

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 216 Movement

Units: 2

FALL 2024—Tuesdays & Thursdays:

8am-9:20am MCC 107

12pm-1:20pm DAB 213

Instructor: Sabina Zúñiga Varela

Office Hours: 30 min. After each class

*By Appointment Only

Contact Info: zunigava@usc.edu

* I will respond in 24 hours

“There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost.”

~Martha Graham

Course Description

This movement class is an opportunity for artists to explore the dynamic power and creativity of their physical selves. Through ensemble exercises, warm-ups, play, conditioning, devised projects, meditation, journaling and independent exploration, student artists will develop a deeper understanding of their individual and unique physical capabilities. Using guided, repeated and cumulative warm-ups we will build a movement vocabulary that will enhance physical expression and character development. In addition to the physical journey we will also embark on a communal wellness journey to acquire various self-care techniques to address burn out, stress- relief and decompression for the artistic lifestyle. We will begin by building our ensemble, move into examining human emotions and characters, transform our bodies into living sculptures inspired by global art and culture, and finally create a clown based variety show that explores the many meanings of freedom. Along the way we will document our journey through handwritten reflections.

Learning Objectives

- Nurture connection, trust and innovation with fellow ensemble members through exercises and group projects.
- Build and apply a movement vocabulary through guided explorations in order to communicate dynamic elements of character and emotion.
- Develop physical conditioning through exercise and repetition to support sustainability in physical work.
- Understand and acquire a deeper awareness of one’s physical capabilities and curiosities.
- Practice the art of stillness in regards to the creative mind as well as the physical self.
- Demonstrate and remember a sense of *play* throughout the course in order to strengthen flexibility, instinct and openness.
- Create individual, partner and group projects utilizing methods explored in class.

Required Reading & Materials

Letters to a Young Poet By Rainer Maria Rilke

Available on [PDF](#)

Please bring a notebook, no larger than one subject to class each day. We will be handwriting reflections for our required reading and projects, and I will be writing responses and evaluations for projects in these as well. A simple folder with sheet paper works as well. Pages for journals must be 8 1/2 x 11.

Description and Evaluation of Assignments: Our class is broken up in to four sections. At the end of each section, with the exception of Section One, there will be a developed, rehearsed and presented project. Along with the project presentations there will be a brief project reflection handwritten during class time. Outside of class you will have 10 handwritten journal entries that respond to the 10 chapters of our required reading. In addition to these reflection journal entries, there will be other journal responses assigned throughout the semester that will reflect on our movement journey.

Grading Breakdown

Projects 45%

Attendance 25%

Journal Reflections 15%

Participation 15%

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

Participation Requirements

Participation is essential to this class and absences will result in a grade deduction.

Any absences must be communicated to me via email and at least 24 hours in advance.

Please wear comfortable clothing that you can move in and bring water to every class.

We work with out shoes and socks in this class, please communicate with me with any issues in regards to this. I recommend bringing wet wipes to class because your feet will pick up a lot of dust and debris.

Required Reading Reflection Papers: There will be 10 handwritten reading reflections due this semester, each corresponding to the 10 letters in *Letters to a Young Poet*. Each paper should be 1-2 pages in length. Reflection papers will be handwritten and will be evaluated by completion. Here are a few prompts that can guide your writing:

**Write down any phrases, sentences, fragments and/or words that resonate with you.*

**Do the words or sentiments in the letter ring true for you or is there something you disagree with?*

**Are there images or life experiences that appear in your mind's eye when you read this letter?*

**Are there any questions you have for either Rilke or the Young Poet?*

For further study on Rilke [HERE](#) is a 40 minute documentary.

Section One: Awareness and Connection

READINESS: Company Building Workshop

For this section we will explore ensemble building exercises based on the work of Anne Bogart and Tina Landau's *Viewpoints*, Augusto Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, and more. There will not be individual assignments for this section, rather the ensemble will explore in a workshop setting that is focused on building a collective readiness for action and response.

Section Two: Inspiration and Interpretation

CHARACTER: The Qualities Project

Utilizing text from *The Book of Qualities* by J. Ruth Gendler, the ensemble will explore movement through various human emotions and conditions. After exploration each student will choose one 'Quality' character to embody. These projects will be recorded on video and stitched together as a class film. Students will explore movement, text and multi media to present a character based off of their chosen Quality. Videos will be 2-4 minutes in length and scored with instrumental music.

