TELLING A STORY: INTRODUCTION TO ACTING

Acting Theory and Performance I THDA120
Monday, Wednesday, Friday  2:20 – 4:30 pm
Instructor:  Harry Waters Jr.
Office:  Room 112   X6256
Office Hours:   Tuesday Thursday 1 – 2 PM or by appointment

Acting Theory and Performance is an introduction to acting. You may have acted before and feel confident and excited about being in this class or you may never have acted and are here through an act of courage or taking a ‘fine arts requirement”. Whatever the reason, you are in the right place. Acting is a glorious process, which makes use of the whole world and all human behavior as its research library.

This class is being created for you to learn about the craft of acting. The de-mystifying aspect of the magic of acting has to begin with the work you find in feeling a freedom of expression that will serve you in future aspects of your life. This class is not designed to make you a Tony or an Oscar nominee. What we will be exploring are the methods and ways that acting reveals the human condition. You will learn the concept of acting in various styles – good and bad, what is avante’garde, etc. – and how styles have changed throughout the centuries. There have been major teachers as well as directors that influence the craft.

Within the weeks to come, be sure to think DIFFERENTLY. The Macalester critical downplaying/judging of ideas, the choices to be too cool or too serious may work against you in truly learning something new about yourself and the world.

Grading: Because it is so important to your GPA, here is the low-down –

Journal entries: 20% The recording or reflections of reading and class exercises as well as your personal journey through the semester

Class Participation 40% Showing the willingness and dedication to participate in challenging group encounters

Graded Acting Presentations 20% Outside of class commitment that will show up in the presentation of monologues and scene work

Acting/Analysis Writing 20% The completion and thoroughness of journal writing exercises as well as observation analysis of performance.

Please note that there is a required office hour visit twice within the semester… One visit before the fall break and another after the break, prior to the end of the semester.

This is going to be a varied and subjective adventure. Some students may be challenged in unexpected ways, while others are on a free fall. Trust that the outcome will be in your best interests as students exploring a craft that has many murky facets. To make sure that you
approach the expectations that you will set for yourself, ask questions, challenge theories and allow yourself to discover in a new way.

**September 5 - 7**

**WEEK 1:** Intro week – meet and greet who we are and what this course is going to be about: finding out who, what, where, how, why and when we are important to the world. We will continually define the requirements of the obligation to commit to the process of the class. Explore the room, the building and other areas as performance event spaces.

“Stay in the Room” is the major initial commitment.

**Writing Assignment:** Childhood memory – ***Due Friday 9/7***

**Reading Assignment:** THE GREAT ACTING TEACHERS AND THEIR METHODS pp. 1 – 77. ***Due Friday 9/7***

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**September 10, 12, 14**

**OCT. 12 – OUT OF CLASS TO WRITE SENSORY MOMENTS**

**WEEK 2:** Talk about Monologue Selection process. Basic technique, terms of structure of drama/plays. Exercises for individual awareness.

- Discussion - How does DRAMA work in your house and your life.

- Introduction to Open scenes.

**Writing Assignment:** Journal - Personal Inventory Due 9/14

**Reading Assignment:** THE GREAT ACTING TEACHERS AND THEIR METHODS pp. 78 – 128 (Chapters 4 – 6)

*The Cherry Orchard by Anton Chekhov*

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**September 17, 19, 21**

**WEEK 3:** Sensory awareness exercises. Further discussion and creation of “Open Scenes”. Create methods to deal with discovery/refining techniques through improvisation. Looking at characters in “The Cherry Orchard” and how to define and identify and personify on stage. We will discuss on FRIDAY! ah.

**Writing Assignment:** Journal responses
September 24, 26, 28
WEEK 4: Technique through Improvisation. Character Analysis adapting to others through group improvisation. Detail discussion on scoring a scene, with emotions, intentions and actions. Further discussion of Open Scenes – rehearsal, costume, props. Etc. also Sign up for order of presentations. Journals to be handed in on Wednesday.

