**AUDITION FOR THE STAGE**

**THEA 3700-001**

**Spring 2025**

**THEA 3700-001**

**Tuesday/Thursday 8:30a – 10:50a**

**HOURS: 3:2**

**RTFP 130**

**3 Units**

**Professor Bob Hess**

**RTFP 231**

**Office Hours: Mondays - Thursdays 11:00a - 12:00p (by appointment, please)**

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

**PREREQUISITES**

THEA 3050 ACTING: REALISM I with a grade of B or higher. The student must also be a Theatre Major with a Concentration in Acting *unless special permission has been given by the professor*.

**This course is a core requirement for a Degree in Theatre with a Concentration in Acting.**

Students should note that THEA 3700 Audition for the Stage also serves as a prerequisite for:

* THEA 4050 Acting: Realism II
* THEA 4700 The Business of Acting

**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 of a live, in-person audition.

**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 procedures, preparation, strategies, protocol, and best practices of live, in-person auditions for the stage
* Examining what makes for an effective and appropriate audition monologue
* Creating a positive and memorable personal impression in the room as an actor
* Coping with the inevitable anxiety and rigor of the face-to-face audition process
* Auditioning with a scene partner using prepared sides, both with a fellow actor or assigned audition reader
* Time management and organizational skills of the career of a professional actor
* The videotaped audition submission
* 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, such as inclement weather, 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, focused observation of detail and nuance 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) texts 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 you may forfeit this privilege if I observe you sneaking alternate uses of the device in between the note taking. Video or audio recording of all lectures is permissible. Video or audio recording of student performances must be requested in advance and approved by the individual student.

**COMMUNICATION**

Information regarding the course will be distributed in class, via email (which is to be checked regularly—YOUR responsibility) or Canvas. 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.

A student in the class will be serving as Communication Liaison to for the semester to facilitate any direct, immediate communication that is necessary.

**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, as well as your own practices as an aspiring professional, will provide valuable insight. This requires a safe, non-threatening, 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 the number of points (out of 100) achieved from the following sources:**

* **QUIZZES**
* **MONOLOGUES**
* **AUDITION SCENES**
* **AUDITION DEMONSTRATION**
* **FINAL WRITTEN 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 (5) and the assigned plays (6). These quizzes are not particularly difficult, and a student who has thoughtfully read the text (and gone over the class notes on the reading assignment) 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, over 20% 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.

If a student misses a quiz due to absence, they may take it at the next class meeting.

***MONOLOGUES***

We will be exploring two one-minute monologues during the first month of the semester, one of which you are already familiar with (MONOLOGUE #1) and a second one that is brand new to you (MONOLOGUE #2). Thoughtful preparation and effort on these will earn the student 5 POINTS for the first monologue and 10 POINTS for the second, for a total of ***FIFTEEN POINTS***. The second monologue will involve a self-evaluation, due by midnight on the Sunday after a mock audition for our Guest Artist. A rubric of how these are graded is available to you on Canvas.

***AUDITION SCENES***

Without question, the best way to gain confidence and skill in the audition process is by repeating the process over and over as it would happen in a real-world context. Our class will complete a total of SIX 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, private appointments (or which you will, per the professional construct, sign up) and then review them in the succeeding class to discuss preparation, professionalism, effectiveness, and student growth. Your Final Exam audition scene will be done as an *independent taped audition submission*. The in-class scenes are worth ***EIGHT* *POINTS*** each. As it requires the employment of some additional skills, the taped audition submission is worth ***TEN POINTS***.

These auditions scenes will, as is evident, constitute half of your course grade. With each scene (except for the Final Exam taped submission scene), a portion of your points will be earned through a self-evaluation, due by midnight on the Sunday after auditions have been screened for the class. As adherence to deadlines is a key skill that the professional actor must understand, these will not be accepted late. A rubric of how the audition scenes are graded is available to you on Canvas.

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 and execute them, using strategies and methodologies that will be discussed in the course.

***AUDITION DEMONSTRATION***

Every actor in the class will be assigned ONE scene in which they will be designated as an AUDITION DEMONSTRATION actor. When the scene is worked on in class prior to audition appointments, these actors will be required to work the scene **OFF BOOK** before the class. This will be worth ***EIGHT POINTS***toward the semester grade. A rubric for how this assignment is graded is available to you on Canvas.

***WRITTEN FINAL SELF-EVALUATION***

At the completion of the semester, all actors will do a lookback over their work and complete a written self-analysis. The professor will provide prompts for this work on Canvas. 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:

ASSIGNMENT POINTS

* Quizzes (11 @ 2 points each, earned with a grade of B or better) 22
* Monologues #1 5
* Monologue #2 10
* Audition Demonstration 8
* Audition Scenes (5 @ 8 points each) 40
* Final Exam (Self- Taped Audition) 10
* Final Exam (Written) ­ \_\_\_ 5

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. Simply put, this is a medium that requires physical presence.

Furthermore, punctuality, presence, and timely adherence to deadlines **are part of the course content**, as these are all critical elements to be mastered for the process of an effective audition for the stage.

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 the student accrues the fourth absence AFTER the last date on which a student may withdraw, that will result in a lowering of one letter grade in the class. If yet another absence accrues in that time period, that will result in a lowering of yet another letter grade.***

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 NOTt negotiable, as that would constitute holding one student to a different standard than all other students in all acting classes.*** Please do not ask. I will, in fact, go so far as to notify you directly if you are on the verge of meeting any of the course limitations so you will have sufficient time to be vigilant about the issue.

The professor’s roll is the official record of absences and tardiness. **Students are also welcome to check with the professor AT ANY TIME 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 (maybe 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, and this would count as one of the EXCUSED absences you are allowed during the semester. Your absences and tardiness will be treated as the industry would treat them—they are permissible to a point.***

***There have to be limits. 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 get or keep the job. Putting it frankly, the industry will NOT accommodate your life. You must manage your time and life to accommodate the demands of the industry.***

**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. **Do not attempt to negotiate this with me, please.**

**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 12, 2025.

**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 April 11, 2025.

**CLASS CANCELLATION**

Because I continue to work as a professional actor in the Resident Acting 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 research requirement), 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. I can promise you that you will not show up to class to find a “class canceled” sign on the door.

**LAST DAY OF CLASS/FINAL EXAM DATES**

The last regular class meeting is Thursday May 1. The Final Exam will take place on Tuesday, May 6 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 not something over which I have control. The good news is that our Final involves a session of observing taped auditions.

**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 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](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).