

AUDITION FOR THE STAGE

THEA 3700.001

Fall 2023

THEA 3700

Tuesday/Thursday 8:30a – 10:50a

RTFP 130

3 Units

Professor Bob Hess

RTFP 222

Office Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays 11:00a - 12:00p, and by appointment

For Class Correspondence: UNTMovement@aol.com

PREREQUISITE

THEA 3050 with a grade of B or higher.

Students should note that THEA 3700 Audition for the Stage also serves as a prerequisite for THEA 4050 Acting: Realism II. Students who have completed THEA 3700 with a grade of B or higher are automatically eligible to enroll in THEA 4050 without the audition that is required for students who have not taken the class.

HOURS

3;2

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction of foundational skills that can be used in the process of auditioning for the stage. Focus on the diverse constructs of the theatre audition in order to expand confidence, practice techniques, create a positive impression in the audition scenario, and devise strategies for navigating the process.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

Students in this course will, through lecture and repetition of the process, explore and gain insight into the following aspects of the theatre audition:

- The specifics of audition procedures, preparation, and protocol (both live auditions and virtual submissions)
- Examining what makes for an effective audition monologue
- Creating a positive and memorable personal impression as an actor
- Coping with the inevitable anxiety of the audition process
- Auditioning with a scene partner using prepared sides (either with a fellow actor or assigned “reader”)
- Strategies for a callback audition
- Cold reading

CONTENT OF MATERIAL

Please be advised that this class contains the development of texts from both classic and contemporary theatre which

may offer situations and language that may be considered offensive to some. If you choose to take the course, you must perform the roles in which you are cast. You are required to speak the text as written. If there is any issue with this, please reach out to the professor privately.

CLASS CALENDAR

Students will receive a class calendar outlining the semester work plan. There is a lot of material to cover in this class in a very short period of time---adjustments to the original class calendar may need to be made as the class progresses and unexpected circumstances arise. Students will always receive as much notice as possible of changes and an updated calendar reflecting any adjustments.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The course will be taught through a combination of lectures discussing the process of auditioning for a stage production and analysis of audition monologues and scenes.

At times it may be necessary to ask the students to demonstrate or find a more appropriate physical movement or posture for a scene, to observe the instructor demonstrating a more appropriate physical movement or posture, and/or for the instructor to assist the student in developing that physical movement or posture. Students should be prepared for an appropriate degree of physical contact with other students in the context of the work for a particular scene. Any student with concerns about being touched must notify the instructor immediately following the first class meeting. A request for any sort of physical touching will always be discussed beforehand and only occur with permission.

TEXT

Shurtleff, Michael. *Audition: Everything an Actor Needs to Know to Get the Part*. Walker and Company. ISBN: 0-8027-0590-1

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- A notebook
- A laptop or iPad on which you can call up a play script and read it privately during allotted class time. Please bring this device with you *on days where there are scheduled audition appointment times*. It is not optimal to read a play script on one's cell phone.

CLASS PROCEDURES

PROTOCOL

It is critical, in a class of this nature, that you give your undivided attention and support to your classmates during exercises and presentations. Skilled observation is a key element of the course. Students are also requested not to enter or leave the classroom while a student is performing or being critiqued. Focus is pivotal in the success of your growth this semester, so the class atmosphere must be as maximally conducive to that as possible. You are to turn OFF your phones, iPads, and laptops before class begins. Remove headphones. If you turn devices on at break, you must turn them off again before we resume. It is very distracting and disrespectful if a student's cell phone rings or vibrates during class, or if a student sends, receives a notification of (or reads) text and Facebook messages, or if a student studies for other class work. A director or stage manager in a professional rehearsal will call you out on this big time. So let's set a tone for the level of respect and focus in the class.

If you prefer to TAKE NOTES on an iPad, laptop, or cell phone, this is acceptable. You must inform me in advance and

understand that I will be extremely displeased if I see you sneaking alternate uses of the device in between the note taking. I am quite aware how easy it is to do that. This is a major pet peeve of mine.

