



THTR 101: Introduction to Acting

Units: 4

Term: Fall Semester, 2024

Mondays and Wednesdays - 8 AM - 9:50 AM

Where: Course Location [DAB B5](#)

Course Instructor: Tomm Polos

Office: MCC 210 or Virtual

Office Hours: Arranged by Appointment

Contact: polos@usc.edu (Please allow response time of 48 hours)

IT Help and Contact Info: phone - 213-740-5555 or email - consult@usc.edu

Hours of Service: 24 hours per day, 7 days per week

Course Description

THTR 101 explores all the basic elements required to have a fundamental understanding of acting including foundational methodologies, performance tools and the necessity of ensemble building. This course emphasizes the importance of creative resilience, self-awareness and collaboration on the modern stage. Throughout the semester, students will also engage in exercises, partake in scene work and play games while discovering the varying benefits of understanding of intentions, objectives, and the personal enrichment that acting can offer across diverse platforms.

Learning Objectives

THTR 101 supports modern storytellers and actors by emphasizing the importance of authenticity, curiosity and the human condition. In understanding ourselves and all stories we can be better artists. To support this, THTR 101 will aim to help students have a better understanding and ability to:

- Bring lived experience to work and text
- Cultivate imagination to bring sense of play and organic exploration to games and scene work
- Provide collaborative support to peers and learn from ensemble work and scene study
- Integrate and champion professionalism in and outside of class
- Evaluate performances on the stage and screen with both a modern lens and historical appreciation

Historical Objective

Understanding important, foundational acting theory and practitioners:

Uta Hagen, Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner and Augusto Boal

There are no Prerequisite(s) or Co-Requisite(s) for this course. There is no enforced Concurrent Enrollment or heavily advised Recommended Preparation. It is open to all disciplines.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Please be sure to have access to Brightspace, email, as well as the occasional printer. There will be times when you must print class assignments. It is helpful, but not required, to be proficient with smartphone and streaming technology for research and reflection purposes. Additional resources may include Google Workspace, YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, etc.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Please wait until our first meeting to obtain the following at the USC Library, Los Angeles Public Library, USC Bookstores, or wherever you can support local bookshops. We will discuss what is required.

Supplemental Reading from: *Respect for Acting* by Uta Hagen, *The Art of Acting* by Stella Adler, *Sanford Meisner on Acting* by Sanford Meisner and *Theatre of The Oppressed* by Augusto Boal

Description and Assessment of Assignments

This course has weekly assignments and multiple creative projects that will be evaluated throughout the semester. These involve reading, writing, speaking, and scene study. Assignments and Assignment Submission policies are listed below.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Possible Points Earned	Percentage of Grade
In-Class Activities	25	25%
Out-of-Class Reflections	10	10%
Ensemble Participation	15	15%
Midterm Masterclass: Groups	20	20%
Final Reflection	10	10%
Final Scenes: Duos	20	20%
Total	100	100%

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				

Grading, Grading Timeline, Assignment Submission Policy

Students are responsible for submitting work on time and in the requested format. Assignments are only to be submitted as specified. **In-Class Activities** and **Out-of-Class** reflections and discussions take place in (almost) every class. Those points are therefore earned in (almost) every class.

Ensemble Participation is an integral aspect of THTR 101 as we are working to build an ensemble of trust, exploration and community throughout the semester. *Ensemble Building* is paramount to understanding an Introduction to Acting. Appearing and participating fully in **In-Class Activities** and/or **Out-of-Class Reflections** will receive a **Complete** grade. Failing to appear or only partially committing will receive an **Incomplete** grade for these sections. Every **Incomplete** grade will take away from the overall **In-Class Activities** and **Ensemble Participation** section grade(s).

Papers, when required, are to be submitted via email as an attached PDF. Please use Times New Roman and size 12 or 14 point font. Large Scale Projects (i.e. **Midterm Masterclass**) have their own presentation format and evaluation. This midterm is a group project and will be a fun showcase of what your team learned - there will be a detailed rubric provided for the midterm within the first

month of the semester. The midterm is worth 20 points or 20% of your overall grade. Your **Final Scenes** will be worked on throughout the last few weeks of our time together culminating with the last week of class. Those scenes are worth 20 points or 20% of your overall grade.

Your **Final Reflection** is worth 10 points or 10% of your overall grade. It is a complete recap and self-analysis of our time together. It will be around two pages in length. The **Final Reflection** will be emailed as a PDF. It will be evaluated on detail, thoughtfulness, specificity, and your authentic conclusions.

Students may request to discuss how they are evaluated at any point during the semester by reaching out and scheduling a conversation during Office Hours.

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 me as the instructor to offer any input on the course.

