



USC School
of Dramatic Arts

Course; Advanced Movement
Course #: 515d
Units: 2
Session: Spring 2025
Instructor: Stephanie Shroyer
Email: shroyer@usc.edu
Office Phone: My cell phone (provided during class)
Office Hours: Available by appointment. Students are encouraged to use this as an opportunity to speak privately with the instructor about individual in-class progress.
Class Meets: Time: 12 until 1:50 p.m.
Days: Tuesdays and Thursdays
Location: TBD
Final Exam: TBD According to the MFA Culmination Schedule

Course Description:

In Advanced Movement 515d we continue the investigation of the use of internal and external musculature (internal being the musculature of thought, external being that of the body) from 515c. We deepen an understanding of physical space to fulfill character and the worlds they inhabit. The student engages in research to build the grammar of movement, power of body language, kinesthetic response and application of these principles to character and storytelling as it applies to different time and place texts. The course emphasis lies heavily in the territory of composition and picturization tools, communication within world of play boundaries, visual and spatial subtext, and engaging the character's manipulation of space and objects.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the 515d movement studies:

1. The student will have acquired a movement vocabulary suitable for the construction of an embodied physical characterization from different time and place texts.
2. The student will have undertaken at least two different time and place transformative characterization efforts where they are able to differentiate and build structural and behavioral traits of character from their own.
3. The student will have researched, acquired objects and/or constructed the physical components of the environment for the texts that are the source of their characterization, and performed excerpts in these environments.
4. With the addition of the research methodologies as prompt, a characterization/period project will have been realized. Students will have included period/different time/different place and genre/style influences in the development of structural and behavioral traits of character and use of space/objects affecting story.

Learning Aspirations

1. Continue to cultivate a pervasive “questioning” state of mind predicated on a commitment to taking responsibility for oneself.
2. Continue to develop a process through which one can break inhibiting, habitual movement patterns to allow unencumbered choice, conscious control, and spontaneity in movement according to the needs of a given character and text.
3. Continue to recognize the importance of and exhibit competency in determining the necessary behavioral, environmental, and spatial choices as they relate to:
 - a. The “reality of doing” principle for the needs of the source material.
 - b. Making of “meaning” through movement (story and relationship connotations).
 - c. The active pursuit of character objective within a text.
 - d. Integration of the mechanics of movement into performance.
4. To regularize the above cited aspirations as a committed lifelong process!

Course Notes, Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Course Notes:

- The syllabus, weekly agenda and assignments are posted on Brightspace. Necessary day to day updates and communications will be provided via USC email.

These are my source texts: (available online if interested in more info)

- Space in Performance, by Gay McCauley
- Laban For All, by Jean Newlove and John Dalby
- The Expressive Body, by David Alberts
- The Empty Space, by Peter Brook
- The Shifting Point, by Peter Brook

Supplementary Materials:

- Instructor may supply handouts and excerpts from suitable texts as needed.
- Notebook/Journal suitable for sketches, daily notations of curiosities, progress and thoughts. The documenting of process, progression and iconic studies across the semester may benefit future contemplation.

Description of Assignments

- **CLASSWORK** Warmups utilizing prompts rooted in movement vocabulary principles that illuminate the physics of acting and comprise the actor’s grammar of movement will be used at times. Outside-of-class preparation for classwork (research, rehearsal, assembling of costume and props etc.) is required.
- **JOURNAL** It’s suggested students keep a movement journal. In addition to 515d class notes and other acquired pertinent information to your movement study the journal may include associations, similarities and/or contradictions between your areas of study. Put it all in! Consider this journal a document you are writing/compiling from the you of today to the you of tomorrow. One day it may be the documentation of your personal trajectory to craft!

- **PROJECT ONE: MOVEMENT AS MEANING.** Utilizing last semesters toolbox, complete a Mirror Process for a character from *Waiting for Lefty* by Clifford Odets (iconic image, structurals, behaviorals and goody bags assembled by week two), and Do Re Mi environment according to playwright’s intent. In this project we deepen spatial and object aspects of storytelling introduced and explored in *Home Free*’s realism into the “suggested” realism of *Waiting for Lefty*.
- **PROJECT TWO: TIME AND PLACE.** In this project we add research to the movement toolbox. In addition to processes we’ve developed to date, we explore the impact of research on choices the actor makes. Introduction of “modifying impulse” tool.

Phase One: Research presentations and applications of historical, sociological, and cultural influences necessary for the chosen text.

Phase Two: Mirror Process and Movement Patterning

- **PROJECT THREE: CULMINATION EVENT.** Utilize the 515 toolbox in accordance with Laura’s, Natsuko’s and Louis’s work. Put it all together!