COMMUNICATION

Information regarding the course will be distributed in class, via email (which is to be checked regularly—YOUR responsibility), Canvas, or the class assistant. Again, it is YOUR responsibility to be informed. Your instructor is ALWAYS available to you through emails or scheduled appointments to discuss any specific issues or questions you may have about the class. I can promise you a swift reply (within 24 hours) to any inquiry or comment you have.

ATMOSPHERE OF SUPPORT & RESPECT

The most critical element of the course rests in students' ability to observe closely and carefully what is going on with their own work as artists. In addition, observation of both your instructor and your peers will provide valuable insight. This requires a safe, unthreatening, nonjudgmental environment of sensitivity, honesty, support, and openness. Each student is at a different place in their journey as an artist. Consequently, the instructor will always phrase observations in an appropriate light for where YOU are in your growth as an artist. Likewise, every student is expected to show exactly the same respect in their own observations. Only in building this atmosphere of complete artistic empathy, safety, and trust can we grow. We must act as a supportive company of actors to maximize our success and growth.

GRADING

Your grade for the semester will be determined by your accrual of the number of points (out of 100) achieved from the following sources: QUIZZES, MONOLOGUES, AUDITION SCENES, and a WRITTEN FINAL SELF-EVALUATION.

QUIZZES

Students are expected to complete all reading assignments connected with the course. You will frequently be quizzed about the content of the assigned reading, over both the class text (8) and the assigned plays (7). These quizzes are not particularly difficult, and a student who has thoughtfully read the text or play will usually not have any difficulty at all in succeeding on these. A student who receives a grade of B or better on any of the quizzes will receive TWO POINTS per quiz.

Thus, **THIRTY POINTS** of your course grade will be based on the fact that you chose to read the material or not to read it. If you are not in the habit of reading carefully and thoroughly for content, this is a good time to improve that skill. Actors who audition for plays and are serious about getting cast read the plays beforehand. Those who choose to enter the process unprepared choose not to. This is simply a reality of our business.

MONOLOGUES

We will be exploring three one-minute monologues during the first several weeks of our class. Thoughtful preparation and effort of these will earn the student 5 POINTS each, for a total of **FIFTEEN POINTS**.

AUDITION SCENES

Without question, the best way to gain confidence and skill in the audition process is by repeating the process over and over. Our class will complete a total of SEVEN audition scenes using sides from the scripts we have read in class. Since the element of having your peers watch your audition is NOT consistent with what you will experience professionally, we will record these audition scenes in scheduled appointments and then review them in the succeeding class to discuss preparation, professionalism, effectiveness, and student growth. One of your scenes will be done as an independent taped submission. These auditions scenes will constitute **FIFTY POINTS** of your course grade.

Every actor's process of preparing for an audition differs. You will be expected to develop your own process as far as how you prepare for auditions, perhaps using strategies and tips that will be discussed in the course.

WRITTEN FINAL SELF-EVALUATION

At the completion of the semester, all actors would do a lookback over their work and complete a written self-analysis. The professor will provide prompts for this work. These are to be submitted by 5:00p on the Friday of Finals Week. This assignment is worth **FIVE POINTS**.

GRADING FORMULA

Your final grade will be based upon the following assignments and point values:

<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>	<u>POINTS</u>
• Quizzes on Text (8 @ 2 points each, earned with a grade of B or better)	16
• Quizzes on Plays (7 @ 2 points each, earned with a grade of B or better)	14
• Monologues (3)	15
• In-class Demonstrations & Auditions (6 @ 7.5 points each)	45
• Final Exam (Self- Taped Audition)	5
• Final Exam (Written)	<u>5</u>
	100

Corresponding Letter Grades:

A (90 – 100)

B (80 – 89)

C (70 – 79)

D (65 – 69)

F (below 65)

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

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 that meet twice per week in the UNT Department of Dance and Theatre:

- Students are allowed no more than a total of THREE excused (3) absences during the semester for any reason.
- 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.

