

THTR 575 Theatre Practicum

**Units: 2 Units
Practicum**

**Fall/Spring—MTWThF—6-10PM and other times as
assigned, SA or SU -- 4 hour block**

Location: MCC and PED

Section: 63241

Instructors: Michele Shay, Edgar Landa, Ahmed Best

**Contact Info: landa@usc.edu, mrshay@usc.edu,
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Director MFA in Acting: David Warshofsky

Office: 1029 Childs Way

Office Hours: **by appointment**

Conatct info: warshofs@usc.edu , 213-470-4710 office,
323-646-9525

Head of Production: Els Collins

Office: 1030 Bloom Walk, Scene Dock Theatre, M201

Office Hours: by appointment

Contact Info: ecollins@usc.edu, 213-821-4034office, 213-
948-6782 cell).

Course Description

One of the goals of the MFA in Acting program is to subject each student to the demands of becoming a member of an ensemble. After two years of working as a cohort in classes, workshops and various performance situations, the third-year students spend the Fall and Spring semesters creating and performing what **had been a three-play repertoire and will now consist of a two-play repertoire followed by an independent film production.**

The performances begin in February 2022 in the Scene Dock Theatre. This year our two plays will be BLADE TO THE HEAT 2.0 by Oliver Mayer, directed by Edgar Landa and SEIZE THE KING by Will Power, directed by Michele Shay. As mentioned above, the 3rd project in this years' REP will be an original Film -- written, directed and acted in entirely by the Y3 ensemble under the supervision of Ahmed Best. A 3-4 DAY location shoot to begin after Spring Break.

Resident theatre companies in the USA have dwindled down to a precious few. The vast majority of acting students coming out of universities, conservatories and schools are immediately thrown into a "free-lance" situation where the work comes sporadically with great spaces in between. The formative practical experience that professional repertory companies used to provide has now been taken on by MFA actor-training programs like ours. This "post modern" 2-play/1 film rep provides the students with an invaluable opportunity to practice their hard-earned craft, an experience they are unlikely to receive in the professional world.

Not only does the student gain an opportunity to play different characters in a multi-rep situation, they get to play characters that the world of commercial theatre and film would

never hire them for. Nothing stretches an actor more than to struggle with a character that's 180 degrees removed from his or her "type." And it's in this kind of "miscasting" that some of the most revelatory performances are created.

What the actor learns from working as a member of the ensemble is every bit as important as what he or she learns in terms of character-building technique. A true ensemble player must not only listen and attend to the other actors, but has the responsibility to support the work of the other actors. It's the melding of individual talents into a coherent and responsive ensemble that creates the potential for extraordinary theatre.

Learning Objectives

- To exercise the craft of creating a cohesive, authentic, and impactful character - in three entirely separate plays - using vocal, physical, emotional, analytical, and interpretative tools.
- To contribute to the strength of the class ensemble, through dedication and application of core principles.
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Recommended Preparation: Completion of Years 1 and 2 MFA Acting Program

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Highest speed internet available, most recent lap top available, external microphone and camera, uncluttered well-lit space to work in.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Blade to the Heat by Oliver Mayer

Seize the King by Will Power

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Rehearsal process and final performances of the play

Grading Breakdown

- A work of excellent quality
- B work of good quality
- C work of average quality
- D work of below average quality

Your grade is assessed according to

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Participation and Preparation	10	10
Professionalism	20	20
Rehearsal Process	30	30
Public Performance	40	40
TOTAL	100	100

Description of Grading Criteria and Assessment of Assignments

Grading will be determined by the following as defined below and according to the appropriate grading matrix and timeline for your discipline which is an addendum to this syllabus:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| 1- Participation and preparation | 10% |
| 2- Professionalism | 20% |
| 3- Rehearsal Process | 30% |
| 4- Public performance | 40% |

All students participating in the production are required to attend and participate in the strike.

Proposed Schedule: August 17th – November 24th

Actors:

- THTR 575 is the rehearsal period for the “3 Play REP”. This includes approx 5 weeks per project during the Fall semester.
- Rehearsals take place 6:00pm-10:00pm Monday-Friday and 5 hours TBD on one weekend day
- Students in the THTR 575 project are “on call” for all scheduled rehearsals.

Additional Policies

Some of our classrooms are retrofitted with camera and microphones that will enable myself to teach remotely from the studio while the students are at home, or vice versa once we can begin to re-introduce in person training. This also enables an actor who is sick and needing to stay at home (during COVID or in the future) to never have to miss class. The following will be discussed on the first day of class:

- Students should be in a space free of outside distractions and sounds. Students should be sitting upright not reclining or lying in bed (unless the scene they are working on requires that physical position)
- Students should log into class on computer when possible, not phone (however we may also explore the value of phone work in “walk and talk” moments in Zoom staging rehearsals.

- If you encounter technical issues during class please text instructor and fellow students in order for us to communicate to resolve the problem
- Please mute microphones when not speaking
- Please do not eat during rehearsals (class) except on designated breaks
- Please do not use any technology other than computers during the sessions, unless for purposes of the class.

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.

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 Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. OSAS is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website for OSAS 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.