

ACTING - REALISM

Scene Study - Exploring the Reality of Doing

Spring 2026

THEA 3050.001 and THEA3050.301 (Lab)
TTh 11am-1:20pm
3 Units
Prof. Marjorie Hayes

Office phone: (940) 565-2472
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Office Hours: T-Th 4:50-5:30pm
or by appointment

I. PREREQUISITES:

This course builds on the skills you have developed in your foundational courses: Acting Fundamentals, Voice, Movement, and Play Analysis. Practical experience in Directors' Ensemble or performance helpful.

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course the actor will learn how to create a role in a play grounded in the psychological realism of contemporary American plays. The student will experience the balance between studying the script logically and intellectually and rehearsing emotionally and passionately with other actors. They will develop an ability to personify the suggestions of an acting coach or director and make the choice their own.

First, the actor will analyze the script and the given circumstances of a particular scene. What are the reasons for this specific behavior? What are the circumstances of the situation? What actions does the character take to achieve his/her goal and what obstacles does he or she encounter on the way to that goal? Since this groundwork will provide the nourishment, the performance feeds on, our first step is a meticulous sit-down, line-by-line analysis of what is being said by each character and how it relates to the world of the play. Besides the psychology of the relationships, we will investigate the language used as clues to characterization. Additionally, we will also discuss the task the author has given the character and its dramaturgical demands.

After the actor has a clear understanding of the scene and the text is memorized, we begin working on our feet through the beats and larger units of the scene. We seek a relaxed environment in which the actor feels free to express his/her innermost thoughts and actions. Then through various exercises, we will explore personal objects, sense memory, endowment of objects, personal experience substitution and emotional memory. We may use group improvisations to explore place, character and physical investment. Exercises are also used to develop spontaneity so that in rehearsal an actor has the courage to let go of the "bookwork" and simply react to what is happening.

Using the experiences discovered through rehearsal, the actor returns to the study of the text, seeking a greater understanding and connection to the role through relaxation, creative visualization, personal investment, striving to eventually bring life to the character without censorship or judgement. When the scene is given its final presentation, we will witness a full performance: an actor alive, living moment to moment, striving clearly toward a goal through the conditions of the relationships and the high-stakes circumstances of the scene's situation.

One of your final projects will be a scene presentation. Some student who wish to apply to the acting concentration will perform for the Acting faculty jury. Passing the jury is a requirement for the advanced acting classes.

III. CLASS GOAL

The standards for this course are pre-professional and the course content is designed to develop the skills you need to teach, enter a MFA Acting program or the profession. By the end of the course you will have a greater sense of what constitutes an actor's homework, rehearsal technique, playing actions, characterization skills, emotional memory and the ability to use your life observations and personal life experiences in the creation of characters.

IV. POTENTIALLY OFFENSIVE MATERIAL

Please be advised that this class contains the development of text and actions that may be considered offensive by some. You may encounter literary and directorial points of view that differ from your own. If you choose to take this course, you must perform the roles you are cast in. You are required to speak the text as written and to fulfill the actions the author describes as the acting coach or director has interpreted them. In theatre we seek to explore all possible forms of human behavior and we may at times give "voice" to characters that hold different views than our own.

V. TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The teaching methodology will be vocal, physical and creative exercises, group interaction, peer review, discussion, skill training, verbal critiques and performance simulation. At times, the scene work may require or it may be necessary to ask students to demonstrate or find a more appropriate physical movement/posture for a scene, to observe the instructor demonstrating a more appropriate physical movement/posture, and/or for the instructor to assist a student in developing that physical movement/posture. Any student with concerns about being touched, whether before or after such class experience, is encouraged to notify the instructor.

It is expected that you give your undivided attention and support to your classmates during their presentations. This often requires silence while they work and you observe. You can learn a great deal from watching others work. Please note that it is considered extremely discourteous to enter or leave the room while others are working, or to speak however quietly while others are performing.

VI. CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Acceptable Student Behavior per UNT Dean of Students:

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

A. ATTENDANCE

Attendance is regulated by the University and the Department of Dance and Theatre. The following policy is consistent with all performance-oriented classes in the department.

1. Attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed THREE absences only in this Course. If you accrue a FOURTH absence, the highest grade you will be able to receive in this course is a D. Three tardies will equal ONE ABSENCE. Please be present, on time and ready to work. This is the professional standard that we will be striving to attain this semester.

2. Class will start at the appointed time. To avoid disturbing your classmates and the work, no one will be admitted after the class begins.
3. Please note that the teacher/director's roll book in Canvas is the official record of absences and tardiness. Ask the teacher/director to check the roll book to ensure that your attendance record is correct. Leaving class early, sleeping, and reading outside material will count as an absence.
4. Please be reminded that university policy states that any instructor who informs students in writing about the necessity of class attendance may request that the registrar drop a student from the course with a grade of WF or F upon the accumulation of the stated number of absences.

