

USC THEATER #480A
PERFORMANCE FOR CAMERA

SPRING 2022
SYLLABUS

“Auditioning for the Camera”
XXX

THTR 480A

Performance for Camera: Auditioning on Camera

Instructor: Joseph Hacker

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#63190 Fri. 2:30 to 5:20

#63191 Tu: 2 to 4:50

#63187 Thu: 2 to 4:50

Office Hours: TBA

2 units

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](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

ACTING IN COMMERCIALS, JOAN SEE, BACK STAGE
COMPREHENSIVE CONTEMPORARY ACTING, SHAWN NELSON
SCREENPLAY, SYD FIELD, DELL TRADE PUBLICATIONS
DIRECTING ACTORS, JUDITH WESTON, M. WIESE PRODUCTIONS

Course Work and Final Exam: Students will work on camera every week. In addition, students will be required to submit several virtual (self-taped 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%

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

Course final grades will 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 Spring 2022

CLASS #1

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

INTRODUCTION	SET THE SPACE. IDENTIFY A READER. ZOOM VERSES I-PHONE
REMARKS:	DEFINE THE COURSE. STAGE VERSUS SCREEN. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY “4 Quotes” Video Examples: McAdams et al Your Time is Now; 300 Times; et al “Apple”
DISCUSSION:	DEFINE THE PROCESS: A SEQUENCE OF DOABLE STEPS. IDENTIFY A PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVE
ASSIGNMENT:	“TWENTY YEAR FRIEND” (HANDOUT) READ SYLLABUS SUGGESTED READING LIST REQUIRED: “AUDITIONING ON CAMERA”
SCENE:	SELF-TAPE: POISON. (HANDOUT)
DISCUSSION:	WARDROBE, PROPS
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 WHAT ARE “THEY” LOOKING FOR? WHAT IS THE ACTOR’S FUNCTION IN AN ON-CAMERA INTERVIEW? LOOKING BACK AT WHO’S LOOKING AT YOU.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN A PROFESSIONAL AUDITION.
ISSUES UNIQUE TO AUDITIONING.
DEFINING "CHARACTER"

EXERCISE: Q & A: "TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF" / "WHAT HAE YOU BEEN UP TO?"
COMMUNICATING EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS VS. THE FACTS
FREE ASSOCIATION TECHNIQUE

ASSIGNMENT: CONTINUE TWENTY YEAR FRIEND
SCENE: SELF-TAPE: " POISON" (HANDOUT)

DISCUSSION: WARDROBE, PROPS

READ: AUDITIONING ON CAMERA:
CHAPTER 3 "ON-CAMERA INTERVIEWS"

CLASS #3

**"SON, IF YOU DIDN'T BRING IT WITH YOU,
YOU SURE AIN'T GONNA FIND IT OUT HERE"**

DISCUSSION: THE CRUCIAL MOMENT: THE INSTANT WE SEE YOU
WARDROBE / STRATEGIC CHOICES / ENTRY

VIDEO: I robot
Jonathan Langley

EXERCISE: SCENE (MOS) / CREATE A REALITY / PRESENT "POISON"
SELF-TAPE
Enter with a verb
Comment with humor.
Acknowledging nerves
Slate
Perform

EXERCISE: "PLUNGE INTO COLD WATER" / SELF-TAPE "POISON"
SLATE AND PRESENT / NEXT!
WARD ROBE / ENTRY / PROPS
WHAT COMMUNICATES
WHO GETS THE PART? WHY?

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

ASSIGNMENT: SCENES: "MICHELLE" / "MICKEY" (HANDOUT)

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"

ASSIGNMENT: SELECTED FILMS
RAINMAN; DEVIL WEARS PRADA

CLASS #4

"I KNEW YOU WERE RIGHT FOR THE PART

THE INSTANT YOU WALKED INTO THE ROOM"

DISCUSSION: ENTRY VERBS / ACTING PRINCIPALS

SCENES: MOCK AUDITION: SELF TAPE (AS ASSIGNED)
MICHELLE / MICKEY

ASSIGNMENT: CALLBACK: REVISIT SCENES: SWITCHED
THREE SELECTED FILMS (WEEK #6)
RAINMAN; DEVIL WEARS PRADA

READ: AUDITIONING ON CAMERA
CHAPTER 9 "EYES / THOUGHTS"
CHAPTER 10 "PLACE / THOUGHTS"

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)
MICHELLE / MICKEY

ASSIGNMENT: CALLBACK: REVISIT SCENES: SWITCHED
THREE SELECTED FILMS (WEEK #7)
RAINMAN; DEVIL WEARS PRADA

READ: AUDITIONING ON CAMERA
CHAPTER 9 "EYES / THOUGHTS"
CHAPTER 10 "PLACE / THOUGHTS"

CLASS #6

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

EXERCISES: MOCK AUDITIONS: CALLBACK SCENES: SWITCHED
LUKE & CAROLINE

DISCUSSION: EVALUATIONS

ASSIGNMENT: THREE FILMS

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

NEXT WEEK. TALKING DAY

CLASS #7

"GREAT ARTISTS POSITION THEMSELVES WELL BEFORE THEY LEAP"

DISCUSSION: THE BASICS OF DRAMATIC STRUCTURE & HOW IT INFORMS YOUR CHOICES
JOHN TRUBY / SYD FIELDS
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 CAMERA
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
VICKIE & HENRY

CLASS #10

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 “OVERALL SUMMARY”

INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES. TO BE SCHEDULE

CLASS #11

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 AUDITION MONOLOGUES & SCENES: (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 TBA

note: all the above subject to change

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.

Support Systems:

Campus Support & Intervention (CSI) – (213) 740-0411

Campus Support & Intervention is an office within Campus Wellbeing and Crisis Intervention. We are a team of professionals here to assist students, faculty, and staff in navigating complex issues. Whether you are here seeking

support for yourself or someone else, we are available to help you problem solve, understand options, and connect with resources. <https://uscsa.usc.edu>

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213)

740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <https://titleix.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://titleix.usc.edu/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu