

**THTR 252b Intermediate Acting**  
**Section 62792R**  
**Units: 4**  
**Spring 2023**  
**Mondays/Wednesdays, 12-150pm**  
**Location: MCC 106**

**Instructor: Zachary Steel**  
**Office: JEF 208**  
**Office Hours: by appointment**  
**Contact Info: [zsteel@usc.edu](mailto:zsteel@usc.edu)**  
**USC Slack: @Zachary Steel**

### **Course Description**

This course builds on the principles explored in the foundational acting courses. We will deepen our understanding of what it means to be fully present, physically and emotionally expressive, physically and emotionally connected to our environment, and deeply committed to imaginary circumstances. We will continue the intellectual work of text analysis so that we can fully understand character arc within the context of a play. And because acting at its core is a creative endeavor, we will strive to deeply embody this work, enter into a state of collaborative play with our scene partners and the audience, and deal with what is happening in the moment in the moment. This class focuses on comedy but the approach remains the same. We are looking for truth and resonance. How do we connect with our audience and remain unpredictable at the same time? This work looks different with all of us and we will use this class to discover our own singular approach. Even though this is not a beginner's course, this work will always benefit from a beginner's mind, from a focus on process over result, experience over product.

### **Learning Objectives**

- To refine acting techniques in exercises and performance assignments
- To analyze dramatic text using techniques learned in class, focusing on character arc
- To utilize successful work habits in collaboration with classmates
- To analyze comedic performance through the lens of the work done in class

**Prerequisite(s):** THTR 252a

**Co-Requisite(s):** N/A

**Concurrent Enrollment:** N/A

**Recommended Preparation:** N/A

### **Course Notes**

- You are required to come to every class. Due to the collaborative and experiential nature of this work, the quality of your educational experience depends on your physical presence.
- Please be prepared to take notes.
- You are required to meet up in groups/pairs outside of class for rehearsals. Please make yourself available for your scene partners.
- The student ensemble will create a group text/chat to facilitate inter-student communication throughout the semester.

### **Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

- Plays and scenes that are assigned. Students are required to have read the play text of their own scenes as well as the plays for the other students' scenes.
- PDFs of other selected readings will be posted to Blackboard, which students are expected to read and retain for discussion.

### Required Viewings

- You are required to attend a School of Dramatic Arts performance, write a reflection on it and how it relates to our class work.

### Suggested Readings

- *Actions: The Actors' Thesaurus* by Marina Caldarone & Maggie Lloyd Williams (HIGHLY recommend book or smartphone app for this course)
- *The Great Acting Teachers and Their Methods, Vol. 1 & 2* by Richard Brestoff
- *Black Acting Methods: Critical Approaches* by Sharrell D. Luckett 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

### Description of Assessments and Assignments

- **In-Class Activities** – You are expected to participate in all class activities. You will not be graded on the end result or your level of “talent,” but on your collaborative spirit and your level of commitment.
- **Discussion** – Throughout the semester, we will hold discussions on homework, readings, and in-class activities. You will be graded on your level of participation in these discussions
- **Performance Response** - You are required to attend a School of Dramatic Arts performance, write a reflection on it and how it relates to our class work.
- **Group Scene** - Work will be in groups 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 group scene will be scheduled — full costumes, props and overall preparation is mandatory. Written component of the group scene will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard.
- **Contemporary Scene #1/#2** - 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.
- **Final** – To be determined by the flow of the semester, a third presentation of a prior piece or a new piece.

### Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
In-Class Activities	100	20
Comedic Monologue	100	5
Group Project	100	15
Performance Response	100	10
Contemporary Scene #1	100	15
Contemporary Scene Written Component #1	100	5
Contemporary Scene #2	100	15
Contemporary Scene		5
Final	100	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>100</b>

### Grading Scale (Example)

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

### Grading Timeline

Grades will generally be posted within a week of submission.

