



THTR 427: Audition Technique for Film, Television and New Media (Section 63127R)

Units: 2.0

Spring 2022 / Wednesdays / 3-5:50pm

Location: PED 202

Instructor: Rodney To

Office: DRC 111c

Office Hours: Per request / Reach out and we'll discuss

Contact Info: rodneyto@usc.edu / (917) 445-1040 m.

Course Description

Auditioning is the fundamental, layered process through which actors are vetted and (hopefully) hired to perform Acting work. Auditioning has remained a consistent step - and yet drastically evolved - since the early days of filmmaking. This course will be a deep dive into every aspect of auditioning on camera. Actors will be taken through the Industry's current audition process - from story and script to preparation and casting, including the nuance in its decision-making. By the end of the course, actors will possess a reliable technique with which to approach auditioning, bringing confidence, specificity and authenticity to their performances.

Learning Objectives

- Review the actor's on-camera acting technique. Exercise, assess, and refine basic acting skills for the camera.
- Understand every aspect of auditioning. Get a holistic overview of the process and the actor's place in it.
- Using the assigned text, we'll delve into the casting director's perspective and not only understand how auditions are facilitated, but how casting directors are the essential conduit between actor and production.
- The actor will learn the process of breaking down audition sides practically for an audition situation to suit the individual actor's ability.
- Actors will get a full assessment of their physical presence, energy and how they carry themselves; the body is essential to powerful auditioning.
- Actors will learn how to play multi-character scenes in auditions and discuss eye-line and various other factors that could potentially affect these type of auditions ('walk-n-talks', driving, speeches, etc.)
- Actors will understand the use of props, wardrobe, environment, etc. in auditioning on-camera and how to make smart decisions regarding them.
- Actors will get a complete understanding of comedic (multi vs. single cam) and dramatic (procedural, serials, etc.) content and the inherent differences and nuances to consider when auditioning for either genre.
- Actors will understand what are the practical elements of strong self-taping and what the actor can control in creating auditions that stand out.
- Actors will also touch upon the business of auditioning and how to maintain good standing with casting, directors, producers, networks, etc. through strong auditions, work ethic, and connections.

Note from Rodney:

Actors, this class is your opportunity to gain a true understanding of one of the fundamental skills in the life of a professional actor - auditioning. I want you to leave my class really armed with what it takes to prepare and perform a competitive audition. I find that acting students mire themselves in many costly details that detract from what is actually necessary for them to thrive. As a working actor and industry professional myself, it is my mission to provide clarity to any unanswered questions you may have about the audition process and/or the Entertainment Industry itself, so you leave our time together well-informed, confident and fully prepared to do your best work.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Since several assignments will include self-taping, students will need internet access as well as access to a working digital camera. Mobile phones or tablets are desirable for easy mobility and access (see *MOBILE PHONE & TABLET POLICY* below). Basic editing software(ie iMovie, Movie Maker, etc.), access to basic sound and lighting equipment may also be useful, but *not* required.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

How to Audition On Camera: A Hollywood Insider's Guide for Actors

by Sharon Bialy

ISBN: 9780884485254

Description and Assessment of Assignments

SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NEEDED. WILL NOTIFY OF ALL CHANGES

Grading Breakdown

- Semester Assignments: **75pts*****
- Final: **20pts**
- Class participation: **5pts †** (see *Participation breakdown below*)

Total: **100 points**

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100	C	73-76
A-	90-94	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 and below

† Participation Breakdown:

† **5pts EXCELLENT participation.** Demonstrates active, everyday engagement. Shows willingness & enthusiasm in discussions, class activity, and collaborations

† **4pts GOOD participation.** Frequent active participation. Engaged, willing semi-regular participation in discussions, class activity, and collaborations

† **3pts AVERAGE participation.** Semi-regular, but active participation in discussions, class activity, and collaborations

Further Participation Notes:

All aspects of a life in the Entertainment Industry is nothing short of a fully collaborative, immersive process. I cannot emphasize enough how much (more) you will learn by listening to,

working with, and supporting your fellow classmates. Therefore daily participation and active engagement in class (discussions, classwork, etc.) is essential and *will* factor into your final grade. **Therefore no absences or late arrivals will be allowed.** *Participation is weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guidelines.*

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments will be discussed in detail at the end of each class period. Assignments will be either emailed, uploaded, or presented in class per Rodney's instruction.

Late Submission Policy

Assignments are expected to be completed by the due date & time. Grades on late assignments will be deducted appropriately. I reserve the right to not accept late assignments at my discretion.

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.

RODNEY'S IN-CLASS POLICY REGARDING COVID AND SAFETY

- ALL STUDENTS WILL WEAR A MASK (PREFERABLY KN95 or KN94) AT ALL TIMES FROM THE MOMENT YOU WALK INTO MY CLASS, TO THE MOMENT YOU LEAVE IT. I (RODNEY) WILL WEAR ONE AS WELL.
- I reserve the right to enforce this policy and either not allow you in class or dismiss you during class. Such dismissals will count as absences.
- We must NOT take wearing a mask lightly. It must be fitted over your nose and mouth. This is non-negotiable. If for any reason you do not agree or feel indifferent or anticipate not wanting to wear a mask at some point or feel like you 'won't be able to act' with a mask on your face, MY CLASS SECTION IS NOT THE CLASS FOR YOU.
- Students and faculty (including myself) have household members who are immunocompromised and it's imperative that we not put them at any more risk than necessary.
- NO EATING OR DRINKING IN CLASS because in order to do so, you would have to remove your mask. So if you even want to sip water, step outside of the building. Again, no excuses.
- Once again, if you feel like you will not be ok with my policies, that is your right, however, my class section is not for you.

