

### **Course Description**

*"Imagination is more important than knowledge.  
For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces  
the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand." — Albert Einstein*

This course lays the foundation for studying the discipline and art of acting, and will explore and apply these concepts through classroom exercises and performances. Students will begin to examine the actor's role in storytelling, including connecting the specifics of text analysis to the emotional and physical portrayal of a role, study concepts of acting theory, as put forth by prominent acting teachers and actors, strive to be present and mindful, consider both their own and others' uniqueness, explore their own innate ability to imagine deeply and fully engage in play, respect their body as an instrument and build its physical and vocal abilities, including mind-body connection, adhere to the required discipline — being on time, rehearsing outside of class, and staying strong and healthy, live in a Process over Result mindset, and think of every exercise as an experiment, with the intent of exploration and discovery, think analytically and respectfully in response to others' work, and reinforce a spirit of generosity, curiosity, compassion, and courage as we work to build an ensemble.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Practice basic acting skills such as focus, concentration, relaxation, imagination, play, vocal/physical/mental presence
2. Apply successful ensemble/partnership techniques
3. Relate observed acting techniques to their own work
4. Research and interpret text as it relates to acting and storytelling choices
5. Deconstruct a script to make active, specific, physical choices
6. Integrate established acting theory and rehearsal techniques into their own work

### **Course Notes**

Classes must be attended live and in-person (medical status withstanding), due to the collaborative, experiential, and performative nature of acting.

You are also expected to rehearse with your fellow actors outside of class, as part of the collaborative nature of theatre. We will discuss your outside rehearsals in class. Both in-class and outside scenework/rehearsal require notes to be taken — please be prepared.

## Communication

Please email me at [kqeggers@usc.edu](mailto:kqeggers@usc.edu) any time with questions or concerns. Emails will generally be returned within 48 hours on weekdays. I can also meet with you via my Zoom personal meeting room, or at an on-campus location as schedules allow.

I also ask that the class as a whole have a communication group, platform of your choice, so you can easily get in touch with each other.

## Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Blackboard will be updated regularly with announcements, readings, etc. Please check often. Blackboard help for students is at [studentblackboardhelp.usc.edu](http://studentblackboardhelp.usc.edu).

You will occasionally need to print scripts — please be prepared with printing capability.

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## Required Reading

Books are available through the USC Bookstore ([www.uscbookstore.com/textbooks](http://www.uscbookstore.com/textbooks)) or wherever you like to buy books.

- *Letters to a Young Artist* by Anna Deavere Smith
- *Actions: The Actors' Thesaurus* by Marina Caldarone & Maggie Lloyd Williams (book OR smartphone app is acceptable)
- PDFs of other selected readings will be posted to Blackboard, which students are expected to read and retain for discussion.

## Required Viewing

You are required to attend a School of Dramatic Arts performance OR watch a full-length play (curated list to come) on Digital Theatre+, and write a response.

## Supplemental Reading

- *The Great Acting Teachers and Their Methods, Vol. 1 & 2* by Richard Brestoff
- *Acting: The First Six Lessons* by Richard Boleslavsky
- *Black Acting Methods: Critical Approaches* by Sharrell D. Lockett with Tia Shaffer
- *The Art of Acting* by Stella Adler
- *Respect for Acting* by Uta Hagen
- *A Korean Approach to Actor Training* by Jeungsook Yoo

## Supplemental Viewing/Watching/Listening

- Additional School of Dramatic Arts performances
- Live theatre — local suggestions upon request
- High quality recorded theatre — Digital Theatre+ and Broadway HD are both excellent resources

## Description and Assessment of Assignments

Below is a general overview of assignments. A detailed assignment description will be posted on Blackboard with ample time for each assignment.

In-Class Activities — *"Art resides in the quality of doing; process is not magic."* — Charles Eames  
*"Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment."* — Mahatma Gandhi

This is an experience-based course, and you are expected to participate and commit with a generous heart, an open mind and a devoted work ethic. You are not graded on 'talent' in this class, you are graded on your Quality of Doing — there is no progress without the effort.

Discussion — You are expected to participate thoughtfully, respectfully and fully in discussions about readings, viewings, rehearsals, and other topics as they arise. Taking notes on and/or highlighting readings is strongly suggested so you can refer back easily. I do not require a written journal in this class, but I will ask you to relay your outside work orally, so a written journal is encouraged, for your own growth.

