



Theater 101: Introduction to Acting

Spring 2022

Instructor: Stevie Johnson M.F.A.

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Course: THTR 101 / Section: 62604

Tuesday/Thursday 11:00 - 12:50 PM

ROOM: MCC 112

Units: 4

Course Description:

To introduce students to the fundamentals of acting by the examination and implementation of acting techniques, improvisational exercises, script analysis, scene study, and monologue performance. To invigorate a student's application of these mechanics of acting to elevate the quality and understanding of their performance. To inspire, guide, and nurture a student's growth in becoming a professional performing artist.

Learning Objectives:

"Acting is the pursuit of truth and the discovery of lies," and how you deal with both defines your character. Our class will be constantly mining for the truth; truth of character and the truth of self. This concept will serve as our base as we:

- * Learn and explore a strong understanding of basic acting terminology: Wants, Objectives, Given Circumstances, Beats, Subtext, etc.
- * Learn and explore methods of classic acting techniques including but not limited to; Stanislavski, Strasberg, Adler, Meisner, Hagen, etc.
- * Learn and explore the physiological connection between thought, breathing, and the body.
- * Learn and explore an understanding of self as perceived by the individual and others. Including the discovery and psychology of the "Basic Fault" and "armor." * To be defined in class.
- * To gain an intellectual approach to script analysis as preparation for character development, scene study, and performance.
- * To enhance the use of voice, articulation, and bodily action as tools of performance.
- * To receive constructive analysis of work performed in class.
- * To reinforce the practice of discipline in all aspects of your career.
- * To discuss the realities of working in the world of entertainment. Including mental setbacks.
- * To keep a journal * Details discussed in class
- * To attend and review SDA productions * Details discussed in class.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

- *Uta Hagen; Respect for Acting*
- Handouts: including selected articles, exercise

Be prepared: If you are absent, it is your responsibility to call a classmate to get assignments for the next class meeting. Write down the names and phone numbers of students to call with questions about what you missed and what is due.

Name _____	Phone # _____
Name _____	Phone # _____
Name _____	Phone # _____

Weekly Schedule

(*Will change. Just a guideline)

Week	Dates	Daily Objective
1	<i>Jan 11/13</i>	Discussion: Syllabus/Contract Class overview. Peer Intro's. Lecture: Intro to Course / Improvised Exercises (breathing) Lecture: The Actor's function as a storyteller. Exercise: "Sell the story, know the product." Assignment: <u>The Moth – KCRW 89.9 fm or KCRW.COM</u> Read: Chapters 1-2 Uta Hagen
2	<i>Jan 18/20</i>	Discussion: "The Moth" Stories and Acting Discoveries Lecture: Role of a character Exercise: #1 Discussion: Chapters 1-2 Uta Hagen Perform: Improv games – Breathing / Visualization Scene discussion Journal discussion Read: Hagen 3-4
3	<i>Jan 25/27</i>	Discussion: Chapters Hagen 3-4 Exercise: Warm Up – Articulation Perform: Assigned Scenes. Discussion. Read: Hagen 5-6
4	<i>Feb 4/6</i>	Discussion: Hagen 5-6 Exercise: Warm up – Word Ball Perform: Assigned Scenes – Off Book! Read/Assignment: TBA - Perform: Campus/Neighborhood Assignment

5	<i>Feb 11/13</i>	Exercise: Articulation Warm Up, Breathing, Visualization Perform: Assigned Scenes – Off Book! Discussion: Checking in on the Journals Read/Assignment: TBA
6	<i>Feb 18/20</i>	Exercise: Warm Up Perform: Assign Scenes – Remaining – Off Book!
7	<i>Feb 25/27</i>	Exercise: Meditation. Articulation. Visualization. Lecture: The Composition of Character Discussion: Addressing concerns and overall review of scene work. Assign: Second Set of scenes.
8	<i>March 1/3</i>	*Midterm Exam Season* Discussion: Feedback/Mid-Season Concerns Lecture: TBA Read/Assignment: TBA
9	<i>March 8/10</i>	Exercise: Warm Up Perform: Scenes pt. 2 Off Book! (Possible Break outs)
10	<i>March 15/17</i>	Exercise: Warm Up Perform: Scenes pt. 2 Off Book! (Possible Break Outs)
11	<i>March 22/24</i>	Discussion: Scene 2 Wrap & Feedback Lecture: TV/Film Acting Scene work Assign: Monologues Discussion: TV-Film Concerns Read: TBA
12	<i>March 29/31</i>	Perform: TV/Film rough Discussion: Dynamics Between Genres Monologue work
13	<i>April 5/7</i>	Exercise: Warm Up – Visualization Perform: Finals Monologue work Lecture: The Storyteller Assign: Monologues
14	<i>April 12/14</i>	Exercise: Warm Up – Work: Remaining Monologues