** A brief written reflection will be due after the project presentation to be written in your journal, you will be given time in class to complete this.*

Section Three: Transition and Stillness

SHAPE: The Sculpture Project

This individual project will utilize movement work learned in class warm-ups and will culminate in a presentation of 6 sculptural imitations connected with movement based transitions. The sequence will be accompanied by a musical score. This individual presentation will demonstrate specificity and creativity. Presentations will be 3-5 minutes in length and scored with instrumental music.

** A brief written reflection will be due after the project presentation to be written in your journal, you will be given time in class to complete this.*

Section Four: Clowning & Freedom

COMMUNITY: Variety Show Project

At the culmination of learning various clowning techniques and exploring 'play' through games, the class will present a variety show. The theme for the show is Freedom. The variety show can consist of individual, partner and group acts. Any choice of music, furniture and/or props are up to the performers.

Assignment Rubric

Criteria	Exemplar (5)	Developed (4)	Limited (3)
Creativity	The presentation contains original and personal movement ideas that promote a clear understanding of the actor's playfulness and curiosities in regards to their body.	The presentation contains a few original and personal movement ideas and vaguely promotes an understanding of the actor's playfulness and curiosities in regards to their body	The presentation contains very little original and personal movement ideas and it is unclear what the actor's playfulness and curiosities are in regards to their body.
Precision	The actor demonstrated excellent control of their body throughout the presentation for a fluid and exact performance.	The actor demonstrated an efficient amount of control over their body throughout the presentation that could have been improved through more rehearsal.	The actor was unable to demonstrate control over their body throughout the presentation.
Completion	The actor rehearsed and completed a fully realized presentation on time.	The actor rehearsed and completed a partially realized presentation on time.	The actor was unable to present a completed presentation and/or did not complete the project on time.
Total _____(15%)			

Assignment Submission Policy

Required Reading Reflection Papers and Project Reflections will be handwritten and turned in on the specified date noted in the Course Schedule below.

Grading Timeline

Evaluations for projects will be completed 72 hours after presentation and written in your journals by Instructor.

Course Schedule

*** Subject to change depending on the Company's needs and desires.***

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1 8.26-8.30	<u>Introduction</u> Meditation/Sun Salutations/ 12/6/4 Warm up/Introductions/ 10-1-10 movement exploration.	Download PDF of Letters to A Young Poet No Reading due this week 1st Journal Entry will be due on Tuesday September 3rd: " <i>What is your relationship with movement?</i> "	1st Journal Entry will be due on Tuesday September 3rd: "What is your relationship with movement?" No Reading Reflection Due this week
Week 2 9.2-9.6	<u>Begin Section One: Awareness & Connection</u> Meditation/Sun Salutations/ 12/6/4 Warm-Up/Begin Company Building Workshop: Exquisite Corpse art project	Read Letter #1: <i>Paris February 17, 1903</i> Reading Reflection #1 Due Tuesday September 10th	DUE: Journal Entry Due Tuesday September 3rd: "What is your relationship with movement?"
Week 3 9.9-9.12	*Veteran's Day No classes on Monday September 9th Continue with Section One: Meditation/Sun Salutations/ 12/6/4 Add Run,Crawl, Gaze, Stretch to warm-up/Continue Company Building Workshop	Read Letter #2: <i>Viareggio, near Pisa (Italy) April 5, 1903</i> Reading Reflection #2 Due Tuesday September 17th	DUE: Reading Reflection Letter #1 Tuesday 9.10
Week 4 9.16-9.20	Continue with Section One: Meditation/Sun Salutations/ 12/6/4 & Run,Crawl,Gaze, Stretch Warm-up/Complete Company Building Workshop	Read Letter #3: <i>Viareggio, near Pisa (Italy) April 23, 1903</i> Reading Reflection #3 Due Tuesday September 24th	DUE: Reading Reflection Letter #2 Tuesday 9.17
Week 5 9.23-9.27	<u>Begin Section Two: Inspiration & Interpretation</u> Continue with Meditation/ Sun Salutations/10-1-10 Warm-Up Introduce <i>The Qualities Project</i>	Read Letter #4: <i>Worpswede, near Bremen July 16th, 1903</i> Reading Reflection #4 Due Tuesday October 1st.	DUE: Reading Reflection Letter #3 Tuesday 9.24