Personal Reading — Refer to Week One of Course Schedule.

Devised Choral Work — Work will be in small groups as assigned by the instructor. Meetings and rehearsals outside of class are crucial to the success of this project. Outside rehearsals will be discussed in class. A final presentation of choral work will be scheduled — full costumes, props and overall preparation is mandatory.

Performance Response — You will write a response to an SDA production OR a Digital Theatre+ production (from a curated list). A list of the Spring season of shows is at the end of this syllabus. Digital Theatre+ is available at [libraries.usc.edu/databases/digital-theatre-plus](http://libraries.usc.edu/databases/digital-theatre-plus). Consider seeing multiple productions before deciding the focus of your response. Detailed instructions and prompts for response will be posted on Blackboard with ample time.

Open Scene — Work will be in pairs assigned by the instructor. Meetings and rehearsals outside of class are crucial to the success of this project. Outside rehearsals will be discussed in class. A final presentation of each open scene will be scheduled — full costumes, props and overall preparation is mandatory. Written Component of the Open Scene will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard.

Contemporary Scene — Work will be in pairs or groups as assigned by the instructor. Meetings and rehearsals outside of class are crucial to the success of this project. A final presentation of each contemporary scene will be scheduled — full costumes, props and overall preparation is mandatory. Written Component of the Contemporary Scene will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard.

### Grading Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
In-class activities (presence, focus, attitude, willingness, ensemble support)	26
Discussion of Readings, Plays, Rehearsals	5

Personal Reading	5
Choral Work and Presentation	14
Performance Response	5
Open Scene Classwork	10
Open Scene Presentation	15
Open Scene Written Component	5
Contemporary Scene Presentation (Final)	10
Contemporary Scene Written Component (inc. Final Reflection)	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

### Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

A = 95-100 pts B+ = 87-89 pts C+ = 77-79 pts D+ = 67-69 pts F = 59 or below

A- = 90-94 pts B = 83-86 pts C = 73-76 pts D = 63-66 pts

B- = 80-82 pts C- = 70-72 pts D- = 60-62 pts

### Assignment Submission Policy

Written assignments should be posted on Blackboard as a PDF attachment before the specified date and time, and should be formatted for clarity and readability. Late assignments will not be awarded full points. Do not send links to Google Docs.

Rehearsal and Performance Assignments are presented in class. Associated notes do not need to be submitted, although you will refer to your work and must be prepared.

Grades will generally be posted to Blackboard within a week. If you fail to turn in an assignment, it will show on Blackboard Grade Center — I cannot follow up with you to ask about missing assignments.

### 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).*

What happens in class, stays in class!

### Learning Experience Evaluation

Learning Experience 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 me as the instructor to offer any feedback on the course.

### **Attendance**

Being absent, late, or leaving early disturbs the important ensemble nature of this class, and in-class activity points will be deducted. You must be present and ready to work at the start of each class.

However, your health and the health of our community eclipses all! If your Covid-19 (or other virus) status precludes you from attending class in-person, I will attempt to conduct class as hybrid, and request you attend class LIVE via Zoom, with Camera On. I will not open the Zoom classroom unless you notify me via email before class begins. Travel and other scenarios are not grounds for attending via Zoom.

Extracurricular activities do not excuse you from class work. (Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university are exempt, with pre-submitted official documentation. See SDA Statement on Productions, ISPs, and Extra-Curricular Commitments below.)

Please take to heart:

*"We have been sitting here waiting, our nerves on edge, angry and 'it seems I am a little late.' We all came here full of enthusiasm for the work waiting to be done, and now, thanks to you, that mood has been destroyed. To arouse a desire to create is difficult; to kill a desire is extremely easy. If I interfere with my own work, it is my own affair, but what right have I to hold up the work of the whole group? The actor, no less than the soldier, must be subject to iron discipline."* — Constantine Stanislavski in *An Actor Prepares*

There is no better place to learn discipline, and its rewards, than in acting class, where others depend on you to make their art.

### **Classroom Norms**

**Devices** — Engagement with cell phones and other electronic devices during class is prohibited. Cell phones should be left on silent in your backpack/bag (not pocket), away from your work in class. This is to encourage your focus, presence, and respect to your peers. Use of cell phones in class will negatively affect your in-class activity points for the day.

