

# **ACTING FUNDAMENTALS**

## **(THEA 1050-003)**

**Tuesday/Thursday 1:00pm-2:50pm Rtfp 130**

**Instructor:** Cynthia Beene

**Office Hours:** M/W 1:30pm-2:30pm T/Th 10:00am-11:00am by appointment. I will be happy to meet with you another time; please send me a message and we will make it happen.

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### **PREREQUISITES**

Prerequisites for THEA 3050 Acting: Realism I include THEA 1050 Acting: Fundamentals, THEA 2051 Theatre Voice I, and THEA 2351 Theatre Movement I.

Students majoring or minoring in Theatre who have received a grade of “C” in any of the pre-requisite courses, even if they are transferring that course in, will be required to audition for consideration for enrollment in THEA 3050 Acting: Realism I.

Any student who receives a grade of “C” or lower in THEA 3050: Acting Realism I will be allowed to repeat it one more time. Should the student repeat the course and receive a grade of “C” or lower, the student will be dismissed from the Acting Concentration.

If the student has indeed earned a C in one or more of the three foundational Acting courses and an audition is required for enrollment in the Acting; Realism I course, these auditions will take place on the Monday afternoon of the week preceding the first day of classes. Students will be contacted by the Acting Faculty in advance to confirm their audition appointment, but they need to be prepared, based on their academic performance, for an audition of two contrasting one-minute monologues to be requested for enrollment in the Acting: Realism I course.

**HOURS: 3;1**

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The study of the art of contemporary acting, grounded in psychological realism. Exposure to a broad spectrum of acting techniques designed to develop use of the body, voice, intellect, memories and imagination. Emphasis on removal of the body’s resistances and blocks which hinder a spontaneous and truthful reaction in a creative situation.

The Nature of Theatre -

What is theatre? How is it made?

Students will learn the objectives of theatre. How it can influence and change society. What is the purpose?

Students will develop an appreciation for the art of acting.

How a Theatrical Production is created and what is the actor’s job -

Students will learn the purpose and practice of auditioning, monologues and acting resumes.

Students will develop a working knowledge of how to rehearse: Attendance, Etiquette, Equipment, Readiness at rehearsal, Homework, Parts of the Stage, Line memorization.

#### Training the Instrument -

Students will develop strength, coordination, flexibility, creative confidence and increased self-esteem via physical and vocal exercises. These exercises will utilize vocabulary and practice from Voice and Movement classes.

Students will practice improvisational exercises to increase understanding of dramatic action and given circumstances.

Students will expand their skills with a holistic approach to body and voice via creative problem-solving exercises.

Students will redefine fear by understanding adrenaline and how it can support your work.

#### Ensemble Building with Group Projects -

With the experience of group exercises, students will obtain the ability to support and lead group work. Students will learn to trust other actors and work together.

#### Basic Script Analysis -

Students will be introduced to Stanislavsky's acting method.

Students will learn and demonstrate the process of character creation. How to break down a script into units and beats.

Students will learn and demonstrate the use of Hagen's Essential Questions. How the answers can feed creativity.

#### Elements of a Scene -

Students will be introduced to the various parts of a scene through skill demonstrations:

Obstacles

Action, Tactics and Strategies

Magic "If"

Subtext

--Moment Before

Event of the Scene

Stakes

Truth

Major Projects: Students will demonstrate the ability to create a believable character and engage with an audience. The ability to memorize lines and script analysis. Demonstrate stage presence, relaxation and public solitude while focusing on their objective and the dramatic action of the scene. The goal is to cultivate creativity.

- o Open Scene - Partners develop an open scene and share with class. They receive suggestions for development. They go back and rehearse then present a final time.

- o Two Contrasting Monologues - Choose an age-appropriate monologue that is active and not a memory or story. Present, receive suggestions for development and then after more rehearsal present again.

# **ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

## **(2 Meetings a Week)**

Punctual attendance is critical for your success in the course. Thus, students are expected to be present and punctual for all classes.

The following policy is consistent with all acting courses in the department:

- Students are allowed no more than a total of THREE (3) absences during the semester.
- Students are considered tardy if they arrive for class no more than 30 minutes late. Arriving more than 30 minutes late for class is considered an absence.
- Students are expected to attend class for the duration of the period. Leaving before the class concludes is considered an absence.
- An occurrence of tardiness for the class FOUR (4) times is the equivalent or ONE (1) absence.
- A total of (4) absences means that the highest grade the student can earn in the class is an F.

Any student with an issue in the area of attendance and/or punctuality will be referred to the Acting Faculty for guidance.

If a student's absences have resulted in a grade with which they are not pleased, they may choose to withdraw from the class.

The professor's roll is the official record of absences and tardiness. At any point, students are welcome to check the grade roster on Canvas to be sure that their attendance/punctuality record is accurate.

