

THEA 1050: Acting Fundamentals

Spring 2026

TuTh 9:00AM-10:50AM, DATH 131

Instructor Contact

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Course Description

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. Prerequisite(s) : Students majoring or minoring in theatre who have received a grade of C in this course, even if they are transferring it in, will be required to audition for consideration for enrollment in THEA 3050. Any student who receives a grade BELOW a C will be allowed to repeat the course one more time. Should the student repeat the course and receive a grade BELOW a C again, the student will no longer be able to continue in the performance concentration.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of basic acting terminology and technique
- Demonstrate basic physical, vocal, and mental skills needed to be a successful actor on the stage
- Identify the skills needed and demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively and work cooperatively with an ensemble
- Demonstrate the ability to create a believable character and engage with an audience.
- Demonstrate the ability to memorize lines and perform a script analysis.
- Begin to cultivate creativity and personal taste through exposure to a variety of theatrical pieces
- Practice giving and receiving constructive critique

Course Expectations

“Never come into the theatre with mud on your feet. Leave your dust and dirt outside. Check your little worries, squabbles, petty difficulties with your outside clothing -- all the things that ruin your life and draw your attention away from your art -- at the door.”

When in class, be present in class. You should be prepared to focus and engage with the work – please do not engage in outside work while in this space. Out of respect for your classmates, your professor, and your work, please refrain from being on your phone during class time. Wear comfortable clothing that allows you full range of movement. For presentation days, please plan to wear plain, neutral (black, grey, brown, monochrome) clothes that will not distract from your performance.

ADA Accommodations

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.

Please contact me at the start of the semester to discuss a plan for how I can help you best succeed in this course.

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 their 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.**

Class Conduct

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 may be referred to the Dean of Students 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.

View [UNT's Code of Student Conduct](#) to learn more.

The University of North Texas prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Please see additional UNT policies and procedures on the [Student Support Services & Policies](#) page.

Physical Contact: In my classroom, we are focused on creating a culture of consent. Movement may require physical contact at some point, but no contact should occur before a conversation is had between participants. This includes handshakes, pats on the back, shoving, kissing, etc. This is for everyone's safety and comfort. You are

always allowed to say no, and you may withdraw your consent at any time. Even in rehearsals when practicing something already blocked, it is important to check in with your scene partners each time to ensure clear and consistent communication.

Sexual Assault Prevention: UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648.

Sensitive Subject Matter: In this course sensitive subject matters may be discussed in this class. Everyone is expected to treat these moments with the sensitivity and respect they deserve. Racist, misogynistic, homophobic, or any other form of hateful language/action is disruptive and will not be tolerated. Anyone who finds it difficult to act respectfully toward their classmates and the subject matter will be asked to leave the class and will forfeit the participation points for the day.

Academic Integrity

UNT Honor Code: *"I commit myself to honor, integrity, and responsibility as a student representing the University of North Texas community. I understand and pledge to uphold academic integrity as set forth by UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy, 06.003. I affirm that the work I submit will always be my own, and the support I provide and receive will always be honorable."*

See UNT Policy [06.003. Student Academic Integrity](#)

Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship.

Unless explicitly stated otherwise, the submission of AI-generated work is not accepted in this course. Any violation of this will result in a full loss of points for the assignment.

When considering whether to use AI tools in your studies, please consider these guiding principles laid out by the university:

- **Be Transparent** - Clearly disclose when AI tools are used to generate content, make decisions, or assist in communication.
- **Ensure Accountability** - Take full responsibility for any AI-assisted work; do not blame the tool for errors or harmful outcomes.
- **Fact-Check AI Outputs** - Always verify the accuracy and reliability of information produced by AI, especially in research, education, and public communication.
- **Maintain Academic and Professional Integrity** - Do not use AI to cheat, plagiarize, or misrepresent knowledge or work. Follow institutional policies on AI use.
- **Credit and Cite Appropriately** - Acknowledge use of AI tools when relevant, and cite sources if AI outputs include or are based on third-party content.
- **Hallucinations and Fabricated Information** - Generative AI tools may produce content that sounds plausible but is factually incorrect or entirely made up.
- **Lack of True Understanding** - AI tools do not comprehend meaning or context the way humans do—it predicts text based on patterns in data.
- **Bias in Outputs** - AI can reflect or amplify social, cultural, or data-based biases present in its training data.

See UNT [AI policy and FAQs](#)

Student Perceptions of Teaching: 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.

Attendance and Tardies

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

Students are allowed no more than a total of **three** absences during the semester. A **fourth** absence is grounds for the student to earn an F for the course. Following receipt of this syllabus, you will be asked to sign your acknowledgement and agreement to this policy.

Keep in mind that we only meet twice a week – four absences is equal to missing two weeks of class!

Tardy Policy

In the theater there is a basic expectation for everyone involved in production to be ready to work **on time**. We will mirror this expectation in this class. Walking in right at class start is **not** exemplifying this practice.

Three tardies equal one absence, which means you receive 0 points for every third time you are tardy. A tardy of more than fifteen minutes will be considered the same as an absence. The professor's rollsheets are the official record of absences and tardiness.

Grading

All written work will be submitted on specified due dates. Written work must be typed. Performances **will not be graded** without accompanying written work. AI-generated work, in whole or in part, will receive a grade of 0.

As your written assignments will complement the work you are demonstrating to the class in your performance, there is **no late work accepted**.

This course is the foundation you will build upon as you continue in your acting studies. As such, attendance and participation is expected, and will account for a large portion of your final grade.