<p>Week 6 9.30-10.4</p>	<p>Continue with Section Two: Meditation/Sun Salutations/ 10-1-10 add 6 Dynamics of movement Warm-Up/ Continue to explore <i>The Qualities Project</i></p>	<p>Develop/Rehearse/Film <i>The Qualities Project</i> outside of class</p>	<p>DUE: Reading Reflection Letter #4 Tuesday 10.1</p>
<p>Week 7 10.7-10.11</p>	<p>*FALL BREAK: No classes on Thursday October 10th</p> <p>Continue with Section Two: Meditation/Sun Salutations/ 10-1-10 & 6 Dynamics of Movement Warm-Up/ Continue to explore <i>The Qualities Project</i>.</p>	<p>No Reading due this week.</p> <p>Rehearse & Film <i>The Qualities Project</i> outside of class</p>	<p>No Reading Reflection Due this week.</p> <p><i>The Qualities Project</i> Video Due, via WeTransfer or Google Drive, by Wednesday October 16th at 11:59pm. Videos will be screened in class on Thursday October 17th.</p>
<p>Week 8 10.14-10.18</p>	<p>Continue with Section Two: Meditation/Sun Salutations/ 10-1-10 & 6 Dynamics of Movement Warm-Up/Explore and then Screen The Qualities Project</p>	<p>No Reading due this week.</p> <p>Finalize <i>The Qualities Project</i> video and submit by 10.16</p> <p><i>Read Letter #5: <u>Rome October 29, 1903</u></i> Reading Reflection #5 Due Tuesday October 22nd</p>	<p><i>The Qualities Project</i> will be screened in class on Thursday 10.17</p> <p>No Reading Reflection Due this week.</p>
<p>Week 9 10.21-10.25</p>	<p><u>Begin Section Three: Transition & Stillness</u> Meditation/Sun Salutations/6 Dynamics of Movement & Fixed Points Warm-up/ Introduce Sculpture Project</p>	<p>Read Letter #6 <i><u>Rome December 23, 1903</u></i> Reflection #6 Due Tuesday October 29th</p>	<p>Reading Reflection #5 Due Tuesday 10.22</p>
<p>Week 10 10.28-11.1</p>	<p>Continue with Section Three: Meditation/Sun Salutations/6 Dynamics of Movement & Fixed Points Warm-Up/ Continue Sculpture Project</p>	<p>Read Letter #7 <i><u>Rome May 14, 1904</u></i> Reflection #7 Due Tuesday November 5th</p>	<p>Reading Reflection #6 Due Tuesday 10.26</p>

Week 11 11.4-11.8	Continue with Section Three: Meditation/Sun Salutations/6 Dynamics of Movement & Fixed Points Warm-Up/ Finalize Sculpture Project selections and begin developing sequence and rehearsing/	Rehearse The Sculpture Project outside of class	Reading Reflection #7 Due Tuesday November 5th
Week 12 11.11-11.15	Continue with Section Three: Meditation/Sun Salutations/6 Dynamics of Movement & Fixed Points Warm-Up/ Rehearse Sculpture Project selections and present final Project on Thursday, November 14th	No Reading Due this week. Rehearse The Sculpture Project outside of class Read Letter #8 <i>Borgebygard, Fladie,</i> <i>Sweden</i> <i>August 12, 1904</i> Reflection #8 Due Tuesday November 19th	Sculpture Projects Due Thursday November 14th and will be presented in class.
Week 13 11.18-11.22	<u>Begin Section Four: Clowning & Freedom</u> Meditation/Sun Salutations/ 12/6/4 & Run, Crawl, Gaze, Stretch Warm-up/Clowning games & Juggling/Introduce <i>The Variety Project</i>		Reading Reflection #8 Due Tuesday 11.19
Week 14 11.25-11.29	*Thanksgiving Break No Classes this week	No reading due this week. Read Letter #9 & #10 <i>Paris</i> <i>The Day after Christmas &</i> <i>Paris, The Day After</i> <i>Christmas</i> Reflection #9 & #10 due Tuesday December 3rd Rehearse The Variety Project outside of class	
Week 15 12.2-12.6	*Classes End Friday December 6th Study Days 12.7-12.10	Rehearse The Variety Project outside of class.	Due: Reading Reflection #9 & #10 Due 12.3

