EXAMPLES

ASSIGNMENT: FOR CLASS # 11: ONE MINUTE MONOLOGUES
ASSIGNMENT: FOR CLASS #12: "ANDIE & CHARLIE" SELF

TAPED READ: AUDITIONING ON CAMERA

CHAPTER 4: "MONOLOGUES AND
HEADSHOTS" CHAPTER 16 "VIRTUAL
AUDITIONS"
CHAPTER 17 "OVERAL

SUMMARY INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES. TO BE SCHEDULED

CLASS #11

(B.A. PRODUCTION WEEK)

INDIVIDUAL

CONFERENCES.

MOCK AUDITION: ONE-MINUTE MONOLOGUES
(IN A PLACE TO AN INDIVIDUAL FOR A

REASON) ASSIGNMENT: FOR CLASS #12: "ANDIE & CHARLIE"

SELF-TAPED

CLASS #12

DISCUSSION: CAREER NOTES

SCENES: EVALUATE "ANDIE & CHARLIE" SELF-TAPED

CLASSES #13 #14 #15

EVALUATED SELF-TAPED MOCK AUDITIONS: (ALL SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

DISCUSSION: METHODS OF PREPARATION
DEFINING AN OVERALL APPROACH AND
PERSPECTIVE ADDRESSING THE SPECIAL NATURE
OF CALLBACKS COMMUNICATING WITH
DIRECTORS.
TRANSLATING “RESULT ORIENTED”
DIRECTIONS INTO “PROCESS ORIENTED”
ACTIONS.
NOTES FROM MY CAREER

FINAL EXAM

SUBMIT FINAL PERFORMANCE ACCORDING TO UNIVERSITY EXAM SCHEDULE

NOTE: all the above subject to change

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.

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: <http://bit.ly/sdasupport>

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.