

TTh 9:30-10:50am
Spring 2008
Office hours: By appointment
Office Location: UTC-112

Tom Prior, Instructor
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Class Location: UTC-151

Auditioning for the Commercial Theatre

THR 432.01

Course Syllabus

This is a writing intensive course

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

<http://blackboard.shsu.edu>

Required Reading:

Acting as a Business, Brian O'Neill (3rd Edition) Available in the bookstore.

Backstage: The Actor's Resource, Acting Trade Publication—Available in theatre office or ONLINE!!

Course Description:

A “hands on” course designed to show the student actor the importance of professional audition techniques and to foster an understanding of the *business* side of this art form. This course will help the student prepare the basic tools of marketing and self-promotion (auditions—monologues, songs and cold readings---pictures and resumes), as well as strategies for pursuing the next step outside the cloistered environment of this university: whether that step is graduate school, a move to New York, or building a career in regional theatre. The course will provide information about resources available to the student (and how to use that information) to make the transition to the next level less intimidating. Through the use of guest lecturers who are professionals in their fields and critiques from the instructor, students will continue to build and strengthen an audition portfolio that is carefully and uniquely crafted to their individual needs.

Course Objectives:

- To gain practical insight on monologue, song and cold reading audition techniques both for the stage and for film / television
- To understand proper audition protocol from the moment you walk into the theatre to the moment you leave (and everything in-between)
- To understand the importance of research in this business; i.e. graduate schools, regional and commercial theatre (Broadway)
- To have a workable and professional looking picture and resume by the end of the semester

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Punctuality: You are expected to attend all classes! If you are absent more than three classes, you will be penalized one letter grade for each absence. ***If you are***

absent on the day an assignment is due, you will receive a zero. Punctuality is extremely important in this profession; to reinforce that, three tardies will count as one absence. If you know it is going to be extremely difficult to be on time because of another class, please let me know at the beginning of the semester.

Audition Assignments: At the beginning of the semester, each actor will be given two options from which to choose. ***Option 1:*** Prepare and present eight audition monologues (4 classical, 4 contemporary) ***Option 2:*** Prepare and present four audition monologues (2 classical, 2 contemporary) and four contrasting songs. Once the latter option is chosen, the student must follow through with it as an accompanist will be scheduled for specific days. ***ALL AUDITION ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE BASED ON A SPECIFIC PRODUCTION OR REGIONAL THEATRE CALL THAT I GIVE YOU FROM BACKSTAGE!!*** Students will also be given material for prepared and cold reading auditions, which will be “performed” in class. For the Final, each student will present as follows:

Option 1: an audition consisting of a minimum of two contrasting monologues, 1 classical, 1 contemporary and ***be prepared*** to offer a total of four monologues (two contemporary, two classical).

Option 2: an audition consisting of a minimum of two contrasting pieces, 1 monologue / 1 song and ***be prepared*** to offer a total of 4 pieces, 2 monologues (one contemporary, one classical) and 2 contrasting songs.

Monologue Preparation (written) and Rehearsal: You will need to turn in a completed Monologue Information Sheet *prior* to the presentation of each monologue. This will be done for the musical pieces as well. A complete description of this preparation will be provided at the beginning of the semester. *****You are expected to rehearse your monologues and musical numbers before your audition. This means, for the song auditions, to rehearse with an accompanist prior to your time slot.***

Participation: You are expected to come to class having read the assignment for that day and to participate in the discussions about those assignments. ***There will be a series of pop quizzes on the reading as well.***

Graduate School Investigation: Each student will be assigned a graduate acting program to research. Among the areas the student should investigate are: curriculum, philosophy of the program, tuition cost, financial aid and admission requirements. Students must also attempt to interview one current student and one alumnus who has been away from the program for at least two years but no more than six. The results of the investigation will be turned in to the instructor in the form of a 3-5 page paper, along with a one-page summary that will be made available to all students in the course.

Regional Theatre Investigation: Each student will be assigned a regional theatre to investigate. Among the areas the student should investigate are: the theatre’s mission statement; the type of plays that they produce; the artistic staff; how the theatre hires actors, including audition contacts and procedures; internship or training opportunities that the theatre provides; and the city in which the theatre is located. The student will be required to give a 10 minute oral presentation on the results of the research. These results will also be

turned in to the instructor in the form of a 3-5 page paper, along with a one-page summary that will be made available to all students enrolled in the course.

Broadway Production Investigation: Each student will be assigned a Broadway show to investigate as if they were going to audition for a replacement cast. Please choose a show that you would be right for; i.e., age appropriate, voice appropriate, etc., **and one that you feel passionate about.** Among the areas the student should research are: the director of the show; other works by the playwright or composer; how long has the show been running; who the casting director is / was for the show and information on them; a brief history of the theatre (what was there 20 years ago, etc.) The results of this investigation will be turned in to the instructor in the form of a 3-5 page paper, along with a one-page summary that will be made available to all students in the course. Included in the paper will be two pieces that you have chosen for your show specific audition.

Picture/Resumes: These are your calling cards and are very important to your success as the CEO of your own PR machine. With that in mind, each student will be required to submit a professional picture and resume with their final audition presentation.

Grading Breakdown:

Audition Monologues, including written prep (8).....	20%
Investigations (3)	30%
Class Participation (including cold readings)	20%
Pop Quizzes on Reading Material.....	5%
Picture/Resume	5%
Final	20%

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 at least 2 weeks before the absence. I will then notify the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments 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