FINALS Week 12.11-12-18	The Variety Show Project Presentation 8am class: Tuesday December 17th: 4:30-6:30 in MCC 107 12pm class: Tuesday December 17th 11am-1pm DAB213	Bring all of your props, costumes and other needs for your skit. Make sure and send me your music selection before the start of our final. We will do an in person reflection about this project, so there is no need to bring your journals!	
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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.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

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](#).

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.

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.

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.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theater 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>

*** Please be advised, as a USC SDA faculty member, I am a mandated reporter. This means I must report any instances of harm I have observed or that have been disclosed to me to The Office of Equity, Equal Opportunity and Title IX (EEO-TIX).**

Support Systems:

[USC Trojans Care for Trojans \(TC4T\)](#) is an initiative within the Office of Campus Wellbeing and Crisis Intervention that empowers USC students, faculty and staff to take action when they are concerned about a fellow Trojan challenged with personal difficulties. This private and anonymous request form provides an opportunity for Trojans to help a member of our Trojan Family.

[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 is comprised 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) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

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.

SZV's Statement of Teaching Philosophy

As actors, we are athletes, poets, psychologists, and scholars. Delving into ourselves, and realizing the expansive amount of power, emotion, experience and potential we hold, is an intimidating yet intrinsic step in our journey towards fulfilling our craft. Peter Brook, author of *The Empty Space*, believes: *"Acting is in many ways unique in its difficulties because the artist has to use the treacherous changeable and mysterious material of himself as his medium."* Once we connect with this force, we as actors then join the artistic regiment and take the stage. We fill the space and shift the air with our undeniable presence to hold up a mirror to humanity— a generations old legacy.

To begin, an artist who chooses the path of acting must obtain control over their physical form. Just as athletes do, building a powerful relationship with the body is an essential element towards training to work as a professional actor. We can perform 8-10 shows a week for months on end, in drastically different elements. Even just standing still on stage and speaking can tax the body to its limits if one does not know how to support with lengthening, widening, and breath. Long hours on a television or film set are challenging to the physical self if one has not developed a deep relationship of listening to and with their body. With rigorous warm-ups, exercises and movement vocabulary one can learn to reveal thought, emotion and character with specificity and sustainability. Pushing the physical self to its limits with flexibility, strength and endurance is an essential key that opens doors to the emotional self. In addition, developing an arsenal of wellness techniques is essential for the working actor, learning to take care of the self, inside and out, supports resiliency as one navigates this demanding industry.

I believe that theatre is an essential part of the humanities in that it helps students deepen their sense of empathy, open themselves up to learn from discomfort and diversity, and experience how body, soul, and mind are intrinsically connected. Included in my philosophy is a conviction that, regardless of a student's career path, the life's lessons that theatre teaches will enrich their professional and personal life. As Donald Declan re- marks in *The Actor and The Target*: *"If every auditorium were razed to the ground, theatre would still survive, because the hunger in each of us to act and to be acted to is genetic."* Striving to live as an artist comes with many challenges: battling rejection, judgement, physical challenges, unemployment, familial/relationship stress and self-doubt can bring any actor to their knees. With the pursuit of high standards, the discipline of training, and the consistent practice of self-care, an actor can build a strong sense of self to support a professional career and fully realize their potential.

My responsibility to my students is to present as many tools, texts, and options for their transformation. Providing a space for their ability to claim ownership over themselves and their craft is one that I strive to offer wherever I find myself instructing. I am dedicated to engage with my students and learn from them, as we are all a sources of experience, knowledge, and methods in our pursuit of excellence in the practice and passion of storytelling.

"I see Art in the distance, coming like a storm, a saving army.

I see Art coming like strength to an embattled world.

Stand, link arms. Speak"

~ John Patrick Shanley