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DRAM 437.01: Advanced Acting - Acting for the Camera I

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Advanced Acting for the Camera I

Spring 2005 - The University of Montana, Missoula

Professor Michael Murphy - McGill 233 - **Office Hours:** TH 1-4
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal for this class is to acquaint the student with the basic acting techniques needed to work competently in realistic film work. The class will consist of several exercises and scenes shot in the studio. There will also be a final paper analyzing a successful film actor or actress.

The class will consist of

- The performance of a series of scenes in one camera filming situations
- Acting as a crewmember for others while they are doing scene work. All students will rotate positions so they can all experience working camera, sound, gaffer/lighting, continuity and grip.
- Analysis of existing scenes from film to articulate use of camera position and shot selection as they relate to performance technique and dramatic action line
- Writing a paper on a major film actor/actress, studying their work on film and articulating the techniques and methods used by them.
- Viewing of location shooting in order acquaint them with that extension of the acting "stage"

Criteria for scene work

You must demonstrate the ability to:

- Be prepared to work, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Understand and work within continuity restrictions called for by the editing process
- Work in an uninflected, non-presentational manner
- Be emotionally available for the camera
- Be in contact with your partner on a moment-to-moment basis
- Create grounded, believable business
- Layer your character development
- Approach scene work "as if" this were the first time

Criteria for Crew work

You must demonstrate the ability to:

- Show up on time and ready to work
- Stay concentrated on the scene and your ongoing role in optimizing the outcome
- Know your place in the chain of command and function within it
- Understand the script you are filming

- Understand why different shots are used, why different lighting is needed
- Be competent in set up and breakdown of equipment

Criteria for Paper

The paper should be ten pages long, analyzing a particular actor or actress.

Following are a list of areas to be addressed:

- Differing roles
- Growth or change in career. Why?
- Them addressing their work
- Others addressing their work
- What was their training?
- Analyze scenes from their work in relation to goals in this class
- How did they structure a role over the course of an entire film?
- Perhaps compare his or her work with someone who is a contemporary of his or hers but not as good. Why?
- Have they done bad work? Most of us have. What's different? Why?
- Why do you feel strongly about them?

CLASS TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND DUE DATES

January 25	Introductions Discussion View scenes Assignment: Read "Sex. Lies and Videotape" Memorize: "Magnolia scene"
February 1	Shoot: "Magnolia" View scenes from films Scene Assignment #1: "Sex, Lies and Videotape"
February 8	View Magnolia footage Film scenes
February 15	Shoot "Sex, Lies and Videotape" Groups A,B,C,
February 22	Shoot "Sex, Lies and Videotape"1 Groups D,E,F ASSIGN SCENE # 3 (Work with Directing IV)
March 1	Tuesday Murphy joins Andrew's class with assignments and discussion of working with actors. Directors work with actors during class time (Thursday)
March 6/8	Appointments with Murphy to view slvt footage Rehearse scenes 3 A,B, C Tuesday Rehearse scenes 3 D,E, F Thursday
March 15	Shoot ABC Tuesday Shoot DEF Thursday ASSIGN FINAL SCENE
March 22	View A,B,C Footage Tuesday View D,E,F Footage Thursday Deadline: 1st draft of research paper

CLASS TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND DUE DATES, continued

March 29	SPRING BREAK
April 5	View Edits of SLVT
April 12	View edits Scene #2
April 19	SHOOT FINAL SCENES A, B, C
April 26	SHOOT FINAL SCENES D,E,,F
May 4	View Footage Final Scenes
FINAL CLASS	VIEW AND RESPOND: FINAL SCENES