

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 252A: Intermediate Acting I (62820)

Semester: Fall 2024

Units: 4

Time: Tuesday & Thursday, 4 – 5:50pm

Location: PED 207

Instructor: Bayo Akinfemi

Contact: akinfemi@usc.edu

Office Hour: Appointment only

Course Description

The mission of this class is to deepen the approach and method by which the actor moves towards artistry, specificity and excellence in performance through dedicated process and specific application. We will further the student actor's examination, exploration, and practice required to attain mastery of the exquisitely complex art of acting. In other words, to continue to learn how to create and portray truthful characters.

Methods Used to Fulfill this Mission:

1. Forming an ensemble built on trust, honesty, generosity, kindness, humility and collective commitment to the work both in and out of class that will lead to the fulfillment of the goals of every member of the ensemble
2. Deepening the intellectual and emotional imagination of the student actors through the in-depth analysis of selected material.
3. Deepening analytical and interpretive skills by concentrating on sub-text to uncover the complex subtleties of each character in any given circumstance.
4. Concentrating on the communication of subtext through the specificity of subtle physical movements and vocal changes of tonality, pace, pitch etc. This means working on technique that masters craft thereby enabling actors to tap into their emotional truth.
5. **Empower** students to define their own philosophical and artistic vision; specifically by examining our present day society through honest and courageous debate inspired by our work.
6. Theatre is a collaborative art form and we foster an inclusive learning environment that addresses integration of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Learning Objectives

A practical understanding of all that is described above, plus the development of professional work habits. By the end of this course students should understand and be able to demonstrate facility with the following:

- Analyze the text from the actor/character point of view (*What do I want? What do I want the other person to do? Etc.*) coupled with a focus of attention on the other actor(s) and the ability to incorporate this work actively into performance.
- Execute strong intentions (objectives, actions) in scenes.
- Creation and utilization of a strong, detailed environment for the character. Employment

of a variety of tactics / actions, while executing with clear objectives/wants/intentions in prepared scene work.

- Learning to live truthfully in the imaginary circumstances.

Required Reading

Respect for Acting by Uta Hagen

The Art of Acting by Stella Adler

Absences/Tardiness:

Learning in class depends on the layering of intellectual and emotional discovery resulting from the consistent active exploration of **100%** of the Ensemble. Absences and tardies erode the trust of the ensemble. Therefore, any **absences or tardies will negatively impact the student's ability to participate in future active exploration in class. Cumulative active class participation points will be lost.** *Participation is weighted at no more than 15% as per University Guideline*

Course Notes

- In- Class Participation is 15% of grade. (See definition of participation in “Grading” on this syllabus). Outside rehearsals are mandatory
- If a scene is scheduled for an in – class rehearsal or presentation and is clearly under-rehearsed or under-prepared, you will be asked to sit down and will lose points for that assignment.
- Scenes should be 100% off book, lines memorized by second “pass” of scene in class or you will be asked to sit down and lose points for that assignment.
- Use of cell phones in class will result in 5-point overall grade reduction for each incident – I will call you out in front of the entire class, so you have fair warning now.
- **No late assignments shall be accepted or graded. Deadlines must be met.**

Description and Assessment of Assignments

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

Grades are also dictated by:

- Preparation and active participation.
- In-class active student analysis of text.
- Constructive feedback of classmates' acting presentations and perceptible support of classmates work i.e. meeting a professional standard of behavior in class and rehearsals
- Willingness to experiment and apply the constructive feedback of instructor and students on exercises, scenes and presentations.
- Meeting all assignment deadlines: reading, writing, acting and scenes presentations.
- Memorization of lines.
- Availability to fellow classmates to rehearse scenes

IMPORTANT: If you are training to be an actor or are exploring the acting profession as a possibility for post university life, you will soon realize that rehearsal and work outside of class is crucial. BE ADVISED!

