THEATRE ARTS 215: ACTING 1 (002)
TRACY SUNDERLAND
FALL 2012  TTH 12:00-1:15 pm  B100

Instructor: Tracy Sunderland  Office Hours: by appointment
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Course Description

This class is designed as an introduction to the craft of acting. Trust, risk, openness, stillness, concentration and improvisation will be explored as tools for unlocking truthful and spontaneous responses in the actor (i.e., unlocking the body, voice and mind). Additionally students will define and apply the concepts of action, objective, obstacle, and given circumstances to improvised work. This course has a rigorous attendance requirement.

Course Objectives

1. In the area of Critical Thinking/Problem Solving Skills students will:
   • Apply critical analysis to the experience of theatrical performance and dramatic literature
   • Develop a basic understanding of structure and theme in the context of both performance and dramatic literature

2. In the area of Communication Skills students will:
   • Formulate and organize an aesthetic response to theatrical performance and be able to articulate that opinion in both verbal and written discourse

3. In the area of Cultural Perspective students will:
   • Appreciate theatrical performance and dramatic literature within diverse social contexts
   • Identify meaningful connections between theatrical productions and plays and the historical contexts in which they emerged throughout Western Civilization
   • Cultivate an awareness of diverse perspectives and values of others as presented in a variety of plays and productions
   • Develop an awareness of the ephemeral and communal nature of theatre

4. In the area of Breadth of Knowledge and Intellectual Perspective students will:
   • Apply methodologies and strategies of inquiry specific to the performing arts
   • Develop a basic understanding of the creative production process essential to the theatre
   • Recognize similarities, differences, and the interrelationships between theatre and allied art forms

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Punctuality:
   • Regular attendance is a must. Class participation is essential to this course.
• You are allowed **three (3) absences** without penalty. **Every absence beyond these 3 will lower your final letter grade by one-third of a letter grade** (i.e., if you have a B- at the end of the semester and 4 absences, you will receive a C+ for the course; a B- and 5 absences a C, and so on).

• **Five (5) tardies = one (1) absence.** Attendance is noted at 10:45 am: anyone arriving after this time is considered tardy. You must speak to me to be sure I’ve marked you present when you are late to class.

2. **Assignments:**
   • **Written:** all requirements for written assignments will be discussed in class. Assignments must be turned in by the stipulated due date.
     1. Journal Entries
     2. Performance Critique
     3. Actor’s Worksheet (in conjunction with the Jump Improvisation)
   • **Performance:** all requirements for performance projects will be discussed in class.
     1. Movement Exercise
     2. Jump Improvisation Original Scene

3. **Rehearsals:**
   • You and your scene partner might require rehearsal time outside of class. You must be responsive to and responsible for participating in and attending scheduled rehearsals.

4. **Attire:**
   • Please wear comfortable clothes that will allow you to move freely and without restriction. Please: no flip flops.

**Course Materials**

• There is no required textbook for this course, although I will distribute periodic handouts that you are responsible for reading as they may apply to your journal entries.

• You are also required to obtain tickets and to attend one production this semester. For BSU productions, if you are not a full-time student, these tickets must be purchased. (Full-time students get one ticket to each performance at no charge. Any additional tickets would have to be purchased.)

• Production information is as follows:
  - **Becoming: An Evening of Short Plays**
    - Oct 4-6, 10-13 @ 7:30 pm
    - Oct 7 & 14 @ 2:00 pm

  - **The Importance of Being Earnest**
    - Nov 8-10, 14-17 @ 7:30 pm
    - Nov 11 & 18 @ 2:00 pm

**House Rules**

• **Attendance and participation** are the foundation for progress in this class. This is a performance class: you learn by experiences in the moment rather than from notes, reading, or lectures. There is no way to “make up” in-class experiences, exercises or moments. Eventually, you will also have a scene partners who are relying on you to be there for in-class rehearsals and performances; if you’re not there, your partners suffer the consequences.
• **Punctuality** is also essential to success in this class. Get to class early enough to be mentally and physically prepared for class. Wear comfortable clothes that you can move in.

• **Willingness to say yes.** Sometimes the things that fill us with the most anxiety are the very things we need to confront. If you find that you are resisting a certain exercise, try this mantra: resistance is the cue to go.

• **Group effort.** This class is not a competition; it is not about outdoing, or besting other people. If we try to work for the collective, or for the progress of the other members of the group, the class will be that much more successful. A group that supports its own members can achieve wonders.

• **Respect. Trust. Risk.** This class and classroom is akin to a sacred space: treat it, yourselves, and others with attentive respect in the knowledge that others will do the same for you.

**Grading Criteria**

- Journal Entries (5 @ 20 each)  
  100 points (10%)
- Production Critique  
  150 points (15%)
- Movement Exercise  
  150 points (15%)
- Jump Improvisation (+ Worksheet)  
  200 points (20%)
- Personal Responsibility (participation, attendance, willingness, professionalism)  
  400 points (40%)

**Total points possible:** 1000 points (100%)

**Course grading scale:**

- 900-1000 = A
- 800-899 = B
- 700-799 = C
- 600-699 = D
- 599 = F

• No written work will be accepted beyond the communicated deadline (see course calendar) except under extraordinary circumstances acceptable to the instructor or based on prior written notification also acceptable to the instructor. In other words, I do not accept late assignments, nor do I accept assignments that have been e-mailed to me.

• All written projects must be typed, double-spaced, with 12-point font. Un-typed work will not be accepted.

• Any written work not turned in will be assigned ZERO points rather than an F grade (an F could = 59).

• If you are absent on the scheduled day of your Silly Symphony performance, you will be assigned ZERO points.

• If you are absent on the scheduled day of your Jump Improvisation performance you will be assigned an F for the course.

• Review your student handbook for the university’s policy on academic dishonesty. If you are caught cheating on any written assignment the minimal penalty will be a zero. Cheating on an exam or production assignment will result in an automatic F grade for the course.