NETIQUETTE (since we start the semester online and/or in the event we pivot back online):
The online learning modality for the Arts & Entertainment Industry is still a new frontier for everyone. We are discovering how to best navigate these newer practices together. While certainly not ideal, let's embrace this as an opportunity.

- I will be expecting that you do your best to treat this as a traditional classroom. Do your best to find a quiet space in your home where you can sit up comfortably and focus with little-to-no distractions or disturbances. No outdoor spots unless you discuss it with me first. I am acutely aware (and sensitive to the fact) that everyone's circumstances vary, so if you're unable to find a reasonable working spot for class, please contact me privately to discuss.
- Even though we will be online and in your homes this semester, students must wear appropriate, casual, classroom clothes - no pajamas. Be professional, mature, and respectful; wear nothing revealing or distasteful.
- Please log-on from a desktop (or laptop) if possible. Oftentimes, I find when students log-on from their phone or tablet, the smaller nature of these devices lends itself to the student being too casual, less alert and easily distracted.
- Remember safety at all times. Do NOT drive while in class. You will be logged-off and marked with an unexcused absence if you attempt to take class while driving or exercising or shopping or cleaning or babysitting - Yes, I've seen it all.
- No 'other' technology during class. Phones must be on silent and put away. Unless I invite you to do so, phones may only be taken out during breaks. I am keenly aware when you are reading your phones unnecessarily - trust me, I'm not *that* old. Any intentional use of your devices for non-class purposes (texting, emailing, viewing of non-class related materials, playing video games, etc.) will negatively reflect your participation grade.
- Except for water, no food or drinks are allowed in class.
- No pets or any other distractions such as toys, video games, etc.
- Do not share personal class dealings and discoveries outside of class. We will be working hard to establish trust with each other. Respect is paramount. Communicate freely, honestly, and frequently, but always be respectful, mindful, mature.

I pride myself in treating all students like professionals-in-training. It's important that you begin your journey to becoming professionals by behaving as such throughout this course which, at the very least, begins with proper, respectful usage of your devices. No one in the history of the world has died or will die because of you paying attention in class.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

*****SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NEEDED. WILL NOTIFY OF ALL CHANGES****

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverables/Due Dates
WEEK 1 1/12 * Class begins via Zoom. Navigate to Zoom class via the link on BLACKBOARD!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to class • Go over class expectations, objectives, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Stanislavsky's <i>ACTION</i> (Hand out) 	
WEEK 2 1/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review <i>ACTION</i> • Example: Apply to monologue • Split in pairs, work on monologue • Review: self-tape assignment rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record monologue. Keep in mind self-tape rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPLOAD TO GOOGLE DRIVE AND EMAIL RODNEY LINK BY SUNDAY, JAN 23 by NOON!
WEEK 3 1/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review self-tape assignments. Discuss. • Review common practical mistakes in auditioning (sides, eye line, moving around, props, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>How to Audition On Camera: A Hollywood Insider's Guide for Actors</i> by Sharon Bialy. 	<p>Be prepared for me to call on you individually to discuss chapters.</p>
Week 4 2/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss various chapters/topics of <i>How to Audition On Camera: A Hollywood Insider's Guide for Actors</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read packet of scenes to be posted on Blackboard for familiarity. 	

WEEK 5 2/9	IN-PERSON AUDITIONING SECTION BEGINS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakdown scenes • Understanding time management w/ scene work. • Work on scene • Split in pairs and work on scenes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tape with scene partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPLOAD TO GOOGLE DRIVE AND EMAIL RODNEY LINK BY SUNDAY, FEB 13 by NOON!
WEEK 6 2/16	IN-PERSON AUDITIONING (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review tapes • In-class taping w/ partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare assigned sides for in-person auditioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sides will be emailed on Monday, 2/14
WEEK 7 2/23	IN-PERSON AUDITIONING (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare assigned sides for in-person auditioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sides will be emailed on Monday, 2/21
WEEK 8 3/2	IN-PERSON AUDITIONING (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare assigned sides for in-person auditioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sides will be emailed on Monday, 2/28 and you will be auditioning for industry professional
WEEK 9 3/9	MID-TERM! GUEST SPEAKER #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Mock' audition for industry professional. You'll perform and receive notes. THIS IS YOUR MIDTERM. 	

WEEK of 3/16	SPRING	BREAK	NO CLASSES!
WEEK 10 3/23	COMEDY AUDITIONING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What goes into auditioning for comedic appointments. • Understand differences in comedic genre (multi-cam, single, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare assigned sides for in-person auditioning. 	
WEEK 11 3/30	COMEDY AUDITIONING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform and tape(in-class) assigned sides and discuss. 		
WEEK 12 4/6	GUEST SPEAKER (TBA)		
WEEK 13 4/13	DRAMA AUDITIONING / FINAL PREP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What goes into auditioning for dramatic appointments. • Understand differences creator-based tone (Shonda Rhimes, Aaron Sorkin, etc.) • Understanding walk-n-talk technique. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare assigned sides for in-person auditioning. 	

WEEK 14	DRAMA AUDITIONING / FINAL PREP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform and tape(in-class) assigned sides and discuss. • Discuss self-tape FINAL. 		
4/20			
Week 15	BUSINESS WRAP-UP/ FINAL PREP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business-oriented wrap-up class. We'll answer questions you may have surrounding the business end of auditioning. • FINAL TAPE DISCUSSION 		
4/27			
FINALS WEEK			

******YOUR FINAL PROJECTS WILL BE SCREENED FRIDAY, MAY 6
from 2pm-4pm******

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.symlicity.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.

