

COURSE SYLLABUS

THR 268.01

ACTING II

3 credit hours

Spring 2008

UTC Room 151

THR 268.01: Noon to 12:50 p.m. M-W-F

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Office Hours: 2 to 4 p.m.

Please make appointments.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course concentrates on techniques of freeing the body, body language and movement in the development of characterization for actors in a variety of roles. The prerequisite is THR164 (Acting I) or consent of the instructor. The basics of psycho-physical connection in acting technique will be taught through a variety of lectures, class discussion, critiques of performances, demonstrations, research, team work and class exercises. Projects will include performance of 2 major scripted scenes, one major rehearsed improvisational body language scene, one musical or monologue solo presentation, one solo mask presentation created by the student, one group movement poem piece, and a final. All scripted scenes are 5 to 7 minutes in length. The body language scene is up to 4 minutes in length. The musical/monologue is up to 2 minutes in length. The Shakespeare monologue is up to 2 minutes in length. The mask performance is 3-5 minutes in length and requires a full-face mask created by the student. The movement poem is up to 4 minutes. The first scripted scene **MUST** be accompanied by a typed glossary of words needing definition for the scene and a typed research page reporting on the character, period or mise-en-scene. A form will be provided by the instructor. A typed glossary of necessary definitions for all scenes or monologues is required. In addition, a list of questions the performers hope to answer is due for the second scripted scene. An audition monologue notebook must be developed and turned in as well.

For the final, the student has an option of presenting either two contrasting monologues (one may be musical in nature) or a monologue and a contrasting duet scene. The final should showcase the actor's growth and performance range and be up to 6 minutes in length. If a duet scene is performed, half the performance time is credited to each performer. If you are new to our theatre program, a 3-ring notebook of a minimum of 9 audition monologues (2 each under the headings: Modern Comedy, Modern Serious, Modern Edgy and Modern Classic and at least one under the heading Period Classical) appropriate to your age range, gender and appearance will be turned in for a grade as well. If you have taken See Tentative Daily Schedule for dates of assignments.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon course completion the student should

- have an understanding of a variety of techniques for freeing the body
- have a basic understanding of body language under a variety of conditions
- have a greater self-awareness relating to his/her personal body attitude
- have improved postural alignment, and gestural freedom
- and have made a connection between skills listed above and their application to a variety of acting scenes
- have used basic research methods to improve scene work
- have a repertoire of appropriate audition monologues available
- and have a solid basic approach to discovering and developing the psycho-physical elements of characterization

TEXTBOOKS

No textbook is required. Instead the instructor will provide handouts. Students may find the text, A Movement Approach to Acting, helpful. It is published by Prentice-Hall. The author is Nancy R. King. This text is not available at the campus bookstore. The student is expected to use a minimum of 3 books and/or periodicals for the research assignment for the first scripted scene!!!!!! Additional sources may be used including the internet.

REQUIRED SUPPLIES

- Paper necessary to fulfill typed assignments
- 3-ring notebook (slim)
- Supplies for making a full-face mask. Masks may be paper-mache, plastic or a variety of other lightweight materials. Decorative elements may include paint, beads, glitter, feathers, etc. depending on the student's creative vision and needs. Be creative. You don't need to spend a lot of money.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Students will need a copy of each play from which a scripted scene has been chosen for performance. **THE ENTIRE PLAY MUST BE READ BY THE STUDENT BEFORE PERFORMANCE OF THE SCENE.**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

After 4 absences in a M-day class, any additional absences will cause a 2-point cut each in the overall semester grade. Absences for approved school business will not be treated as absences. Validated written excuse signed by medical personnel are mandatory if absences due to illness are to be excused for a performance assignment. Proof of absence due to family emergency is necessary if the absence is to be excused. The nature of this proof may be negotiated with the instructor. Auditions out-of-town are not excused unless negotiated with the professor in advance. **PERFORMANCES SHOULD GO UP AT SCHEDULED TIMES.** Should a postponement due to validated illness, for example, be allowed, **no** assignment may be postponed twice! If a duet assignment or group assignment is postponed due to the excused absence of a performer, no grade cut will be issued. If, however, the duet or group performance is postponed due to an unexcused absence by a performer, that performer will receive a 10 point cut on the performance grade. Note also there is a 10 point assignment grade cut for unexcused absences on in-class rehearsal days which are indicated on the Tentative Daily Schedule. 3 tardies will be treated as an absence and cause a 3 point cut in the semester grade. Failure to attend the entire final without permission from the professor will cause a "0" for the final exam grade. Do not make doctor's appointments during exams unless there is an emergency. Theatre majors **MUST** attend all UTC Season productions. Others are asked to attend 2 productions which will be free.

