

**ACTING: REALISM II**  
**THEA 4050**  
*Advanced Scene Study for the Stage*  
**Spring 2026**

**THEA 4050.001 and THEA 4050.301 (Lab)**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30a – 10:50a**

**RTFP 130**

**3 Units**

**Professor Bob Hess**

**Office: RTFP 231**

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

**For Class Correspondence: ActingRealism@aol.com**

**I. PREREQUISITES**

There are four Prerequisites for THEA 4050 Acting: Realism II:

- THEA 3050 Acting: Realism I
- THEA 3700 Audition for the Stage
- Theatre Major *with a Concentration in Acting* (or, if a not, submission of a petition for enrollment, which must be approved by the professor)
- Audition for the Acting Faculty

**II. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Follow-up course to THEA 3050 Acting: Realism I and continuation of THEA 3700 Audition for the Stage. Advanced training in the process of creating a character grounded in psychological realism, with texts from modern realism as the source material for scene work. Investigation of previously unexplored acting methodologies, including processes and exercises.

**III. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Continued application and reinforcement of both foundational and advanced concepts in the creation of a character introduced in THEA 3050 Acting: Realism I and THEA 3700 Audition for the Stage, with particular focus on:

Objective, Obstacle, and Tactic  
 Long-term and Short-term Circumstances  
 Vocal, Physical, and Emotional Life of a Character  
 Text and Subtext Analysis  
 Active Listening and Responding  
 Presence and Focus  
 Finding Love, Competition, Discoveries, and Game-playing in the Scene  
 The Moment Before  
 A Sense of Place

- The specific study of methodologies developed by Anne Bogart (Viewpoints) and Sanford Meisner.
- The task of self-direction
- Development of the actor's personal, individual work ethic and method of preparation and rehearsal for stage performance
- Continued practice of the self-tape audition

#### **IV. CONTENT OF MATERIAL**

Please be advised that this class contains the development of texts and actions that may be considered offensive to some. You may encounter literary points of view and language that differ from your own. 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 and to fulfill the actions the author describes. If there is any issue with this, please reach out to the professor privately.

#### **V. TEACHING METHODOLOGY**

The course will be taught through a combination of lectures discussing the history and content of various methods, group discussion, analysis of text, peer and instructor observations, scene performance and critique, class exercises, and written analysis of the work.

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 and comfort.

## **VI. 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. As this is a class for the advanced actor, students are expected to honor all of the same protocols of respect and support that were established in the Realism I and Audition courses. If the student needs to review these protocols or be reminded of them, they should reach out to the professor about this.

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

I AM SURE YOU ARE AWARE THAT I DISLIKE STUDENTS CHECKING THEIR CELL PHONES DURING CLASS. THIS IS TRUE. PLEASE DO NOT ASSUME THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO YOU. IT DOES. I FIND THIS DISRESPECTFUL TO THE CLASS, THE PROCESS, AND OTHER ACTORS. I ACTUALLY DO NOT EXPECT THIS TO BE AN ISSUE OF ANY KIND WITH A CLASS AT THIS LEVEL

### **COMMUNICATION**

Information regarding the course will be distributed in class, via email (which is to be checked regularly—YOUR responsibility), on Canvas, or through messages from a 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. Professional actors in the current state of the industry MUST stay on top of communication and reply promptly. Otherwise, the business will pass you by.

As a rule, I will send you a follow-up email after every class explaining what is expected of you before our next class meeting. It is your responsibility to read these thoughtfully. As a result, an insistence that you were “not aware” of something will not be appropriate in this class.

## **VII. TEXTS**

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Esper, William and Dimarco, Damon. *The Actor's Art and Craft: William Esper Teaches the Meisner Technique*. Anchor Books.

**\*\***You will also need a notebook of some kind for recording observations and class notes. In addition, students will need to have the capability to film their own scenes for personal observation and self-critique.

## VIII. GRADING

Your grade for the semester will be determined by your accrual of the number of points (out of 100) achieved in various aspects of **TEXTBOOK QUIZZES, SCENE STUDY, FINAL EXAMS (both performed and written), and ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY.**

### CLASS EXERCISES

Our methodologies will be accompanied by various exercises to be done in class. All students are expected to participate in these.

### TEXTBOOK QUIZZES

You will have assigned readings from our class textbook. A grade of A or B on these earns the student **TWO (2) POINTS** for a total of **TEN (10) POINTS.**

### SCENE STUDY

The class will complete several finished performances of **THREE** scenes to be presented in class, with students doing several passes on each of these. All of these performances must be completed in order to pass the course, and students can earn a maximum of **TWENTY-FIVE (25) POINTS** for each scene, *based on the evaluation of the FINAL PASS*, for a total of **SEVENTY-FIVE (75) POINTS.**

For some of these performances, I will make myself available to you for private coaching to assist in blocking, text work, and performance skills on your scene. Students must be OFF BOOK when requested.

