

MWF 1:00-1:50pm
Spring 2008
Office hours: By appointment
Office Location: UTC-112

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Class Location: UTC-151

Acting IV THR 370.01

Demystifying Shakespeare: An Actor's Approach to his Text

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

<http://blackboard.shsu.edu>

Course Description:

To explore the skills and tools necessary for *advanced* scenework as they pertain to Shakespeare's text. We will be using six plays of William Shakespeare during the semester. This scenework will be supplemented with various exercises designed to lead to the understanding of more advanced concepts and techniques of the acting process as they apply to this playwright. Using John Barton's book *Playing Shakespeare* and other supplemental texts and DVDs, we will explore how to marry the *modern* Stanislavski-based acting tradition to the *Elizabethan* text and acting tradition. Finally, we will be delving into monologue work--- examining the structure of both blank verse and prose sections of text.

Course Objectives:

- To find an organic approach to Shakespeare's language as it pertains to the acting process.
- To gain a basic understanding of Shakespeare's text through analyzing it as a map for the actor.
- To learn the tools of discovering character through *language*.
- To construct a personalized vocal regimen for each actor in preparation of monologue & scenework.
- To make the analysis of Shakespeare's plays less sacrosanct and academic and more as a practical tool for the actor to enable creative freedom in performance.

Required Texts:

Playing Shakespeare: An Actor's Guide.....John Barton
Hamlet
Romeo & Juliet
Macbeth
Much Ado about Nothing
Taming of the Shrew
As You Like It → William Shakespeare

Playing Shakespeare is available in the bookstore—there are numerous places to obtain the plays, including the university library. I'll go over them in class.

Course Requirements:

- **Attendance:** Please be on time ready to work! You can be absent 4 times without penalty, providing the absences do not fall on assignment days. Any absence after 4 will result in a letter grade drop for each occurrence. Three tardies will result in one absence. If you know it is going to be difficult to arrive to this class punctually because of another class, let me know at the beginning of the semester. *An actor must have discipline and professionalism, this is most important in working with scene partners. If you know you are going to be absent, you must contact me AND your partner either the night before or the morning of the absence.*
- **Monologue work:** Each student will be required to workshop a monologue of his / her choice: either prose or blank verse. These will be workshoped once only. On the day of the workshop, you must turn in the speech with all scansion markings, key words, etc. and a paraphrased version of it.

- **Scene work:** Each student will workshop two scenes. One from a tragedy (*Hamlet, Macbeth, or Romeo & Juliet*) and one from a comedy (*Much Ado about Nothing, As You Like It, or Taming of the Shrew*) culminating in a final “performance level” attack of the 2nd scene at the end of the semester in front of an invited audience. On the day of the workshop, each actor must turn in the scene with all scansion markings, key words, etc., a paraphrased version of it, and all rehearsal diary entry sheets. **ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO READ AND ALL OF THE AFOREMENTIONED PLAYS, and be able to intelligently discuss them in class.**

**All performance assignments will be scheduled in a particular order, if you are ABSENT on your performance day, you WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE UP THIS GRADE.

- **Actor’s Rehearsal Notebook:** You are required to keep a notebook with scenes marked with scansion, division of beats, full stops, etc. (terms we will be discussing in class). The actual text of the play must be typed, 12 pt. font and double spaced. This notebook must be a 1” binder and all the sheets must be hole punched. You must also include in this notebook a section of paraphrased versions of all monologues and scenes to help with clarification of the text. In this notebook, you will also keep a rehearsal journal of discoveries made, new challenges that arise, time span of rehearsal day to day, etc. I will be furnishing you with a sheet for this. You will fill one out for EACH rehearsal and then place them in your Notebook.

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.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Monologue Workshop	10%
Scene 1 (2 workshops)	15%
Scene 2 (2 workshops)	20%
Rehearsal Notebook	20%
Final (3 rd workshop of 2 scene)	20%
Participation **	15%

**** (There is a direct correlation between your attendance and this grade!)**