B. PARTICIPATION

1. Most of your homework will be scene work involving other people. You will have to organize rehearsals *outside of class that may be early in the morning or late at night, on Saturdays or Sundays*. You are responsible for finding rehearsal space. You reserve space in the Theatre office. Make sure that times and places are clearly decided upon. Once a plan is made, you must be there. It is incredibly inconsiderate to make a rehearsal and then not show up or be grossly late. If a problem with missing rehearsals occurs, do not let your work suffer, contact the instructor immediately.

2. Actors are responsible for clearly communicating their rehearsal schedule to each other.

C. COMMUNICATION

Information regarding class will be distributed in class, Canvas or via UNT email. Please check it regularly. It is your responsibility to be informed.

D. MATERIALS

Appropriate dress for the character, which may include hard soled shoes, suits, dresses, etc. Rental costumes not allowed. Rehearsal props as needed.

E. HOMEWORK

All homework and papers must be typed, spellchecked and stapled. Follow format in the MLA handbook: Double-spaced, 12-pt font, no larger than 1" margins, etc.

F. TESTING

Quizzes and examinations covering the information in readings and class may be given.

G. ATTENDANCE AT ALL UNT D+T THEATRE SEASON PRODUCTIONS

1. See the box office for your ticket. Be prepared to critique the acting.
2. Assignment: One professional production: Dallas Theatre Center, WaterTower, Casa Manana, etc., or Live streaming productions from National Theatre Live, Lincoln Center. Turn in 1-page acting critique and your ticket.

H. CRITIQUES

Please understand that because of the large number of people involved in any production, suggestions and critiques by directors or stage managers will be given in public. One aspect of the profession is learning to take publicly the suggestions of the director. If you are unclear as to the meaning of your in-class critique, please make an appointment with the instructor to discuss your work.

VII. STUDENT OBLIGATIONS TO ACADEMIC/PRODUCTION WORK

Theatre students are expected to budget and organize their time and efforts 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 Theatre students. One of the principal responsibilities of each student is to carefully identify 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 Theatre classes or from the completion of any required class assignments.*

VIII. SCENE STUDY PROCEDURES

See handout.

All furniture must be struck at the end of your scene to the prop room. Props struck to your locker.

IX. TEXTBOOKS

Required:

A View from the Bridge by Arthur Miller

Plays by John Patrick Shanley

Various texts for scene study as needed

Suggested:

A Challenge for the Actor by Uta Hagen, Scribners ISBN 0-684-19040-0

Acting Onstage and Off, by Robert Barton, 0-03-072192, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

An Actor Prepares by Stanislavski

Creating a Role by Stanislavski

Six Lessons by Boleslavsky

The Viewpoints Book by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau

Intro to Play Analysis by Carl Pritner and Scott E. Walters

X. CLASS CALENDAR

Our class calendar will be updated throughout the semester on Canvas if illness, weather, or other circumstances change our class plan.

IX. GRADING

You will be graded on your class participation and willingness to explore, your script analysis, your exercises and your scene work. ***Your development and artistic quality will be the main factor in the grades for your scene work.*** Students are encouraged to make an appointment with the professor to discuss their work in greater detail than class critique time allows. All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

This is a course designed for performance majors and minors who are intent on developing professional technique. The grading standard is c = average, b = very good, **a = excellent classwork, participation and attendance.** There are 100 points possible for the class. The grading scale is a: above 90%, b: above 80%, c: above 70%, d: above 60 %, and f: below 60%. Your final grade will be based upon these criteria with approximately this weight:

1. Exercises and Scriptwork	5%
2. Quizzes	5%
3. MonoScene- Hot 1 Baltimore	10%
4. New Monologue	10%
5. Personal Monologue	20%
6. 1 st Scene	20 %
7. Final Scene	30%

100% possible

X. FINAL PERIOD

If you wish to continue in the acting emphasis, your jury for the Acting Faculty will be the final week of classes. The Final Exam (Assessment discussion and paper due) will be **Tuesday, December 5th 10-12pm.**

XIII. INCOMPLETES

Only under extraordinary circumstances will an incomplete be given.

XIV. WITHDRAWAL

Should you choose to drop this course, you must initiate the drop and acquire all the proper signatures and paperwork. If that process is not completed, you will be subject to a WF or F at the close of the semester.

XV. FITNESS

This course is designed to accommodate all levels of physical ability and fitness. As with any physical training, there will be some soreness and muscular fatigue as a result of a new use of the body. This is normal and healthy. However, *you are responsible for your own health*. If you are in doubt as to whether you can perform some aspect of the exercises, please refrain from doing so until you can consult a physician. If you need to refrain from doing significant portions of the coursework due to this condition, you must get written verification from a physician and be prepared to do alternative assignments.

XVI. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT NOTICE

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.

The UNT Department of Dance and Theatre Arts does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the recruitment or admission of students. The content of this class requires each student to (a) actively participate in a safe manner and (b) spontaneously process visual and verbal cues. The student has the responsibility of informing the instructor of any disabling condition which will

require modifications in assignments or exercises. If you have a disability and feel you are unable to meet the requirements of this class without reasonable accommodations, please contact the instructor to discuss your particular disability.

XVII. ACCOMMODATION

Please let me know if you need accommodation for religious holidays or other issues.