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THTR 420.01: Acting V - Studio - Shakespeare

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Acting V - Shakespeare – THTR 420 - 01
3 Credits MW 2:10-4:00 PM Schreiber 123

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Office Hours – R 1:30-3, F 1:30-3

Aim

This is an advanced acting studio exploring the work of William Shakespeare. Over the course of the semester we will explore performing Shakespeare's comedies, histories, tragedies, and love stories.

By the end of the semester you must...

- Demonstrate full use of breath to support both voice and movement, clear phonation, resonance, articulation, and volume at all times
- Understand, recognize, and perform the poetry and language integral in the work of William Shakespeare
- Develop fully formed characters with empathy and respect for the imaginary circumstances of the play
- Synthesize all skills learned up to this point in their training and transcend craft past the point of intellectual preparation to truly live in the moment during all scene work

Grading

Process and Participation	40%
Performances	40%
Reflection and Critique of Artistic Progress	20%

Required Texts

Shakespeare's Advice to the Players by Peter Hall (This is the required course textbook and can be purchased as a paperback or an ebook on the Amazon Kindle and iPad Kindle App. **You can wait to read this until the semester begins.**)

Helpful Resources

Speaking Shakespeare by Patsy Rodenburg

Freeing Shakespeare's Voice by Kristin Linklater (the first edition can be purchased as an ebook, the second, expanded edition is only available in paperback)

Shakespeare's Words: A Glossary by David Crystal (An interactive version is included with the Shakespeare Pro App)

Shakespeare: The World as a Stage by Bill Bryson (A concise, realistic history of Shakespeare's life)

Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human by Harold Bloom (Selections from this text will be made available on Moodle but its a great book that should be in your library if you love Shakespeare)

Playing Shakespeare by John Barton (9 Episodes featuring some of the UK's greatest actors. Also available on reserve at the UM Library or streaming on youtube)

Class Structure

Please note the weeks are tentative and subject to change.

Unit One	Weeks 1-3	Comedy and Ribaldry Scenes Assigned from <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
Unit Two	Weeks 4-7	Historical Drama Scenes Assigned from <i>Richard II</i> to <i>Henry VIII</i>
Unit Three	Weeks 8-12	Tragedy Scenes will be chosen from <i>Hamlet</i> , <i>Macbeth</i> , or <i>Othello</i>
Unit Four	Weeks 13-16	Lust, Love, and Tenderness Groups will devise a final "essay performances using selections from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , <i>The Tempest</i> , <i>Measure for Measure</i> , or <i>The Winter's Tale</i>
M & W	Studio Work	
F	Private Rehearsal or Coaching by Arrangement, 2:10 – 4	

Final Exam Tuesday, December 10 1:10-3:10 PM

Ensemble Work

To foster an encouraging and productive environment for our work, we will treat Schreiber Gym as a sacred space. Please remove your shoes and socks upon crossing the threshold into the classroom and store your belongings neatly off to the side. If you arrive early, use this time for reflection, meditation, stretching, and organizing any furniture scattered about. Be mindful of any rehearsal furniture designated for a School production that may be using the space and treat them with respect. If you must speak, speak only of the work we will do in Voice and Speech. When class has ended, restore the room, moving any furniture back to its designated area, and retrieve all belongs that you brought with you to class.

As an upper-division acting course there are no un-excused absences. Two absences drop the grade a letter and so on. Two tardy arrivals equal one absence.

Graded Performances

When working in the studio, I expect to see a high degree preparation and specific acting choices in your performance. This means I should not have to coach the fundamentals of your acting (circumstance, objective, tactic) more than the nuances of your character relationships and the intricacies of your scene. So come to class with bold choices already made. Most of all have fun with it! Costumes, props, scenery and whatever you can think of are highly encouraged. Be CREATIVE.

Grades will be determined by attendance, involvement, intellectual and creative process, engagement, preparedness, and contribution to the ensemble.