ASSIGNMENTS

- 2 SCRIPTED DUET SCENES (5 TO 7 MINUTES)
- 1 MUSICAL/MONOLOGUE (2 MINUTES) May be Shakespeare
- 1 IMPROVISATIONAL BODY LANGUAGE SCENE (UP TO 4 MINUTES)
- 1 group movement poem performance (4 minutes)
- 1 solo mask performance created by student (3 to 5 minutes)
- 1 typed page sources and research report for first scripted scene
- Typed glossary for each performance except mask assignment
- Typed list of questions to be answered by performance of second scripted scene

- 1 3-ring notebook of audition monologues selected by the student Headings: Modern Comedy, Modern Serious, Classical Comedy, Classical Tragedy, Modern Edgey
- Handouts will be provided for most assignments
- In class exercises

EXAMS

Final exam will require typed glossary for all scenes/monologues. Student may perform 2 contrasting monologues not to exceed 6 minutes or a monologue and contrasting duet. If a duet scene is performed, half of the performance times is credited to each performer. The overall time limit is 6 minutes for a monologue and duet as well. If performing two solos, one may be a highly physicalized song if the student sings well, please. **RECORDED OR LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT IS REQUIRED.**

GRADING PLAN

Naturally, in a performance-oriented course, grading is potentially highly subjective because a value judgment must be made. The student will be graded on scenes and solos with a grading form which breaks down all areas of performance with a point system. A copy of this form will be provided to the student before performance. Failure to read the entire play from which a scene or monologue is taken will result in a 40 point cut on the assignment grade. Performers should sign a statement that they have read the entire play. The instructor will explain primary grading emphasis for each assignment. Verbal critiques will also be provided. Two major scripted scenes will count as double grades as well as the final. All other assignments including the monologue notebook will receive single grades. Grades are given on 10 point scale, i.e. 90-100 is an "A," 80 to 89 is a "B," 70 to 79 is a "C," 60 to 69 is a "D," 1 to 59 is an "F." Remember absences may negatively impact on your grades. See Attendance Policy above. **COME TO CLASS.**

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experience both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to cheating on an examination or any other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource material. In particular falsification of research sources, failure to read entire plays from which scenes are taken for performance, and any form of prompting or hidden cue cards are of particular concern. Failure to read entire play will result in a 40 point cut on the assignment. Falsification of research sources, use of hidden cue cards will result in a "**0**" ON THE PERFORMANCE. Penalties for cheating will be severe grade cuts as well.

RULES OF CONDUCT

Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and thus impedes the mission of the university. Cellular phones and pagers must be turned off before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks (no cursing except in scenes, please) reading newspapers, working on materials for other classes, sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing or engaging in other forms of distraction. **GENTLEMEN PLEASE REMOVE YOUR CAPS.** Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave the class. Students who are especially disruptive may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom and must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified disabled individual shall, solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in , be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic or Student Life program or activity. Disabled students may request assistance with academically related problems stemming from individual disabilities by contacting the Director of the Counseling Center in the Lee Drain Annex or by calling (936)294-1720.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

University policy states that a student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day must be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. Students must be excused to travel for observance of a religious holy day. A student who wishes to be excused for a religious holy day **MUST** present the instructor with a written statement describing the holy day(s) and the travel involved. The instructor shall provide the student with a written description of the deadline for completion of missed exams or assignments.

STUDIO WORK

Students wishing additional help in preparing scenes and solos are encouraged to make appointments with the instructor for times outside the class well in advance of performance. It is preferred that material be memorized and rehearsed prior to the appointment with the instructor.

MISSION

Be competitive! I want to see your best work. Keep some images of magnificence in all your work. Participate in class discussions and critiques. I am interested in your opinions of your own work/art and that of your classmates.

Be a good duet partner. **Be prepared. Be passionate. Be courageous. ACT!!**