15	April 19/21	Work/ Performing Monologues
16	April 26/28	Remaining Work

Final Examination: Tuesday May 10th 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Breakdown of Point Values: (assignments and values subject to change)

1. Contract/Syllabus signed	5
2. Scene Set I	25
3. Scene Set II	25
4. Monologues	15
5. Midterm	25
6. Final	25
7. Internet Assignment -TBA	10
8. Journals	10
9. SDA Production Critiques	10
10. Reading or Off Campus Assignments	5
11. Attendance	20
12. Participation/Discussion/Contribution	<u>25</u>
	200

Class is graded on straight percentage:

A = 96-100%	C = 75-77
A- = 91-95	C- = 71-74
B+ = 88-90	D+ = 68-70
B = 85-87	D = 65-67
B- = 81-84	D- = 61-64
C+ = 78-80	F = 60 or below

The G. P. A. scale is as follows: A = 4; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3; B- = 2.7; C+ = 2.3; C = 2; C- = 1.7; D = 1; F = 0.

Be advised that most communication will come directly from lecture or email (john498@usc.edu) but check all lines of communication, including Blackboard, for assignments, notifications, or instruction.

Homework will be due in person unless otherwise stated. Homework will also to be uploaded to Blackboard to timestamp and assure it met the due date and time.

The following rubric provides a guide as to how **course participation** will be assessed.

Course Participation Chart

<i>Active Participation</i>	<i>Moderate Participation</i>	<i>Low Participation</i>
Exhibits evidence of having completed all assignments and activities according to guidelines that were assigned	Attempts to participate and has completed most assignments and activities	Exhibits lack of preparation and non-completion of required assignments
Initiates discussion and supports points using page-specific references to readings or other materials	Supports points during discussion but uses general references to readings and other materials	Rarely initiates discussion and is not able to reference required readings or other materials
Furtheres the discussion and builds on the ideas of others; comments and questions reflect having thought deeply about the material	Furtheres the discussion and builds on the ideas of others; general or limited references to course materials	Comments do not further the discussion and do not exhibit careful reflection on the material

The following rubric provides a guide as to how the **quality of completed assignments** will be evaluated.

Assessment of Work Quality

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Acceptable</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>
Depth of thought	Shows evidence of depth of thought in preparation, intellectual curiosity, adequately supported arguments, and clarity of presentation	Evidence that thought and attention given were insufficient; evidence in support of argument may be lacking to make persuasive presentation	Not evident that serious thought went into preparation
Connection to readings	Assignment demonstrates knowledge of concepts course readings and integrates course content in an appropriate manner	Some parts neglect important concepts presented in the course readings or discussion, or the concepts are integrated in an inaccurate manner	Fails to relate to course materials or demonstrate knowledge of course content
Completeness	All parts of the assignment are done completely and according	All parts done completely, however, lacks adherence to guidelines in some areas	Assignment is not entirely complete and/or shows marked

	to guidelines provided for the assignment		lack of adherence to guidelines
Growth	Highly responsive to feedback from peers and instructors. Substantive revisions in content and format demonstrate willingness to rework ideas and presentation.	Modest revisions in content and format, or revisions don't have a substantive impact on the overall communication of ideas in the document.	Little to no evidence of integration of changes in content or format in response to feedback.

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.

Classroom and Netiquette Policies:

- All assignments are to be typed and received on time. Assignments timed-stamped passed the time/date due **will not be accepted.**
Reminder: Class will commence promptly at 11:00 AM.
- Masks must be worn covering mouth and nose at all times. No exceptions. This is nonnegotiable. You will be dismissed from class for being in violation and marked as absent.
- No eating or drinking in class. Most class periods there will be a small break to do so. If absolutely necessary ask for permission to be excused.
- RESPECT will be conducted toward each person in class, including myself. During discussions talking over someone or being offensive will not be tolerated and will be dismissed from class. – No chatting in class during discussion/lecture.
- Sickness, accompanied by a physician's note and legal obligations, with summons, are the only *excused* absences. All other absences are unexcused. You get one unexcused.
- Documents should be sent as MS Word or PDF format or cut & paste to email.
- Cell phones must not be in use during the duration of class. Texting during class/**Zoom** is strictly prohibited and any violations will result in a loss of five points. The second violation the student will be dismissed from class. (If phone use is absolutely necessary please notify me prior to class commencing.)
- No recording, photographs, or social media postings of any kind are allowed

during classtime, unless conducted by the professor. Performances may be taped for feedback discussion.