**Attire** — Acting is physical and can get sweaty; dress accordingly. Your clothing and shoes should allow you to move freely and comfortably. Shoes should be closed-toed and stay on your feet — no flip-flops. If hair gets in your face, secure it back. Hats are generally discouraged.

**Eating** — Open food and drink is not permitted in any SDA classroom. Absolutely no chewing gum, please dispose of before class.

**Break** — We generally do not take an official break during class. Please be prepared to stay in the room and active as both a performer and audience member for the entire 110 minutes of class. In the event of an emergency for which you must leave the room, observe theatre rules of being discrete and respectful to your fellow actors.

**Strike** — You are expected to restore the classroom to neutral at the end of each class.

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### Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Please note: due to the fluid and creative nature of this course, weekly structure will change to accommodate the needs of individuals and the ensemble. You are asked to remain flexible, and you will be informed of any changes as much as possible.

Every class will begin with group work, exploring foundations of voice, physicality, relaxation, concentration, imagination, focus, storytelling, playfulness, and ensemble-building.

	Date	Topics/Daily Activities	Due Today	Homework
1	Mon Jan 9	Welcome/Introductions. Syllabus and expectations review. Begin ensemble, play, and mindfulness work.		DUE WEDNESDAY: Please bring in an existing piece of writing that feels personal to you and ignites you in some way. This may be a poem, a passage from a book or script, song lyrics, etc. It should not be something you wrote. Please read from a <b>hard copy</b> , NOT a screen.  AND  Read "What is Acting?" from <i>Acting One</i> by Robert Cohen. Posted on Blackboard.
	Wed Jan 11	Present personal readings. Ensemble, focus, storytelling work.	Personal readings. Please bring in an existing piece of writing that feels personal to you and ignites you in some way.  Discuss "What is Acting?" from <i>Acting One</i> by Robert Cohen.	FOR WEDNESDAY: Read "Basics" and "Relationships" from <i>Letters to a Young Artist</i> for discussion.
2	Mon Jan 16	MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY — NO CLASS		
	Wed Jan 18	Group movement and voice work. Personal readings, continued.	Discuss "Basics" and "Relationships" from <i>Letters to a Young Artist</i> .	FOR WEDNESDAY: Read "Work," "Matters of the Mind," and "Matters of the Heart" from <i>Letters to a Young Artist</i> for discussion.
3	Mon Jan 23	Group movement and voice work. Book discussion. Personal readings, continued.		

	Date	Topics/Daily Activities	Due Today	Homework
	Wed Jan 25	Imagination work. Personal readings, continued.	Discuss "Work," "Matters of the Mind," and "Matters of the Heart" from <i>Letters to a Young Artist</i> .	FOR WEDNESDAY: Read "Keeping the Faith," "Art and Society," and "The Death of Cool" from <i>Letters to a Young Artist</i> for discussion.
4	Mon Jan 30	Ensemble work. Book discussion. Personal readings, continued.		
	Wed Feb 1	Ensemble work. Personal readings, continued.	Discuss "Keeping the Faith," "Art and Society," and "The Death of Cool" from <i>Letters to a Young Artist</i> .	
5	Mon Feb 6	Introduce choral work.		Choral work rehearsal.  FOR WEDNESDAY: Read Thespis section from <i>The Great Acting Teachers &amp; Their Methods</i> PDF for discussion. Posted on Blackboard.
	Wed Feb 8	Choral work.	Discuss Thespis section from <i>The Great Acting Teachers &amp; Their Methods</i> .	Choral work rehearsal.  DUE APRIL 10: Performance Response, posted to Blackboard before class. Season of Plays begins this weekend.
6	Mon/Wed Feb 13/15	Choral work.		Choral work rehearsal.
7	Mon Feb 20	PRESIDENTS' DAY — NO CLASS		
	Wed Feb 22	Choral work.		Choral work rehearsal.
8	Mon Feb 27	Choral work.		Choral work rehearsal/prep.
	Wed Mar 1	CHORAL WORK PRESENTATION.  Relationship and tactic work, in pairs. Begin open scene work.	CHORAL WORK PRESENTATION.	DUE MONDAY: Read Rehearsal/Actions compilation PDF, posted on Blackboard. Open scene work/rehearsal/prep.  Open scene work/rehearsal/prep.
9	Mon Mar 6	Relationship and tactic work, in pairs. Open scene work.	Discuss Rehearsal/Actions compilation PDF.	Open scene work/rehearsal/prep.
	Wed Mar 8	Open scene work.		Open scene work/rehearsal/prep.
SPRING BREAK!				
10	Mon/Wed Mar 20/22	Open scene work.		Open scene work/rehearsal/prep.
11	Mon/Wed Mar 27/29	Open scene work.		Open scene work/rehearsal/prep.