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

The policy is not negotiable, as that would constitute holding one student to a different standard than all other students in all acting classes. Any student with an issue in the area of attendance and/or punctuality should direct their concerns to the Head of the Acting Faculty.

The professor's roll is the official record of absences and tardiness. Students are also welcome to check with the professor to make sure that their attendance/punctuality record is accurate.

KEEPING IT REAL ABOUT PUNCTUAL ATTENDANCE...

I am very aware that the unexpected comes up in life, and many times it is beyond your control. The attendance policy of acting classes in the Department of Dance and Theatre at UNT is set up to ALLOW for and EXCUSE those occasional issues that may come up (illnesses, deaths in the family, emergencies, traffic, car trouble, unavoidable commitments, weather, etc.). All of these things could occur to you during the semester (even a couple of times). Please DO NOT ask for further leeway on this, because there is none. The leeway for these unexpected occurrences is already BUILT IN to the attendance policy. Do not ask me if there is any extra credit you can do to make up for excessive absence. Changing the policy for you means that it must, in the interest of fairness and consistency, be changed for students in all acting classes. There is NO NEED to bring me a doctor's note when you are sick. If you tell me you were ill, I absolutely believe you. The attendance policy already allows for the fact that you might get sick and miss a class or two as a result and excuses those absences up to THREE times. However, there have to be limits, particularly since your absence may have an impact on a fellow actor. If you are ill and/or absent excessively, it means you are missing the actual content of the course. You are seeking to be a young professional actor—get used to the fact that you simply have to BE THERE, and you have to be there ON TIME if you wish to keep the job.

EXTRA CREDIT

There is NO extra credit available in the class. Please do not inquire if there is some "additional work you can do to boost your grade." Your grade is based on the criteria set forth in this syllabus. If extra credit opportunities become available, you will be notified by your professor.

INCOMPLETES

Only under extraordinary circumstances that suddenly render the student unable to continue the classwork will an INCOMPLETE be given. Please see your instructor if you feel you may qualify for a course grade of INCOMPLETE. Circumstances have come up in the past which made this appropriate. This has usually involved a scenario where a student had completed the work in excellent standing up to a certain point and then had to suddenly leave school for some personal reason, such as an illness or family emergency. The terms for making up the INCOMPLETE are negotiated between the student and the professor, and these terms must be signed by both parties and submitted to the departmental office for approval. The earliest date for the student to request an INCOMPLETE is November 11, 2023.

WITHDRAWAL

Should you choose to drop this course, YOU must initiate the drop before the deadline and acquire all proper signatures and paperwork. The last day for the student to elect to drop the class with a grade of "W" is November 10, 2023.

CLASS CANCELLATION

Because I continue to work as a professional actor in the Resident Company at the Dallas Theater Center and with a broadcast agent (and am expected to do so by the UNT Department of Dance and Theatre as part of my tenure track), I

may occasionally have to cancel class for projects on which I am working—sometimes on short notice. In all cases I will try to find a substitute from the UNT Acting Faculty to cover the class. If I am not able to do this and need to cancel a class meeting, you will be notified by both text and email. While I am teaching, I turn down more work than I accept---teaching is my first priority. However, conflicts are sometimes unavoidable, especially due to re-shoots and clients with whom I have ongoing contracts. If I completely cancel class at any point *with no advance notice*, you will each be given a “free” absence. For example, if you have accrued two absences in class, you would then have only one.

LAST DAY OF CLASS/FINAL EXAM DATES

The last regular class meeting is Thursday, December 7. The Final Exam will take place on Tuesday, December 12 from 8:00a – 10:00a. I am very sorry for the early hour. This is a fixed time provided to us by the university and is not something over which I have control.

POST MORTEM

After our Final Exam, an informal *post mortem* discussion to reflect on the semester’s work will POSSIBLY be conducted at an off-campus location, but only if 75% or more of the students are interested and available to attend. Attendance at this *post mortem* is NOT mandatory and will have no effect on the student’s grade. As I need to make a reservation for this event, please make every effort not to approach me on the day of the *post mortem* to tell me you suddenly have a change of plans and cannot attend.

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 or email 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.