Additional Policies

Participation is worth 15 percentage points of the student's grade and will be considered on the scale of Average, Good or Excellent. 1 to 5 is Average, 6 to 10 is Good, 11 to 15 is Excellent. Being prompt for discussion is of the utmost importance. Contact the professor with as much notice as possible if you cannot be prompt or present.

Cell Phone Usage is not permitted in class unless permission is given by the instructor. There is no audio and/or visual recording of the course or instruction without prior permission granted. Please communicate if you wish to record or document any aspect surrounding this course.

Computer Usage is allowed, on occasion, for note taking. There will be times when computers are not allowed to be open or used in class out of respect for certain lectures, lessons, or presentations. In this course, pen and paper will often suffice.

Promptness. Be ready to **start on time**. You are a valuable member of our ensemble. When you are late, it is disrespectful of our time. It is unprofessional and takes away from our collective experience. We understand emergencies happen - please communicate with the professor as quickly and efficiently as possible. Let's be pros.

Positive attitudes only.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Week	Subject Matter	Assignments / Readings	Deliverable Due Dates
Week 1 Monday 8/26 Wednesday 8/28	Welcome Week Course Introduction and Expectations Story of Your Name	Prepare Story of Your Name Prepare Going Out Routine	Week 1 Wednesday
Week 2 Monday 9/2 Wednesday 9/4	LABOR DAY Going Out Routine, Clean Your Room	Prepare Going Out Routine Prep Favorite Lyric/Literature	Week 2 Wednesday Week 3 Monday
Week 3 Monday 9/9 Wednesday 9/11	Warm Ups Share Lyrics and Literature Share Performance on Film Selections	Prepare Performance on Film	Week 3 Wednesday
Week 4 Monday 9/16 Wednesday 9/18	Warm Ups The Greatest Show, Masterclass Groups Share Performance on TV Selections	Prepping for Masterclasses Prepare Performance on TV Start Required Reading	Midterm: Week 7 Week 4 Wednesday
Week 5 Monday 9/23 Wednesday 9/25	Warm Ups A and B Scenes, Intentions, Objectives Share Performances on New Media	Prepping for Masterclass Prep Performance on New Media, Cont. Required Reading	Midterm: Week 7 Week 5 Wednesday
Week 6 Monday 9/30 Wednesday 10/2	Warm Ups A and B Scenes, Games Share Performances on Stage	Prepping for Masterclass Prep Performance on Stage Cont. Required Reading	Midterm: Week 7 Week 6 Wednesday
Week 7 Monday 10/7 Monday 10/9	Masterclass Midterms Begin Uta Hagen Part I Uta Hagen Part II	Preparing for Midterms Cont. Required Reading	Week 8
Week 8 Monday 10/14 Wednesday 10/16	Adler Exploration Stella Adler Part I Stella Adler Part II	Reflect on Adler Cont. Required Reading	Week 9
Week 9 Monday 10/21 Wednesday 10/23	Meisner Exploration Sanford Meisner Part I Sanford Meisner Part II	Reflect on Meisner Cont. Required Reading	Week 10
Week 10 Monday 10/28 Wednesday 10/30	Boal Exploration Augusto Boal Part I Augusto Boal Part II	Reflect on Boal Cont. Required Reading	Week 11
Week 11 Monday 11/4 Wednesday 11/6	For the People Select Partners and Scenes for Final First Pass at Final Scene	Election Day Tomorrow Begin Final Scene Study	Vote Tomorrow Week 12
Week 12 Monday 11/11 Wednesday 11/13	VETERANS DAY First Pass at Scene Continued	Thank a Veteran No Class, No Homework Continue Final Scene Study	Week 13 Final Scenes
Week 13 Monday 11/18 Wednesday 11/20	Warm Ups Second Pass at Scene Second Pass at Scene Continued	Continue Final Scene Study	Week 14 Final Scenes
Week 14 Monday 11/25 Wednesday 11/27	Warm Ups Holiday Exercise, Scenework OFF FOR THANKSGIVING	Continue Final Scene Study Enjoy Family and Friends	Week 15 Final Scenes Enjoy!
Week 15 Monday 12/2 Wednesday 12/4	Final Rehearsals Finals Scenes and Evaluations	Prep for Final Final Reflection	Final Class 12/4 Final Reflection: 12/11

Final	Final Reflection December 11th		
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The weekly subject matters are subject to slight variation but all of the above will be covered.

Further Notices

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

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, talking to Tomm Polos) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theatre Consent Culture Statement

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.

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>

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](#). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.
Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate](#)- and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Further Support Systems

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 - 24/7 on call

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

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages - 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) - 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

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) 740-2500

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

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

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) 442-1200 - 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

This was a lot. You did it.