Grades for your performances will be based on the following rubric:

- A** **Superb work.** The student has transcended craft past the point of intellectual preparation and is living truly in the moment
- B** **Good work.** The student has the acting skills necessary for advanced performance, but is not yet living consistently in the moment
- C** **Fair work.** The student still struggles with the fundamentals of acting and it is evident that more effort is needed to master the truth of the text.
- D** **Poor work.** The student is not or has prepared fully for the work and it is a painful experience for the actor, scene partners, and the audience.
- F** **Failure.** The student is not or has not prepared at all to perform Shakespeare.

Critique

You will be divided into groups throughout the semester and tasked with critiquing your classmate's use of specific skills fundamental to Shakespearean acting. We will use the course text as our reference point for a common language. Participation is mandatory and those who fail to participate on a regular basis will see this portion of their grade fall throughout the semester.

Advanced Training

From the Handbook, Page 24: "all acting and skills courses during the third and fourth years of BFA training are considered "advanced." This level of training is student-driven and collaborative. The successful completion of advanced courses requires that students synthesize and utilize the fundamental skills acquired during prior training outside of class time. Independent preparation and rehearsal is expected so that advanced concepts can be pursued in the studio. Students who fail to demonstrate proper preparation for advanced work or monopolize studio time addressing fundamental issues of skill will be graded accordingly and may be asked to withdraw from the course. Instructors will address the skills necessary for completing advanced work in the studio at the beginning of each advanced course."

Extra Credit

This semester you can earn up to a maximum of **fifty extra-credit** points towards your **participation grade** for participating in the following activities:

- 10 Points – Serve on the crew—construction, stage management, board operation, and backstage run-crew—of a production that does not fulfill your required school crew assignment. Please be sure to provide a program or note from your supervisor to verify that you completed the assignment.
- 5 Points Each – A sleeve of fancy 8-ounce clear plastic party cups for opening night toasts or a two liter bottle of ginger-ale (or equivalent number of cans)

No student can earn more than 100% of his or her participation grade in the class. Be aware of this when pursuing extra credit. **There is no extra credit to make up missed assignments or performances.**

Electronic Resources

In this class we will embrace twenty-first century technology as the incredible resource that it is in your education. Therefore, email is the required method of communication for the course. Please check your email and Moodle frequently throughout the day. Due to its unreliability, refrain from messaging me on Moodle using the IM feature. **I will always contact you using the primary email stored in Moodle and Cyberbear so be sure that your information is up to date.**

If you have course materials stored on your phone, tablet, laptop or equivalent device, please set it to “Airplane Mode” so that the functionality is limited to stored data retrieval for class participation. Please silence and stow other unneeded electronic devices. I will have my phone on vibrate in case an emergency message should be sent by the university. If accessing the web becomes necessary, inform me that you are doing so for the benefit of the entire class. Raise your hand and proclaim, “I’m Googling it!”

If one of your devices rings accidentally during class, please silence it as **quickly as humanly possible**. Don’t be embarrassed, just turn it off and all will be forgiven. Having said that anyone caught text messaging or frivolously surfing the web will be dismissed immediately from class, resulting in a complete absence for the day. **I’M NOT KIDDING.**

Procedure/Policy

You are expected to abide by the following School regulations. There is no eating, drinking, or gum chewing during the class. Please let me know if in writing if you have a medical exception to this policy. Water in a capped container is acceptable. Absolutely no weapons, real or fake, are allowed in the classroom.

There is inherent risk involved in many Theatre classes, as they are very physical in nature. Please proceed through class and rehearsals with caution. Always be mindful of your personal safety and the safety of others. Students participating in classes, rehearsals, and performances do so at their own risk.

Due to safety considerations, at **no** point during a student’s time spent in class or serving on a production (in any capacity) should non-enrolled persons be guests of that student **without my consent**. Presence of such unauthorized persons in a class, shop, or any backstage/off-stage area will negatively affect a student’s grade.

School of Theatre and Dance Handbook

All students in theatre courses must have an in-depth knowledge of the practices and procedures outlined in the School of Theatre & Dance Handbook. The Handbook is available online at the link above.

Disability Services for Students (DSS):

If you have a disability for which accommodations are needed please contact me in the first week of the semester. Please visit the website linked above for more information.

Student Conduct Code

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code located at the link above.