

Fall 2015

FTA 1300

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Acting I 1300
Department of Film and Theatre
Course Syllabus: Spring 2015

Instructor: Sarah Beth James

Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. or by appointment

Office Location: PAC 351

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Learning Objectives

- To make the student aware of some of the methods actors utilize to define characters; to learn techniques of bringing organic life to a role through the use of exercises, improvisations, and limited work in scenes and monologues from scripted material.
- To give the student an awareness of body and voice. To identify vocal and physical needs and to use techniques to help address such needs.
- To help students learn the basic principles of acting and its artistry.

Grading Considerations

Verbal Class Participation (discussions and critiques) 10%

Assignments (monologues, scenes, improvisations) 75%

- Each assignment must be prepared with understanding and thoroughness. Prepared means that the material is carefully thought through, rehearsed (when necessary), and lines must be learned and developed to the point that they are delivered effectively.
- Each assignment must be ready on the date it is assigned as due.
- Inadequately prepared material will be stopped and no credit will be given for that assignment.
- It is not possible to make up assignments.

Written Assignments (papers, handouts, etc.) 10%

- Written assignments must be handed in on time on the date it is assigned as due. Written assignments turned in late may be refused with no credit given.

Discipline 5%

- Good rehearsal and class discipline requires promptness, courtesy, and a high level of concentration.

Your initiative, enthusiasm, and willingness to explore unfamiliar ground.

The commitment to and quality of your warm-up.

Evaluation of your execution of all exercises and assignments.

Auditioning for a UNO mainstage production is highly encouraged.

Attendance Policy

- Attendance to all classes is required. This is part of departmental policy for Film and Theatre classes.
- Promptness is required. Three late arrivals will be counted as one absence.

- If you accumulate three (3) absences, you cannot earn an A in the course.
- If you accumulate five (5) absences, you cannot earn a B in the course.
- If you accumulate 7 absences, you cannot pass the course.
- Rehearsal attendance is required. Please be courteous to your scene partner(s) and respect their time and work by showing up to rehearsals prompt, prepared, and focused. If you miss more than two (2) rehearsals scheduled with your partner(s), it may result in your receiving no credit for the assignment.

Final Examination

Since you will be examined on a rather constant basis, there will be no formal final written examination. Bear in mind, since this is a growth course, the quality of your work later in the semester will carry more weight toward your final grade than the quality of the work in the earlier part of the semester. You cannot do high quality work toward the end of the course unless you work hard during the early part. It is fair to say that, for grading purposes, your industry during the early part of the semester will be taken into consideration more than the quality, and during the latter part of the semester, both industry and quality will be thoroughly considered. Your final project or presentation will weigh heavily on your grade since it should reflect a culmination of all of your work in the course. **The final project will be your presentation of a scripted monologue or scene.**

The Group Experience

Beyond all these policies, this is a course built around the group experience. If a part of the group is missing, or late, part of the experience is missing. The absentee misses it and those present miss the absentee's experience. The group dynamic will suffer. The work in this class cannot be made up. Time and experience lost is time and experience lost forever. In classes (like this one) in which you are dependent upon each other for your growth, it is essential to require each student to abide by schedules and to cooperate fully and openly. Your responsibility extends beyond yourself.

Required Reading

- **The plays from which your monologue and scene are taken. You cannot fully understand a character without seeing their progression throughout the story.**

Recommended Reading

- A Practical Handbook for the Actor – Bruder, Melissa and Others
- The Great Acting Teachers and Their Methods – Brestoff, Richard
- Sanford Meisner On Acting – Meisner, Sanford and Longwell, Dennis
- Actions: The Actors' Thesaurus – Caldarone, Marina and Lloyd-Williams, Maggie

Course Content

- Warm-Ups: Physical and Vocal

- Improvisations: Various Group Exercises
- Elliptical Scenes
- Scripted Monologue
- Scripted Scene Study
- Character and Scene Analysis
- Production Attendance and Critique
- Required Readings
- Final Exam Presentation

Other Assignments such as journals, exercises, written and reading assignments, production attendance, etc. may be given throughout the course of the semester at the discretion of your instructor. The above content list is a reflection of the minimum work covered by all students enrolled in FTCA 1300.

Physical Contact

It may be necessary for me (your instructor) to make physical contact with you to determine breathing, muscle tension, etc. If this ever makes you uncomfortable, please let me know immediately.

Policies

- Be in class ON TIME.
- Turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices before entering the classroom.
- Feel free to ask me (your instructor) questions during class. Do not ask other students.
- Do not eat or drink anything in the theatre except bottled water.
- Make sure all trash and belongings are removed after each class.
- Civility and respect for the opinions of others is imperative in an academic environment – especially in a performance class. Courtesy is respected. Disrespectful or disturbing behavior will not be tolerated.
- You are expected to prepare for each class and be ready for active engagement with the instructor and classmates when called upon.
- Warm-ups are mandatory. Always wear comfortable, flexible clothing that can get dirty.
- Production values in scene, improvisation, and monologue work is de-emphasized. Elaborate sets, costumes, and props are unnecessary. Emphasis is always in process and not production – let your work speak for itself.
- Lines for monologue and scene work must be memorized cold. That means they must be learned and developed to the point where you can deliver them effectively – beyond rote level. Work can only begin once lines are learned.
- Your instructor will provide dates and times of the productions you are required to attend. In addition, they can provide a written excuse for your employer if necessary.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the UNO Judicial Code for further information. The Code is available online at <http://www.uno.edu/~stlf/policy%20Manual/judicialcodept2.htm>.

Final Grade Reporting

Under no circumstance will final grades be posted in any manner or given out over the phone by the department or the instructor. You can learn of your final grade by calling the day after final grades are due to be submitted into the university or you can go online on that day. Look in your class bulletin for the final grade due date.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who qualify for services will receive the academic modifications for which they are legally entitled. It is the responsibility of the student to register with the Office of Disability Services (UC 260) each semester and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance.

Important dates to remember will be provided in a separate document.

See Academic Calendar Spring 2015 at www.uno.edu for academic deadlines.

I, _____, have read and understood the policies and requirements stated above in the Acting I 1300 Spring 2015 Course Syllabus – (Instructor: Sarah Beth James).

Signature _____ Date Signed _____