Rehearsals with your partner are your responsibility, with an expectation of both in-class and independent rehearsals. A scene which is clearly not ready to be performed because one of both of the actors are not prepared will be stopped, with a resulting loss of points on the overall scene score.

This is an advanced, honors acting class reserved for students who have demonstrated that they are capable of the time management, responsibility, and accountability that the profession demands. You will be expected to organize your own rehearsals outside of class and find your own rehearsal space. Make sure that times and places are clearly decided upon. Once a rehearsal is set, you must be there, as the other actor is affected by your punctuality and presence.

**If any actor encounters problematic absence, lateness, or any other issue with a partner, you must contact me immediately.** I absolutely understand that a lack of preparation may be the fault of one actor and not the other, so PLEASE MAKE ME AWARE IMMEDIATELY if there is a problem in this area. *I cannot help you if you do not let me know.* If you wait until the actual day of your performance or after the fact to inform me of a problem, it will be too late, and BOTH actors in the scene will be given the consequence. Take responsibility for your own performances by making me aware of any difficulties you are experiencing. In all sincerity—I would not expect, at this level, that these work ethic issues should be a problem. If they were, you would not be in this class.

Rehearsal set pieces, costumes, hairstyles/make-up, sound cues, and props, as needed, are also YOUR responsibility. In particular, one of the major lessons the course reinforces is that appropriate wardrobe, physical look, and props are critical to the truthful creation of that scene. You have already observed this repeatedly in both Realism I and Audition for the Stage. If you do not own something that would be appropriate for your scene or character, it is your responsibility to acquire it.

As you observed in THEA 3700 Audition for the Stage, the preparation is of as much value as the execution. The points earned for your Scene Study will be based in four areas:

**--SUBMISSION OF TEXT WORK (5 POINTS)**

Due by midnight on the day before the student's assigned TEXT WORK day.

**--SUBMISSION OF RECORDED REHEARSAL (5 POINTS)**

Due by midnight on the day before the FINAL PASS.

**--CREATIVE CONTENT OF THE SCENE WORK (10 POINTS)**

***PREPARATION:***

- Scenery, props, costumes, personal appearance, and possibly even minor technical effects (such as sound cues) as demanded by the scene
- Staging and lines solidly delivered *as the author wrote them*, free of paraphrasing, ad libs, hesitation, or prompting.
- **SUFFICIENT REHEARSAL**

***VOCAL SKILL:***

- Well-supported sound, free of tension
- **HEARD AND UNDERSTOOD**
- Vocal quality consistent with the character
- Variety in pitch, rhythm, vocal quality, and dynamics
- Effective use of the words themselves

***PHYSICAL SKILL:***

- Relaxed and free of the actor's own personal tensions, default gestures, and habits
- Connected to the destination, intentions, and responses of the character

***UNDERSTANDING AND USE OF THE TEXT:***

- Full understanding of the content of what the character is saying
- Grasp of subtext
- Full understanding of what the individual words actually mean (and how they are **PRONOUNCED**)
- Implementation of discoveries made during text work

***INTENTION & OBJECTIVE:***

- Connection to objectives and tactics and how they change through the arc of the scene

***BELIEVABILITY & EMOTIONAL TRUTH/INVESTMENT:***

- Connection to the emotional life of the character on a truthful level
- Becoming the character as opposed to just “acting” it
- Thinking like the character
- Openness to spontaneity in performance as opposed to a rehearsed, recited, or rote performance

***CONNECTION TO THE OTHER ACTOR:***

- genuine, truthful listening and responding to what you are given
- sending and receiving of information
- cue pick up (and natural overlap, if appropriate)
- effective use of pauses

***TAKING DIRECTION & APPLICATION OF CONCEPTS:***

- Application of the concepts learned in the curriculum
- Taking the direction given by the professor in rehearsals and applying it to the final performance<sup>4</sup>.

**SUBMISSION OF SELF-CRITIQUE (5 POINTS)****FINAL EXAM (TAPED SUBMISSION)**

With the realization that our industry is so rooted in the actor’s ability to complete effective audition self-tapes, it is in the best interest of career readiness to practice the skill you learned in THEA 3700 Audition for the Stage. Thus, students will complete one of these as the Final Exam of the semester. This assignment is worth **TEN (10) points**. A rubric for this assignment can be found on Canvas.

**FINAL EXAM (WRITTEN)**

Students will complete a written Final Exam as a semester reflection on the work done in the class. This is worth **FIVE (5) POINTS**. If a student does not turn this in by the due date (**5:00p on Friday of Finals Week—a strict university deadline for submission of all work from the semester**), this is a choice to forfeit credit for the work.

**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 is the official policy for all acting courses in the UNT Department of Dance and Theatre which meet two days per week:

- 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. A student who reaches this status has the option to withdraw from the class.
- *If the student accrues the fourth absence AFTER the last date on which they may withdraw from the course (FRIDAY, APRIL 10), that will result in a lowering of one letter grade in the class. If yet another absence occurs in that time period, this will result in a lowering of yet another letter grade.*

The policy is not negotiable, as that would constitute holding one student to a different standard than all other students in all acting classes.