### 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.

### Additional Policies

- Due to the impulsive, often improvisational nature of this work, some things might come up that can offend, be hurtful, or trigger. It is important that in these moments we take the time as a class process these incidents as much as is appropriate.
- Learning in class depends on the presence and participation of each individual student at a high commitment level. Points may be deducted for missed in-class work, in the event of absence or tardiness. In the event of an absence, you are responsible for the content of any missed class time. You must be ready to work at the start of each class.
- If you are going to be absent for COVID reasons or any other reason, it is required that you inform me well in advance of the class, not thirty minutes before class or after class has begun.
- If you are required to quarantine, we will come up with a solution so your educational experience will continue until you return to class.
- Please wear clothing in which you can move freely and comfortably. Your clothing and shoes should not inhibit you in any way. If hair gets in your face, secure it back. Hats are generally discouraged. Acting can get messy, plan accordingly.
- Please reserve break-time activities for before and after class. Depending on the day's flow, we may or may not take an official break in the hour and fifty minutes of class — you should be prepared to stay active in the class, both as performer and audience.
- Please don't eat in class unless absolutely necessary and please never chew gum.

### Zoom etiquette (if necessary):

- Please find as private and quiet a setting in your house as you possibly can. Keep in mind that as important as it is to not have any interruptions, it is also important to feel comfortable making sound and not be too concerned with disrupting others who are sharing a living/working space with you.
- Zoom camera should be on unless there is a specific reason for them to be turned off. Virtual backgrounds are ok.
- While we are in class, no applications should be in use on any device besides Zoom, unless otherwise instructed.

### Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

This schedule is subject to change based on the flow and needs of the class.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
<b>Week 1</b> 1/9, 1/11	<b>Monday:</b> Introductions Syllabus Review <b>Wednesday:</b> 1-2 minute comedic monologue		<b>DUE Wednesday:</b> 1-2 minute comedic monologue
<b>Week 2</b> 1/18	<b>No Class Monday:</b> MLK, Jr. BDay <b>Wednesday:</b> 1-2 minute comedic monologue		<b>DUE Wednesday:</b> 1-2 minute comedic monologue
<b>Week 3</b> 1/23, 1/25	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday:</b> <i>Miles for Mary</i>	<b>Due Monday:</b> Read <i>Miles for Mary</i> Rehearsal	
<b>Week 4</b> 1/30, 2/1	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday:</b> Group Scene Presentation Round 1	Rehearsal	

<b>Week 5</b> 2/6, 2/8	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday:</b> Group Scene Presentation Round 1	Rehearsal	
<b>Week 6</b> 2/13, 2/15	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday:</b> Group Scene Presentation Round 2	Rehearsal	
<b>Week 7</b> 2/22	<b>No Class Monday:</b> President's Day <b>Wednesday:</b> Reflect & Review AND... Acting Exercises	Rehearsal	
<b>Week 8</b> 2/27, 3/1	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday:</b> Contemporary Scene #1 Present Rd. 1	<b>Due Monday:</b> Read the plays for contemporary scenes. Be rehearsed and ready to present.	<b>Due Monday 2/27 @ 11:30am:</b> Written Component for Contemporary Scene #1
<b>Week 9</b> 3/6, 3/8	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday:</b> Contemporary Scene #1 Present Rd. 1	Rehearsal	<b>Due Wednesday 3/8:</b> Pitches for Contemporary Scene #2
<b>SPRING BREAK 3/13-3/19</b>			
<b>Week 10</b> 3/20, 3/22	<b>Monday:</b> Contemporary Scene #1 Present Rd. 2 <b>Wednesday:</b> Review & Reflect	Rehearsal	
<b>Week 11</b> 3/27, 3/29	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday:</b> Contemporary Scene #2 Present Rd. 1	Rehearsal	<b>DUE Monday 3/27 @ 11:30am:</b> Written Component for Contemporary Scene #2
<b>Week 12</b> 4/3, 4/5	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday:</b> Contemporary Scene #2 Present Rd. 1	Rehearsal	
<b>Week 13</b> 4/10, 4/12	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday:</b> Contemporary Scene #2 Present Rd. 2	Rehearsal	
<b>Week 14</b> 4/17, 4/19	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday:</b> Ongoing Scene Work	Rehearsal	
<b>Week 15</b> 4/24, 4/26	<b>Monday &amp; Wednesday:</b> Ongoing Scene Work	Rehearsal	<b>Due 4/24 @ 11:30am:</b> Performance Report
<b>FINAL</b> 5/5 11-1pm	<b>CONTEMPORARY SCENE PRESENTATION</b>	Rehearsal	<b>FINAL: Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup> – 11-1pm</b>

### 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 GFS 120 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) 814-4618 (Vidoe Phone), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto: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/>).

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### 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>

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### **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 and 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 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*

[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [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.

*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](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 - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu)  
Non-emergency assistance or information.