	Date	Topics/Daily Activities	Due Today	Homework
12	Mon/Wed Apr 3/5	Open scene work.		Open scene work/rehearsal/prep. Last chance to see an SDA Play or Digital Theatre+ production.
13	Mon Apr 10	Open scene work. Discuss plays.	Performance Response, posted to Blackboard before class.	Open scene work/rehearsal/prep.
	Wed Apr 12	Open scene work.		Open scene final rehearsal. Finalize written component.
14	Mon Apr 17	OPEN SCENE PRESENTATION  Introduce contemporary scene work.	OPEN SCENE PRESENTATION. Written component due with presentation.	Contemporary scene work rehearsal/ prep.
	Wed Apr 19	Contemporary scene work.		Contemporary scene work rehearsal/ prep.
15	Mon Apr 24	Contemporary scene work.		Contemporary scene work rehearsal/ prep.
	Wed Apr 26	Learning Experience Evaluations. Contemporary scene work. AMA.		Contemporary scene work rehearsal/ prep.
<b>Final</b>	<b>MONDAY MAY 8 — 8-10am</b>	CONTEMPORARY SCENE PRESENTATION.	CONTEMPORARY SCENE PRESENTATION. Written component due — specifics given in class. Final self- reflection format TBD.	Happy Summer!

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## SDA Statements On...

### Productions, ISPs, and Extra-Curricular Commitments

SDA productions, ISPs and extracurricular activities do 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 are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.)

### 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>



## Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theater Consent Culture

Through our pluralistic approach of diverse pedagogies, methodologies, ideologies, and modalities of artistic expression, we invite (engage) and challenge students to expand their breadth and depth of knowledge, complexity, and range of the human experience. Even though we nurture, guide, and challenge our students to embrace the unknown or unfamiliar and step outside of their comfort zones through storytelling/art, we aim to practice effective strategies and offer tools to students mindful of their physical, psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. In alignment with professional and industry standards, we will integrate core principles and techniques of Intimacy in Theater and Building Cultures of Affirmative Consent. This will provide agency, offer resources and support to the teachers, students, directors, and staff to establish healthy boundaries of consent when working on material that is physically, intimately, or emotionally charged content in both the classroom and production.

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### Statement on 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](http://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 Needing Accessibility Services

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 your instructor 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 (Video Phone), (213) 740-8216 (FAX), [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

### Statement on Emergency Preparedness/ Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency or 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, [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu).

### Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health  
213-740-9355 – 24/7 on call [studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://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](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)  
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)  
213-740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call [studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://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 [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)  
Title IX – 213-821-8298 [titleix.usc.edu](http://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](http://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.

USC Campus Support and Intervention  
213-821-4710 [campussupport.usc.edu](http://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](http://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 / Dept. of Public Safety  
Emergency: 213-740-4321 // Non-emergency: 213-740-6000  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)  
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime.

**USC SDA Season of Plays Spring 2023**

More information at <http://dramaticarts.usc.edu/on-stage/>

January 26-February 2 in Scene Dock Theatre

***Buried Child***

by Sam Shepard

February 23-26 in Bing Theatre

***The Winter's Tale***

by William Shakespeare

March 30-April 5 in Bing Theatre

***Urinetown***

by Mark Hollman & Greg Kotis

April 6-16 in Scene Dock Theatre

***The Belle's Stratagem***

by Hannah Cowley

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April 20-25 in McClintock Theatre

***Michaela's Fluent Aphasia***

by Christina Carrafiell

April 20-26 in Bing Theatre

***Sondheim on Sondheim***

by Stephen Sondheim

April 21-26 in McClintock Theatre

***Weekend Warriors***

by Adi Eshman

April 22-27 in McClintock Theatre

***bloody noses***

by Matilda Corley Shulman