- All **Zoom** classes are recorded. Please review the appropriate use and handling of these recordings under existing SCampus policies regarding class notes (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/>). Students are not permitted to create their own class recordings without the instructor's permission. Violations of these policies will be met with the appropriate disciplinary sanction.
- No smoking, food or drink, except water are allowed in the classroom, unless previous arrangements are made. – **Zoom**: It is encouraged not to eat full meals during class. A small snack, water, coffee or juice as needed is fine.
- You are expected to arrive on time and remain until the **Zoom** class is dismissed. Students who leave class early, or float in and out, will be counted as absent for that class period. Doors may be locked 10 minutes after class begins. **Zoom**: admittance back into the room may not be granted. Disruption of lectures, or speeches is not considered "participation" and will be docked accordingly. Repeated absences or tardiness will be reflected in the 10% factor of the grading scale. (If the student's needs an early dismissal please notify me prior to class.)
- Each student is responsible for rehearsals outside of class and to be ready on performance days.
- Students should attend **Zoom**/Class in clothing suitable for movement and/or appropriate clothing for designated scene work/movement days.
- It is the student's responsibility to cover missed material from fellow classmates.
- I am available anytime per appointment.
- Students must help with set up and strike of each class. In-person.
- Students are required to participate fully in all classes; to work collaboratively with their peers; and to show disciplined commitment to acting.
- If you have a religious conflict with any class or class assignment, email Professor Johnson within the first two weeks of the semester.
- Class assignments will be completed either synchronously or asynchronously. Students should check in on the shared Flipgrid to share recorded video content: <https://signup.flipgrid.com/from/Stevie2605>

Additional Synchronous Considerations

- Synchronous class sessions via Zoom are regulated as a formal class. Proper conduct is to be expected as that of an in-person classroom setting. Off the bed, sitting up, out of pajamas and attentive is required. This means off your bed, change out of your pajamas, sit up, and present for your class.
- If you chose a virtual background please make it conducive and not disruptive to class. A plain background is suggested for performance days.
- You may log-in to the class using your phone.

- If you have technical issues during the class, please let me know via Chat, or email. You may dial in to USC ITS consultation—1 (213) 740-5555—for technical help.
- Please mute your microphone when you are not speaking. If possible, I'd like you to enable your webcam, so you are visible in the course. Let me know if you have Internet issues that prevent you from using the webcam.
- I prefer that you refrain from private Chatting during the class session. I might not be able to respond to your Chat messages during class—but I will do so afterwards. Alternatively, I will ask one of you to volunteer as my Chat TA, who will respond to your urgent Chat, when needed. Or, simply raise the question to me during class time.
- You may use the “raise hand” feature via Zoom “Participants” tab to alert me that you wish to speak. You may also raise your hand in front of the camera to alert me. I will call on your name for you to speak.
- I want to offer my classroom as a safe space that nourishes a variety of opinions and encourages challenging ideas. Like any environment, an online learning environment is a place where we train ourselves to interact with others. Here are a few guidelines conducive to our (socialization) training:
 - Listen actively, attentively, and with respect. Listen to what others are saying even when you disagree with what is being said.
 - Criticize ideas, not individuals or groups. Respect others' right to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from your own.
 - Link claims and assertions to appropriate evidence when possible. Give examples.
 - Ask clarifying questions if you don't understand a point raised. It is OK to ask a question that you think may be too simple or uninformed. We are all in a learning process.
 - Try not to interrupt the speaker, unless we are explicitly engaging in a debate. Please do not be offended if someone interrupts you. At times, eagerness to share overtakes the patience of waiting to be recognized.
 - As your professor who has to monitor class discussions, please allow me to interrupt you in order to offer equitable speaking opportunities to others. When invited to speak, you may always ask to come back to you later and allow you time to formulate your response.
 - Use “I” statements to share your views with peers. For example, “I notice that when I'm with my friends, we pay attention differently” is more constructive than “When you're with friends, you pay attention differently.”
 - Support good ideas that other people have, even if they are different from our own. Then you may follow up with your opposing opinions.

- Our primary commitment is to learn from each other, including me from all of you. We acknowledge differences among us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our awareness and understanding through this process.
- What we are practicing is global citizenship. We are experiencing intercultural exchanges-in-action.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology. If you need resources to successfully participate in this class, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the **USC technology rental program**. To apply, please submit an application. The Student Basic Needs team will contact all applicants and distribute equipment to eligible applicants prior to the start of the fall semester.

Statement on Academic Integrity & Academic Conduct

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

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 and contact information for DSP: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu. dsp.usc.edu

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>.

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.

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.

* I have read, understand and agree to the above terms

Print: _____
(Print Student's Name)

Signature: _____
(Signature)