Acting Fundamentals is a chance for you to learn and work on the craft of acting. As such, the work is as important as the final product. Acting performances are also somewhat subjective. To stress the importance of the process and ensure fairness, your classwork will be graded based on your entire process, rather than a single performance of a monologue/scene, according to the following criteria:

1. Class Participation & Effort
2. Completion of Assignments
3. Professionalism
4. Preparedness
5. Improvement
6. Collaboration with other actors (when applicable)

Notes on In-Class Coaching:

- Students not actively working are expected to take notes on what they observe in their classmates' work. Students may be called on at any point for their feedback or observations.
- You are encouraged to approach class openly and honestly. Be daring, make bold choices, and be willing to get it wrong.
- If you are scheduled to work in class that day and you are not prepared to work, you will be asked to sit down and will lose that day's points
- If you are scheduled to work in class that day and you have not read your play, you will be asked to sit down and will lose that day's points.
- If you miss a class when you are scheduled to perform you will receive **zero points** on the assignment.
- Only excused medical or emergency absences will be accepted, and evidence of such must be submitted in order to have the opportunity to make up for the coaching.

We are building an ensemble. Class time is everyone's time—coming to class unprepared, unable, or unwilling to work is unfair to everyone.

Grade Breakdown

Assignments	Point Value
Class Attendance and Daily Work (10 points x 30)	300 points
Monologue Paperwork	100 points
Monologue First Pass	25 points
Monologue Second Pass	25 points
Monologue Performance	100 points
Scene Paperwork (75 points x 2)	150 points
Scene First Pass (25 points x2)	50 points
Scene Second Pass (25 points x2)	50 points
Final Exam Scene Performance	200 points
Total Points Possible	1000 points

Final Grading Scale:

A: 900-1000 points

B: 800-899 points

C: 700-799 points

D: 600-699 points

F: 599 points or below

Course Assignments

Audition Monologue

You will choose a contemporary monologue to work on and perform this semester. Monologues must be from a play published in the last 15 years, and should be age and type appropriate. It is recommended you choose pieces that are new to you and that are intriguing to you in some way. You will study the piece, which includes reading the play it is from, and writing a character analysis. You will work some text in front of the class off-book, and finally you will perform the monologue off-book during class in front of your peers. Your Monologue Paperwork will be due at final presentations.

Scene Work

For this course, you will perform two scenes. One scene should be from a 19th century, European play. The second scene will be from a 20th century, American play..

Find a 2–3-person scene of your choosing that has strong roles for the entire group. Make sure to **thoroughly read the play** so that you understand where your character fits into the story

You will work 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. Your Scene Paperwork will be due at final presentations.

Presentation Expectations

Here is a breakdown of what is expected of you during in-class coachings:

First Pass

- Script analysis started; you are ready for examination and defense
- Verbally demonstrate your play/scene analysis in class.
- Give an informed and impassioned reading. You are expected to show:
 - a. beginning character analysis,
 - b. beginning physical and vocal characterization,
 - c. knowledge of all words and meaning of phrases,
 - d. use the language,
 - e. ability to mean what you say,
 - f. awareness of builds, topping and cutbacks, and
 - g. emotional commitment to the actions and objectives.

Second Pass

- Demonstration of a fully memorized script**
- Demonstration of 70% performance commitment to the character, “given circumstances” and style of the play.

**failure to be off-book for second pass will result in a zero for the exercise

Final Pass

- Demonstration of a fully memorized script.
- Demonstration of performance level physical and vocal characterization.
- Demonstration of performance level emotional commitment to the situation
- Demonstration of performance level playing of actions and bold choices.

Rough Course Schedule

* subject to change

- 1/13** - Class introductions and syllabus. What is acting?
- 1/15** - Acting exercises and intro to acting theory: the Stanislavsky Method
- 1/20** - Character Typing; Acting exercises: objective, given circumstances, want/need
- 1/23** - Open Scenes
- 1/27** - Open Scenes
- 1/29** - Open Scene showcase; Monologues due (printed and given to professor)
- 2/3** - Workshop moment before and solidify your 1, 2, 3
- 2/5** - Workshop moment before and solidify your 1, 2, 3
- 2/10** - Monologue First Pass / Coaching
- 2/12** - Monologue First Pass / Coaching
- 2/17** - 9 Questions & object exercises
- 2/19** - Monologue Second Pass
- 2/24** - Object exercises cont, working the Slate
- 2/26** - Acting theory: Meisner exercises, the Pinch
- 3/3** - Creating the space and entering the scene
- 3/5** - Monologue Final Pass; Monologue Paperwork due (midterm grade)

March 9th - 13th: Spring Break

- 3/17** - Starting the scene (first 10 lines); Scene 1 scripts due
- 3/19** - Starting the scene (first 10 lines)
- 3/24** - Scene 1 First Pass / Coaching
- 3/26** - Scene 1 First Pass / Coaching
- 3/31** - Rehearsal time - Scene 1
- 4/2** - Scene 1 Second Pass
- 4/7** - Scene 2 scripts due, starting the scene (first 10 lines)
- 4/9** - Scene 2 First Pass/Coaching
- 4/14** - Scene 2 First Pass/Coaching
- 4/16** - Rehearsal Time - Scene 2
- 4/21** - Scene 2 Second Pass
- 4/23** - Rehearsal time (½ class Scene 1, ½ class Scene 2)
- 4/28** - Rehearsal time (½ class Scene 1, ½ class Scene 2)
- 4/30** - Scene 1 & 2 Final Showcase; Scene Paperwork due (final grade)