Note: *If a deadline is missed because of a classmate/ project partner's unavailability, the available partner/s will not be penalized. If problems arise, a discussion with the professor with all involved must be arranged before the day of the scheduled scene or everyone will be held equally accountable*

Grading Scale

The final course grade is determined according to the following scale:

Excellent: A (4) = 100-95; A- (3.7) = 94-90 (clear understanding of class material coupled with original and creative insight) **Good:** B+ (3.3) = 89-87; B (3) = 86-83; B- (2.7) = 82-80 (class material has been understood clearly) **Average:** C+ (2.3) = 79-77; C (2) = 76-73; C- (1.7) = 72-70 (class material has been generally understood, but gaps in understanding remain) **Poor:** D (.7-1.3) = 60's (identifiable gaps in the understanding of class material) **Fail:** F (0) = 59 and below (gaps in completion of work coupled with poor understanding of class material).

Assignment Points % of Grade

Monologue – **5**; Hagen Destination Exercise – **10**; In - Class Rehearsal Scene #1 – **10**; MID-TERM Scene Presentation (Final presentation of Scene #1) - **10**; In - Class Rehearsal Scene #2 – **10**; Final (Final presentation of Scene #2) – **20**; Cumulative Active Class Participation / Contribution / Attendance – **15**; Final Exam – **20**; **TOTAL - 100**

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.

Course Schedule:

The timeline is subject to change depending on the dynamics, pace and unpredictability of the creative process of any given class.

Week 1: 08/27&29

- Course overview. Discuss students' expectations, course goals, requirements, deadlines, required texts, reading.
- Monologues.
- **Homework:** Reading: *Respect for Acting* by Uta Hagen,

Week 2: 09/03&05

- In-class discussion of reading (active participation expected as part of grade)
- Monologue presentation
- **Homework:** Reading; *Respect for Acting* by Uta Hagen,

Week 3: 09/10&12

- In-class discussion of reading.
- Monologue presentation.
- **Homework:** Reading: *The Art of Acting* by Stella Adler

Week 4: 09/17&19

- Discuss Hagen Studio Exercise “Destination” and show Demo
- **Homework:** Prepare Hagen Destination Exercise including answering the 6 Steps / 9 Questions.

Week 5: 09/24&26

- Present Hagen Studio Exercise “Destination”
- **Homework**

Week 6: 10/01&03

- Casting
- Table read scenes.
- Scene analysis and discussion.
- **Homework:** Complete Uta Hagen character breakdown. Write a description of moment before and complete beats breakdown for the scene.

Week 7: 10/08&10

- First scenes: blockings and in class rehearsal.
- For this class: Bring in character breakdown re: Uta Hagen six steps, written description of moment before, complete beats breakdown for the scene.
- **Homework:** Rehearse scenes.

Week 8: 10/15&17

- First pass of Scene #1 Presentation (MIDTERM)
- Notes / class feedback
- **Homework:** Rehearse scenes incorporating in class notes.

Week 9: 10/22&24

- Final Presentation of Scene.
- Casting for Scene #2

Week 10: 10/29&31

- Scene #2; first read through.
- Scene analysis and discussion.
- **Homework:** Complete Uta Hagen character breakdown. Write a description of moment before and complete beats breakdown for the scene.

Week 11: 11/05&07

- Scene #2: blockings and in class rehearsal.
- For this class: Bring in character breakdown re: Uta Hagen six steps, written description of moment before, complete beats breakdown for the scene.
- **Homework:** Rehearse scene.

Week 12: 11/12&14

- First pass of Scene #2 Presentation with notes / class feedback
- **Homework:** Rehearse scenes incorporating in class notes.

Week 13: 11/19&21

- Scene #2; Second pass Presentation with notes / class feedback
- **Homework:** Rehearse scenes incorporating in class notes.

Week 14: 11/26&28

- Scene #2; Final Presentation
- Feedback.

Week 15: 12/03&05

- Scene #2; Final presentation.
- Feedback
- **Reviews. Putting it all together**

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 12th; 4:30 - 6:30pm. Final will be dictated by the creative process of the class. Specifics will be discussed later in the semester.

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.

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.

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.