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...***

*I am very aware that the unexpected comes up in life, and in many instances, this 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, doctor appointments, inability to find a parking space, unavoidable commitments, weather, etc.). All of these things could occur during the semester (even a couple of times). Changing the policy for you means that it must, in the interest of fairness and consistency, be changed for students in all acting classes. The attendance policy already allows for the fact that you might need to miss a class or two. However, there have to be limits, particularly since your absence will very possibly 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 be there ON TIME) if you wish to get and keep the job. The industry will not adjust itself to accommodate your life, so it is wise to get used to that and lose any expectation that it will. That is just the reality. I would expect that students operating at the level of this course would*

*already completely get that, though.*

### **OVERVIEW OF POINT VALUES FOR COURSE WORK**

READING QUIZZES	5 @ 2 points each	10 points
SCENE STUDY	3 @ 25 points each	75 points
FINAL EXAM (TAPED SUBMISSION)		10 points
FINAL EXAM (WRITTEN)		<u>5 points</u>
		100 points

**ONCE YOUR POINTS EARNED FOR THE SEMESTER ARE DETERMINED, THAT NUMERICAL GRADE CORRESPONDS TO A LETTER GRADE FOR THE COURSE AS FOLLOWS:**

<b>A</b>	<b>90 or higher</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>80 – 89</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>70 – 79</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>60 – 69</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>59 or below</b>

### **IX. 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” or if I can “work with you.” Your grade is based on the criteria set forth in this syllabus.

### **X. 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 April 11, 2026.

### **XI. 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 Friday, April 10, 2026.

## **XII. 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. I would not count on this happening, though.

## **XIII. LAST DAY OF CLASS/FINAL EXAM DATES**

Our last regular class meeting is Thursday, April 30. The Final Exam will take place on Tuesday, May 4 from 8:00a – 9:30a. 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.

## **XIV. 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 12 or more of the students are interested/available and have participated in the university feedback for the class*. Attendance at this *post mortem* is NOT mandatory and will have no effect on the student’s grade.

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

Dance & Theatre 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.

## **XVI. 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.

## **XVII. 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.

## **XVIII. 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).

## **XIX. GUIDELINES FOR THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM**

Should online meetings of the class ever occur, it is expected that every student will practice virtual etiquette that is respectful to the class, the professor, and other students during these sessions. Adherence to appropriate virtual etiquette is factored into the student's grade. This includes the following:

- Log on at least a minute or two early; do not be surprised if you are counted late if you are not logged on to the virtual class when it starts.
- Do not attend class if you are unable to participate actively. Do not join the virtual classroom just to ignore it or walk away from it. If the instructor realizes this has occurred, your participation will be penalized, and you may be counted absent.
- Do not attend virtual class from your bed. While this is a virtual space, it is still a classroom. You will find it easier to pay attention, learn material, and complete your course work if you are seated at a table or desk.
- If you use a profile picture in virtual classroom, it should be a classroom-appropriate photo.
- Mute yourself unless you are making a presentation to the class or the instructor is seeking questions/comments from the class. For users in virtual classroom, the space bar acts as a quick unmute—press it down to speak on mic, then release the space bar to mute yourself again.
- You are expected to enable your video and remain on camera while class is in session, unless directed otherwise by the professor.
- Dress as if you are coming into a regular class.
- Make sure to illuminate your face with natural or artificial light so the instructor and others can see you clearly.
- Make sure there is nothing distracting or inappropriate in the background of your video feed.
- Try to avoid having other people enter and exit your frame to avoid distracting your classmates and instructor.
- If seeing yourself on camera distracts you, right-click on your own video feed in virtual classroom and choose HIDE SELF VIEW. This setting allows your instructor and classmates to see you, but you will not see yourself.
- Be careful when sharing your screen. You do not want your personal email, documents, or images to be displayed accidentally.
- Be aware everyone can see your messages in chat unless you have chosen to send the instructor a direct message. Private messages to other students are disabled to avoid distractions during class.
- Do not attend virtual class while operating a vehicle or doing anything else in which attending the virtual class at the same time may negatively impact your safety or the safety of others.

- Do not attend class in an unauthorized public space where others will see/hear the class. Your privacy and the privacy of your classmates is federally protected.
- If you know that you are unable to attend a class meeting, contact the instructor in advance to receive a recording of the class that you can watch later.
- Do not share the web URL for our virtual classroom class with anyone outside of class. If class is “virtual classroom bombed” because you shared the link, administration will be notified and will enact sanctions up to and including removal from the course and possible expulsion from the university.
- If the class is “bombed,” the instructor will first attempt to mute and boot the unwanted person from the meeting. If this is not possible or fails to stop the disruption, the instructor will end the meeting, create a new meeting link, and email it to you in short order.