

THTR 515D – MFA – Advanced Movement 63227

Units: 2

Term: Spring 2022

Day/Time: Tuesday/Thursday 10am – 11:50am

Location: TBD

Instructor: Alexandra Billings & Christopher Shaw

Office: Zoom

Office Hours: By Appointment: email alexansb@usc.edu
email shawchri@usc.edu

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(323) 632-4894 (Cell – Text OK)

Course Description

"Every true artist has deep within them the desire for Transformation" ~Michael Chekhov

*"A seismic cultural shift occurred in America during the middle of the last century. It was a shift marked by such events as the protests against the Vietnam War, the marches for civil rights, and the birth of abstract expressionism, postmodernism and minimalism. During the 1960s, this cultural explosion and artistic revolution gained momentum in New York City, San Francisco, and other urban centers and then spread across the nation. The movement was political, aesthetic and personal, and it altered the way artists thought about their processes, their audiences and their role in the world. . . . These postmodern pioneers forged the territory upon which we now stand. They rejected the insistence by the modern dance world upon social messages and virtuosic technique, and replaced it with internal decisions, structures, rules or problems. What made the final dance was the context of the dance. Whatever movement occurred while working on these problems **became** the art. This philosophy lies at the heart of both Viewpoints and Composition. "*

– Anne Bogart & Tina Landau

Picking up where we left off last semester with extensive mask work, we will

- 1) Explore a form of actor transformation unmasked
- 2) Begin to explore Viewpoints work: The Viewpoints, as seen through the lens of Anne Bogart derived from its originator; Mary Overlie, are nine specific containers describing the physical language of an artist's body as it moves through space and time. The exploration of these nine containers will be lead by Alex Billings in a deep dive into the spiritual well of both self and character. This will support Chris Shaw's work as well as enhance the tools needed for each individual artist to navigate their artistic journey.

Learning Objectives

Picking up where we left off in the Mask progression work, we will continue to explore transformation through unmasked acting work. We will also continue working the nine Viewpoints as they reveal the need for text and imaginary circumstances.

- Train through a series of exercises to strengthen spontaneity, physical expression and imagination.
- Exploration of energy, connectivity and communion between the actors in relation to each other, and the “space between”.
- Encourage more risk-taking and bolder choices in acting that are not confined by any particular expectations or a strict process
- Discover the unity of the actor’s instrument: body, mind, psyche – thus, exploring and developing its optimal potential.
- Explore the potential for character transformation through the foundation of mask work, viewpoints and the various external and internal degrees of that work.
- Cultivate an awareness and control of the actor’s vocal and physical apparatus.
- Apply the work to material, exploring different levels of physicality and theatricality.

USC technology rental program

If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university’s equipment rental program. To apply, please [submit an application](#). The Student Basic Needs team will contact all applicants in early August and distribute equipment to eligible applicants prior to the start of the fall semester.

USC Technology Support Links

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

IT Services 213 -740 – 5555 or email consult@usc.edu

Course Requirements:

Proper Attire – all black movement / work out / athletic wear, no logos or symbols on the clothes, plain black. The clothing should be non-restrictive and easy to move in and yet not conceal the shape of the body. *Target* brands have great inexpensive options. A small “Champion” or similar logo okay if unavoidable

Regular Attendance and vigorous courageous participation

Grading

In order to succeed in this class you need to do the following.

- . Show up on time ready to work.
- . Participate in all class activities with vigor, courage, risk and an open mind and heart.
- . Rehearse outside of class with passion and a collaborative generous creative spirit.
- . Demonstrate improvement in your ability

Grading Point Breakdown:

- True Person Research and Transformation Exploration.....15 points
- Viewpoints Project #1 15 points
- Viewpoints Project #2 15 points
- MID-TERM Solo True Person Video Project 20 points

- FINAL (specifics TBD)20 points
- Cumulative Active Class Participation, Contribution15 points
- TOTAL 100 points**

PARTICIPATION

Acting is a subjective art form and you will be graded not on your talent, but rather on your growth, willingness to risk, and your participation and commitment to yourself, your partners and the class as a whole. This is an experienced-based course and participation in class activities is essential for students to gain a deeper understanding of the work.

Willingly engaging in and contributing to the overall experience of the group in a positive way. Your participation grade for this course is based on the following criteria:

- Being present and available in mind and body and willing to physically participate in all the various forms of Mask work we are exploring
- Engaging in and contributing to discussion in this exploratory eo
- Attitude – Enthusiasm – Professionalism
- Maintaining focus and concentration
- RESPECT: always respect your classmates and instructor
- The nature of this work is incredibly personal and revealing. It can be exciting, hysterically funny, frightening and even painful. We expect that you fully engage in everything we do, and actively seek this excitement and intensity.

Grading Breakdown

Absences/Tardiness:

Learning in class depends on the layering of intellectual and emotional discovery resulting from the consistent active exploration of **100%** of the Ensemble **No absences or tardies are allowed.** **Cumulative active class participation points will be lost.** *Participation is weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guideline*

Grading Policy:

Grades are not dictated by the success of acting presentations or the instructor's subjective opinion of talent and artistic preference.

Grades are dictated by

- Participation, preparation, attendance
- Willingness to experiment and apply the constructive feedback of instructor and students **on one's own scenes, presentations, and exercises**
- **Meeting all assignment deadlines: reading, writing, acting, scene and exercise presentations**
- **Application and understanding of methods being explored in class and in reading, to scene work and exercises**

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

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

For all assignments points will be determined as follows:

100% - Excellent: clear understanding of the class material is coupled with original and creative insight and confident preparation

85% - Good: class material has been understood clearly and performed competently

75% - Average: class material has been generally understood, but gaps in understanding and performance remain

50% - Poor: there are identifiable gaps in the understanding of class material, as well as deficiencies in basic requirements such as memorization, blocking, etc.

0% - Unacceptable: work was not completed on time, with no communication with professor or student partners

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown. NOTE: Since this is a live studio style class where we work on the craft live during class time this schedule is always subject to change

Week 1 : Intro and Animal Project

Week 2: Unmasked Character Transformation / Video Project

Week 3: Unmasked Character Transformation / Video Project

Week 4: Viewpoints Work / Video Project

Week 5: Viewpoints Work / Video Project

Week 6: Viewpoints Work / Video Project

Week 7: Viewpoints Work / Video Project

Week 8: TBD

Week 9: **TBD / MID TERM**

Week 10 - --SPRING BREAK--

Week 11 – 16 TBD

FINAL DAY OF CLASS: Thursday April 28

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday May 10 , 11 – 1

The Final is dictated by the creative process of the class so specifics will be discussed later in the semester.

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 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 for DSP and contact information: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (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.

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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.