

Acting I
(Beginning Technique Class)
Theatre 164.04
MWF 12:00-12:50pm
Fall 2007

Thomas Prior, Instructor
Office Hours: MWF 1:30-3:30pm / TTh By appt.
Office Location: UTC-112
Phone: 294-1328
Email: TomPrior@shsu.edu

***THIS SYLLABUS, SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GRADES CAN
BE FOUND ON THE BLACKBOARD WEBSITE-PLEASE CHECK IT FREQUENTLY!***

<http://blackboard.shsu.edu>

Required Text: *Practical Handbook for the Actor* (Melissa Bruder, et al) In campus bookstore

Class objective:

To learn a *beginning* acting technique; i.e. the skills and tools necessary for *introductory* scene work. We will be delving into exercises and studying theories of Stanislavski, Meisner, and other important acting innovators throughout the semester. We will be studying subjects such as breaking scenes into beats, intentions/motivation of character, talking and listening onstage and making strong and creative choices.

This is not a lecture class. We will be 'discussing' different viewpoints of important teachers and actors (Stanislavski, Meisner, Hagen, Lewis, etc.). These discussions, requiring active participation of each student, are not constructed towards a test, but towards student implementation in their work onstage.

Attendance: Please be here on time ready to work! You can be absent 4 times without penalty. ***Each absence after 4 will result in a five (5) point drop in your FINAL cumulative grade.***

Classroom Attire: Please wear clothes that you feel comfortable moving in. Loose fitting clothing such as sweatpants and T-shirts are best.

Classroom Etiquette: This class is a CELL PHONE AND PAGER FREE ZONE!! Turn them off when you walk through the door!!

Course Requirements

1. Participation:

ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL ACTIVITIES AND EXERCISES AND DISCUSSIONS. This is very important to your grade. Participation (and I mean active participation) is **vital** in this class! ***Attendance will tie into this grade as well.***

Exciting, breathing, vibrant theatre is not possible without *everyone* contributing artistically: giving his or her own 'creative' input. Evaluations will be made on all exercises and scene work. This evaluation also expands to the day-to-day involvement of each student.

2. Alone in your Room exercise We will begin by looking at a glossed-over subject in acting classes today: text analysis. We will discuss David Ball's book Backwards and Forwards (not a required textbook) while concurrently delving into Stanislavski's teachings and examining an exercise called "Alone in your Room."

3. Monologue Work. Each student will begin building their monologue repertoire over the course of the semester. You will be working on two monologues in class, but will choose a total of four, one from each of the following categories (the playwrights cited are examples only) You will compile your monologues in a binder at the end of the semester.

- Modern comedy---1950 to present-- Martin, Jane Martin, Henley, Durang,
- Modern serious---1950 to present --Mamet, Blessing, Horton Foote
- Modern edgy---Guare, Bogosian
- Modern Classic---1900 to 1950---Miller, Williams, O'Neill, Odets

4. Scene work. Various exercises will be employed throughout the semester to lead the student to understand basic concepts and techniques. These exercises will be the stepping-stone for scene work. Each student will be required to perform in a two-person scene provided by the instructor. The scene will be performed four times, three times to workshop and evaluate progress. Students will be given an evaluation after each time the scene is workshopped in class. You will need to fill out a "Rehearsal Information Sheet" for each rehearsal. These will be available on Blackboard.

ROUND FOUR OF THE SCENES WILL COUNT AS THE FINAL. It will be a 'performance level' attack at the scene, with *suggested* costumes and props. It will be the culmination of all the techniques learned throughout the semester.

****All performance assignments will be scheduled in a particular order, if a student is ABSENT on a performance day, HE/SHE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE UP THIS PERFORMANCE ASSIGNMENT. In the event the performance is a 2-person scene, and one of the partners is absent, students are instructed to bring a copy of their scene so that another student may read in the missing character. The absent student WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE UP THIS PERFORMANCE GRADE.**

5. Department Production Critique: Learn by viewing: Students will be required to attend two (2) Department of Theatre & Dance productions this semester and write a critique of them. These papers should be a critique on the acting; i.e., what worked, what didn't work and a support of your assertions with classroom vocabulary and terms. The critiques should be typed, minimum three pages in length, double-spaced, 12 point font. Critiques are due the Monday class after the show closes, at the *beginning of class*. **NO CRITIQUES WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS TIME.** You may send your critique via Safeassign on Blackboard, provided that it is in Microsoft Word format.

If you need to contact me, you can email me (I check it twice a day, sometimes more), or leave me a voice message at the above number. *Please do not hesitate to contact me regarding questions on class activities or scenes throughout the semester.*

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy A student desiring to miss a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) should present a written statement concerning the religious holiday to me in the *first fifteen days of the semester*. I will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

Americans with Disabilities Act SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may adversely affect your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk to me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center by calling (936) 294-1720.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation	20 %
Alone in your Room Exercise	10%
Monologue Work	15%
Scene Work	20%
Two Critiques	15%
Final	20%

RECOMMENDED READING

<u>An Actor Prepares</u>	Constantin Stanislavski
<u>On Acting</u>	Sanford Meisner
<u>Respect for Acting</u>	Uta Hagen
<u>Backwards and Forwards</u>	David Ball
<u>Method-Or Madness</u>	Robert Lewis
<u>The Actor's Ways and Means</u>	Michael Redgrave
<u>True and False</u>	David Mamet
<u>A Dream of Passion</u>	Lee Strasberg
<u>Acting One</u>	Robert Cohen
<u>Audition</u>	Michael Shurtleff