

USC School of Dramatic Arts

THTR 354 Acting Shakespeare

Term—Day—Time: Spring 2025

Tuesday/Thursday

9:00am - 10:50am

Location: DAB 109

Prerequisite(s): THTR 101

Instructor: Matt Felten

Office Hours: by appointment only

Contact Info: felten@usc.edu

(336) 671-2478 (cell)

Timeline for replying to emails/calls 48 hours

Course Description

A study of performing Shakespeare's language and themes through active exploration and analysis of the plays and sonnets through the lens of Shakespeare's time with a particular focus on the First Folio as the actor's text..

Learning Objectives

1. To explore and strengthen the personal connection between the actor, the text, and the audience; and, in turn provide an "original practice" approach to analyzing and performing Shakespeare's works.
2. To understand character motivation and theme according to the Elizabethan World View.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Access to the Complete Works of Shakespeare (sonnets and plays)

4 - 5 different color highlighters

A journal or notebook

A pen or pencil

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Content:

1. Iambic Pentameter/Poetry Study - personal sonnet
2. Sonnet Study and Performance - focusing on personalization and relationship to the text
3. Macbeth - Text analysis and staged readings
4. Voice/Speech/Movement exercises
5. Scene Study and Performance

This is a performance class so we will be approaching Shakespeare's work from a theatrical angle rather than an academic one. There will be two graded performances though grading will not be based on the instructor's subjective opinion of talent. Grading will be based on:

- Active **in-class** student analysis and performance 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
- Meeting all assignment deadlines: reading, writing, acting
- Memorization of lines

Class work is not restricted to class time. You will have to rehearse individual and group performances both inside and outside of class.

Grading Breakdown

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Warm-up/Check-in | 5 points |
| In Class Work on Macbeth | 15 points |
| In Class Voice/Movement/Speech Exercises | 10 points |
| In Class Work on Sonnets/Poetry | 15 points |
| Mid-term Performance of Sonnet | 20 points |
| In Class Work on Final Group Scenes | 15 points |
| Final Performance of Scenes | 20 points |
| TOTAL | 100 points |

Grading Scale (Example)

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

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|----|--------------|
| 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 |

Assignment Submission Policy

No late assignments shall be accepted or graded. Deadlines must be met.

All written assignments and original work will be EMAILED to instructor or handed in during class

Attendance

You are required to attend every class unless you have been granted an approved excused absence. Unexcused absences will result in receiving a 0 in participation of exercises for class that day and will affect your final grade.

Grading Timeline

As soon as humanly possible with the understanding that feedback is most valuable if work being assessed is fresh in the mind of the student. *I will be happy to discuss your work at any time.*

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 feedback on the course.

Additional Policies

Students must be present on performance/presentation days in order to receive credit. There will not be any make-up performances/presentations unless previously cleared by the professor. Students must come each day dressed to move. Leave all electronic devices in silent or off mode and put them away during class. No food or drink (except water) will be allowed during class unless it is part of a scene.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

(The timeline is subject to change depending on the dynamics, pace and unpredictability of the creative process of any given class and the world's dictates)

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| <p><u>Module 1</u> Weeks: 1 - 6</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personal Poems ● Sonnet Selection and Analysis ● Folio Text work <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss students' expectations, aspirations, course goals 2. Personal Sonnets 3. Voice/Movement/Speech exercises 4. Intellectual, emotional exploration of Selected Sonnet 5. Folio Text analysis and staged reading of Macbeth | <p><u>Reading/Rehearsal/Homework</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal Sonnet 2. Memorize Selected Sonnet 3. Macbeth reading |
| <p>//////////////////// /</p> | <p>////////////////////</p> | <p>//////////////////// ////</p> |
| <p><u>Module 2</u> Weeks: 7 - 9</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sonnet Rehearsal and Performance ● Final Scene Casting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Voice/Movement/Speech exercises 2. Selected Sonnet Performance (mid-term) 3. Assignment and Casting for Final Scenes | <p><u>Reading/Rehearsal/Homework</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued Rehearsal of Selected Sonnet 2. Final Scene Prep work - reading of play, beginning text analysis |

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|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| | | 3. Macbeth Reading |
| //////////////////// / | //////////////////// | //////////////////// //// |
| Module 3 Week: 10 | SPRING BREAK | SPRING BREAK |
| //////////////////// / | //////////////////// | //////////////////// //// |
| Module 2 Weeks: 11 - 16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Scene work <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Voice/Movement/Speech exercises 2. Final Scene Text Analysis 3. Final Scene Rehearsal 4. Final Scene Performance | <u>Reading/Rehearsal/Homework</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Memorize lines 2. Rehearse Final Scene |

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.

Use of AI Generators

Since creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have

another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. 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 relation to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

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

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.

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>

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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.