Grading Criteria and Assessment

100 possible points. All points are awarded based on prompt and effective completion of the stated requirements.

Class work is adjudicated according to the standards and expectations set forth by the MFA in Acting core faculty. Participation, preparation, and willingness to explore concepts with openness individually and as part of the ensemble.

Projects are adjudicated based on completeness of physical choices and ability of student to develop lasting recognizable physicality as observed by the instructor on a continuum basis.

Levels of achievement are defined as follows:

Excellent: evidence of clear understanding of class concepts coupled with original and creative insight and confident preparation

Good: an understanding of class concepts is evidenced with competence

Satisfactory: a general understanding of class concepts but definable gaps are in evidence

Poor: definable gaps in class concepts and lack of preparation are in evidence.

Unsatisfactory: absence of preparation, work not completed on time and no communication with professor and student partners.

<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>PCT</u>
Classwork	40	40%
Project One	25	25%
Project Two	25	25%
Project Three	10	10%
TOTAL	100	100%

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 feedback on the course.

Additional Policies

Attendance and Time Requirements

Program wide policy as mandated in the "MFA Acting Student + Faculty Agreement: Guidelines & Policies Academic Year '24-'25"

Attendance Policy

- The training at this MFA program is ensemble-based work; therefore, **it is a requirement for the entirety of the ensemble to be present for every class.** **Absences** will directly affect your grade and standing in the program. A **lateness** will be counted as an **absence**. A **lateness** is anything after a 5-minute grace period at the official start time of class. Anything longer than five minutes will result in being locked out of class. *Don't be absent. Don't be late.*

Absences

- THREE (3) absences will result in a full letter grade demotion. If you miss a total of FIVE (5) classes, you fail the class. Any failed class results in academic probation.
- Excused and unexcused absences are the same.

Email records

- All lateness's and absences need to be documented by the Student at fault via email. The Student must email the specific professor for which class will be missed, as well as David Warshofsky and Natsuko Ohama.
- If a Student is late/absent to class and an email has not been sent in advance, the professor **must report these events** to David Warshofsky and Natsuko Ohama.

Lateness

- There is no need to text professors if you are late.

Illness

- Stay healthy. Illness counts as an absence. Please notify your professor, as well as David Warshofsky and Natsuko Ohama with a doctor's note.

Health and Participation in Class

- Online attendance, observation, or participation is not available for this class. All classes are held in person, on the ground. Classes are not to be recorded.
- While being mindful of the importance of being in class, our hope is that if you are feeling ill, you will use your best judgement as to whether you need to be absent.
- In the event of an absence, students can access lecture notes (should there be any) and/or schedule office hours with the instructor. However, the reconstruction of missed sessions in totality is not possible.
- 515d is a highly participatory, experiential, activity-based class. It requires extensive group exercises, large and small group discussion, outside rehearsal and peer observation/feedback of in-class presentations. If a student's health presents a frequent interruption in the engagement of classwork, then the student should contact the instructor to determine the best way forward.
- We will follow University health protocols as adjusted throughout the semester.

Classroom Rules

- Students must dress in attire that is flexible and allows them to move freely. To maximize safety and learning potential, it is of utmost importance to be able to observe physical technique and form during movement and voice. Sweats, yoga pants, gym shorts etc. are appropriate. No Jeans. No belts. Bare feet are preferred for movement vocabulary. A towel is recommended.
- Bottled water is welcome and recommended in the studio. However, food, coffee, tea, soda and other beverages are not allowed.
- Character studies and scenes require attire and props to support movement choices and to define the physical world as specified by the text (see "Goody Bag" addendum to syllabus). There will be no miming of the physical elements of the work. The *reality of doing principle* is paramount in 515d Adv Movement.
- Cell phones are to be turned off and put away for the duration of class, including during breaks.
- Electronic capture of any portion of class is strictly prohibited without prior written approval of the instructor.

Course Schedule

Week one through five: Movement as Meaning with *Waiting for Lefty* by Clifford Odets. Using the movement tools explored in 515c (Mirror Process, Do Re Mi, Movement Principles centering the Physics of Acting), What are the composite physical constants that affect the final character's understanding of story and what is the actor's responsibility to employ them? Focus on meaning made through gesture, the body in space and in relation to space, objects and others on stage.

Weeks six and seven: Begin different time different place exploration. Research as a movement tool. What does the ensemble need to know to tell this story? To live truthfully under different time and place circumstances?

Weeks eight and nine: Mirror Process for different time and place characters. Iconic Images selected and "Goody Bags" assembled. Ensemble creation of the Do Re Mi.

Weeks ten through thirteen: Centering on the actor's "movement patterning". What are "world of play" circumstances that influence the actor's "reality of doing" dedicated to storytelling as specified by a text? What do I need around me to tell this story and how do I use such to optimal effect?