### **Attendance Note:**

To succeed in this course your commitment to punctual attendance will be rigorous. You are expected to be at every class on time, and stay through the entire class period. To document your attendance sign in at the beginning of class. If you are late you may sign in below the line drawn across the bottom of the list. If you arrive 30 minutes or more after class time has begun you will not be allowed to sign in, and you may not receive credit for being in class. You are allowed 3 absences in this course. If you are tardy or absent your daily work grade will be affected.

## **WHAT TO BRING TO CLASS**

- Notebook or paper
- Writing utensils
- Water bottle
- Materials for assignments

## **WHAT TO WEAR TO CLASS**

- Athletic clothing you can move in every day (no jeans or restrictive clothing)
- Bring socks and be prepared to take off your shoes when you work (socks with rubber soles or other indoor footwear may be useful)

## **CLASS EXPECTATIONS**

This is an ensemble based class which uses the Seven Norms of Collaboration to promote a sense of ensemble in this lab.

- Seven Norms of Collaboration
  - Promoting a spirit of inquiry
  - Pausing . . .
  - Paraphrasing.
  - Probing for specificity
  - Putting ideas on the table
  - Paying attention to self & others
  - Presuming positive intentions

## **Etiquette**

- Phone, laptop, book, AirPods/headphone use during class is unwelcome (especially during other students' work). An exception would be to support an objective from this class
- Be honest and kind with your colleagues as we are all here to learn
- Share your boundaries
- Listen and watch for others' boundaries
- Practice saying yes and
- Practice saying and receiving no
- Respect the space: clean up trash, leave things nicer than you left them, be gentle with set pieces/props, return borrowed items where you found them
- Be mindful and present; when possible leave what's outside of the room outside

**Grading (see full rubrics on Canvas):**

Assignments	Point Value
Daily Work - (30) 15 points per class day	450
Warmup Leadership	50
Monologue #1	100
Monologue #2	100
Scene #1	150
Scene #2	150
Total Points Possible	1000

TOTAL Points: Scale:

A: 1000-901

B: 900-801

C: 800-701

D: 700-606

F: 605 or fewer points

**Assignments:**

Daily Work (30)

Earn up to 15 points per class period for engaging with the ensemble by performing the daily exercises and assignments during class with other colleagues.

Warmup Leadership

Earn up to 50 points for leading your colleagues in a 10 minute warmup. Practice leading the warmup with peers, colleagues, family, or friends beforehand. The warmup should have three parts: several short exercises to activate axial movement (stretching, swinging, twisting, bending), several short exercises to activate locomotor movement (dancing, jumping, walking, leaping etc.), and a theater exercise to warm up the actor mind.

Contrasting Monologues #1 and #2

You will choose two contrasting 1 minute monologues (45 -90 seconds) to work on and perform this semester. Contrasting can be interpreted in many ways including but not limited to genre (comedy vs. drama), time period (more recently published vs. less recently published), style (verse vs. prose). I recommend you choose pieces that are new to you and that are intriguing to you in some way. You will study the pieces, which includes reading the plays they come from and writing a script analysis to submit as your text work. You will work some text in front of the class off-book, and finally you will perform both monologues off-book in a showcase during class in front of your peers.

### Scene Work #1

You will choose a scene partner to work with and together choose a scene that is around 3-5 minutes long from a play. You will study the scene, which includes reading the play it comes from and writing a text analysis. You will work some text from the scene in front of the class off-book, and finally you will perform the scene off-book in a showcase during class in front of your peers using appropriate set pieces, props, and costumes.

### Scene Work #2

You will be assigned a scene partner. Work together to choose a contrasting scene that is around 3-5 minutes long from a play. This scene should reflect a contrast to both your and your partner's previous scene. Again, contrasting can be interpreted in multiple ways. You will study the scene, which includes reading the play it comes from and writing a text analysis. You will work some text from the scene in front of the class off-book, and finally you will perform the scene off-book in a showcase during class in front of your peers using appropriate set pieces, props, and costumes.

### **STUDENT OBLIGATION TO ACADEMIC/PRODUCTION WORK**

Dance & Theater students are expected to budget and organize their time and efforts in order to meet both their academic and production commitments satisfactorily and on time. The faculty and staff recognize that the academic and production assignments within the department, as well as outside employment and other obligations, sometimes impose conflicting pressures on DT students. One of the main responsibilities of each student is to identify carefully and monitor the commitments that comprise his/her departmental assignments and outside obligations. It is also important to keep in mind that production work and outside obligations do not constitute an excused absence from DT classes or from the completion of any required class assignments.

### **ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABILITIES**

The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation: reference Public Law 92-112—The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

### **STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING (SPOT)**

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at [www.spot.unt.edu](http://www.spot.unt.edu) or email [spot@unt.edu](mailto:spot@unt.edu).

The Department of Dance and Theatre also offers face-to-face SPOT evaluations, if the student wishes. Ask your professor for details if you wish to pursue that option.

### **ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom, and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SYLLABUS CONTENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read  
(please print)

through the content of the course syllabus for:

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and have a thorough, clear understanding of the course requirements, standards, and policies. This includes class assignments, the attendance/lateness policy for UNT acting classes, grading criteria for the course, and classroom protocol.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(your signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