Writing Assignment: Journal #2 – Observation activity ***Due 9/26***
Reading Assignment: THE GREAT ACTING TEACHERS AN THEIR METHODS – Chapters 10, 11, Conclusion pp 154-190

October 1, 3, 5
WEEK 5: Open Scenes Due: First Graded Presentation. ANGELS IN AMERICA Opens this Friday. Talk about Journal exercise #3 – Monologue Analysis. Begin the selection of monologues. **Office meetings – you should plan to visit and talk to me during office hours or another discussed time slot. During the semester, it is important to schedule at least two office visits.**

Writing Assignment: Acting Observation – begin and ask questions if unsure of procedure or content
Reading Assignment: METHOD ACTING RECONSIDERED – Introduction pp. 3 – 34
ALL MY SONS by Arthur Miller

October 8, 10, 12
WEEK 6: Monologue selection: Initial presentations and observations in class. Introduction to nonsense improvisation with THE JABBERWOCKY
ALL MY SONS to be discussed on FRIDAY. YEAH.

Writing Assignment: Make sure you have fine tuned your Acting Observation along with the participation in the class activities.
October 15, 17, 19
WEEK 7: MONOLOGUE INTENSIVE REWORKING
In addition there will be time allotted for work in class on concerns and questions. Include costume, props or sound if need be. You will do your monologue TWICE next week.

October 22, 24, 26 FALL BREAK - MIDTERM GRADES DUE
WEEK 8 MONOLOGUE PRESENTATIONS – – 2nd Graded Presentation

Writing Assignment: MONOLOGUE CHARACTER ANALYSIS – which should be included when you perform your monologue
Reading Assignment: Sexual Perversity in Chicago and Duck Variations by David Mamet

October 29, 31, November 2
WEEK 9 ACTING OBSERVATION – “” due in Journal.
Rework Monologues in class with specific intentions, actions and activity selections.
Reflections on weeks of class continue in Journals. Sign up for order of presentation of monologues

Writing Assignment: Catch up on Journal entries from Fall Break

NOTE; REMEMBER TO ATTEND AND WRITE ABOUT AN ADDITIONAL THEATRICAL ACTING EVENT DURING THE SEMESTER.

November 5, 7, 9
WEEK 10 LYSISTRATA OPENS Friday
Be prepared to audition for the DIRECTING II CLASS PROJECTS. They will be asking you for your time and
talents to assist in their Fall pieces that will be presented later in the semester.

Reading Assignment:  
**METHOD ACTING RECONSIDERED; Chapter Three**  
pp. 61 - 77  
*Cloud Nine by Caryl Churchill*

**November 12, 14, 16**  
**WEEK 11** Scene selection will begin as well as intense scene work or character and relationships…  
Journals to be handed in FRIDAY

**November 19, 21**  
**23 THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**WEEK 12** Scene selection, beats, units, emotional transitions discussed– make sure that you have the Acting Observation - Journal Entry by the end of the run.  
Activities: TBD

Reading Assignment:  
**TBD**

**November 26, 28, 30**

**WEEK 13** Scene work: within class as needed and approaching the work necessary for presentation.  
Journals handed in with ACTING OBSERVATION…

Reading Assignment:  
**METHOD ACTING RECONSIDERED: Chapter 9, 10**  
pp. 147 – 166  
*The Colored Museum by George C. Wolfe*

**December 3, 5, 7**  
**DANCE CONCERT this FRIDAY**

**WEEK 14** Scene touchup and reworking .  
Revisiting all of the plays read throughout the semester in order to create a performance journey through time and styles. Your connections through observations and personal investing will present a quilt-work for our theater. .

**December 10, 12, 14**

**Last class day**

**WEEK 15** Presentations of Scenes,
FINAL GRADED PRESENTATIONS

. HAVE A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY AND NEW YEAR

PLEASE NOTE;
SYLLABUS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS SEMESTER PROCEEDS
ROLL WITH THE FLOW AND ENJOY THE RIDE