Weeks fourteen through culmination week: In tandem with work from Laura's and/or Natsuko/Louis' classes, we'll center on the "dynamic sequencing" of impulse dedicated to story. A practical application of the influences of light, sound, shape, environment, objects, architecture, topography, kinesthetic response, and spatial relationship as catalytic tools to effectively illuminate text. Incorporating 515 tools into other rehearsal halls.

Process and Progression

Weekly Breakdown

Week 1	1/14 1/16	Introduction and Course Outline. Read <i>Waiting for Lefty</i> . For next week: Character Iconic Image and Goody Bag, solidify your scene's literal doing and assemble all props necessary for reality of doing according to the play's form.
Week 2	1/21 & 23	Movement as Meaning: Literal Doing w/in form. Scene Pairs ready to work on feet with their scenes identified literal doing. For next week: Review levels of objectives and rehearse to deepen literal doing movement pattern.
Week 3	1/28 & 30	Movement as Meaning: Primary and Secondary Action. Finding Movement that reveals subtext. For next week: Rehearse <i>Waiting for Lefty</i> .
Week 4	2/4	Movement as Meaning: First Share of <i>Waiting for Lefty</i> scenes evidencing all 515 tools used to date.

- 2/6 Scene Share Re-work. For next week: Rehearse for *Waiting for Lefty* final share.
- Week 5 2/11 *Waiting for Lefty* culmination share.
2/13 **Begin Project 2: Different Time and Place Project.** How is research a movement tool? Tablework as “movement of the mind” physical preparation. Project Parameters Given. Text, Casting, Research Areas Identified and Assigned. For next week: Read Text. Research your Assigned Area.
- Week 6 2/18 In class read of Project 2 scenes. Identify Universal and Super Objectives for characters. For next class: Begin Mirror Process for New Character (Iconic Image chosen from artwork of the time period, Goody Bag). Coordinate research of your assigned area for presentation next class.
2/20 Research Sharing for Project Two.
- Week 7 2/25 Research Sharing for Project Two cont. For the next class session: Bring your character iconic image to share with the group. Be prepared to source your image and address “excepts” prior to selecting the image you’re working from.
2/27 Complete Research Sharing. Share Iconic Images. For the next class session: complete the assembling of your Project 2 character “Goody Bag” and bring to class.
- Week 8 3/4 Mirror Process Project 2 Character (Transform using Goody Bag, Structural, Behavioral, 1-10, 10-1 exercise. For the next class session: prepare a three-minute character private moment exercise exemplifying the different time and place work we’ve identified.
3/6 Share Private Moment Exercises. For next class: Work with scene partner to draw the Do Re Mi ground plan for our scene arc.
- Week 9 3/11&13 Establish and build Project 2 Do Re Mi. “Walk and Talk” reading of Project 2 text.
- ***Spring Break March 15th thru March 23rd***
- Week 10 3/25 & 27 *Project Two* Movement Patterning: Scene Objectives, Literal Doing, Composition and Picturization
- Week 11 4/1 & 3 *Project Two* Movement Patterning: Beat Objectives, Primary and Secondary Action, Modifying Impulse
- Week 12 4/8 & 10 Observed Rehearsals: “Potential – Interference = Performance”
By this point, you know your potential. What is the interference in you reaching it? Identify the interference and that’s what we’ll address in your observed rehearsal.
- Week 13 4/15 *Project Two* scene run. Peer feedback.
4/17 *Project Two* Culmination Share

- Week 14 4/22 & 24 *Project 3* 515 Toolbox applied to _____? (Laura's work? Natsuko's? Louis'? All three? Putting it all together! TBD)
- Week 15 4/29&5/1 *Project 3* 515 Toolbox applied to _____? (Laura's work? Natsuko's? Louis'? All three? Putting it all together! TBD)

*****Culmination of Project Three: 515 Toolbox TBD*****

Course schedule subject to change according to the needs and progress of the group

Note From the Instructor

We will glean the most from this time together if you hold the overview that the course content is aimed at building a process for you to employ in every maker effort, whether classwork or performance based. The tools are being added to a process you have been developing since you became an actor. Don't worry about "getting it right"!

The principles explored this semester in 515d are processes that take time to absorb and understand. Remain patient, positive and curious about the work. Remember the results are not instantaneous. Your commitment to openness in exploring these concepts is of much greater importance than a definitive result. Resist judgment and expectation of outcome. Explore. Play. Be fearlessly inventive within the parameters given. Each student works and learns in a unique manner.

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) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.*

****The following statements and disclosures portion of this document are subject to SDA updates. Addendums will be posted on Bright Space ****

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.

This syllabus serves as your contract for course #515d, Spring Semester 2025.