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THTR 120A.01: Introduction to Acting I

Hillary Bard

University of Montana, hillary.bard@umontana.edu

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THTR 120.01, 3 Credits

INTRODUCTION TO ACTING

Fall 2014

Tues & Thursdays / 12:40p-2:00p / McGill 125

Instructor: Hillary Bard

Email: hillary.bard@umontana.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays @ 2:00p-3:00p in the Poetry Corner of Library

Phone: 989-285-7445

Aim

The purpose of this course is to help broaden your communication, presentation and personal skills. The course will also help you develop a more articulate, responsive, and expressive identity. These goals are achieved by studying the craft of acting. At the end of the semester, I hope you leave with an extended understanding of yourself, your peers, and your world.

Outcomes

In this setting you will achieve:

- A demonstrated confidence in the presentation of your self—socially and professionally
- An ability to further articulate both your personal character and the character of those you take on in performance
- A basic understanding of the nature of theatre and the craft of acting
- An understanding of, and respect for, performance, including audience etiquette

Content:

This course is divided into 4 sequential units.

Unit 1: Finding Your Inner Actor

- An introduction to the history and theory of theatre and acting, vocabulary, and audience etiquette. You will be creating new performances and learning how to see yourself as an actor.

Unit 2: Ensemble

- Building trust and skills through group exercises, including warm-ups and theatre games.

Unit 3: Scene Work with a Partner

- Rehearsing and performing short scenes with a partner, creating new and original characters, writing scenes, and script analysis.

Closing Unit/Final: Applying Acting in Your Life

- Techniques and exercises that help you connect to the world around you.

Production Attendance

Part of your grade for this class requires that you attend three of the School of Theatre & Dance's performances this semester. Missing one production will drop your grade one full letter. Missing two productions will drop your grade two full letters. If you do not attend any of the productions, you will not be able to pass the class. In other words, production attendance is a part of this class and there will be quizzes on the productions.

The materials fee you paid when you registered for this course allows you to obtain your ticket for these shows at no additional expense. You must pick up your ticket at the UMArts Box Office, located in the lobby of the PARTV Center, in person between 10 AM and 6 PM Monday-Friday. You may pick up only

one ticket—your own; you cannot pick up a ticket for a classmate. If you pick up your ticket to a production and wish to change performances, you will be charged a \$2 exchange fee before the performance date printed on the ticket. If you come in to exchange your ticket after the performance date printed on the ticket (and therefore need a new ticket), you will be charged the full student ticket price.

When you go to the Box Office to obtain your ticket, you must present your Griz Card. Please tell the box office staff that you are a 120 student and that you are picking up your ticket. Tell them who your instructor is and what section you are in and you must identify which class you are taking.

You are in section: 01

Your instructor's name is: Hillary Bard

Seating in the Masquer Theatre is general admission. Seating in the Montana Theatre is reserved. The fee that you have paid does not guarantee you a ticket on a particular night, nor does it guarantee that you will be able to get a ticket if the show sells out. Do not wait until the evening of the performance you plan to attend to pick up a ticket.

Required Productions

The three productions you will be seeing this semester are:

Broomstick

Christmas Carol

Cyrano

--Performance schedule can be found on the University of Montana's website. I will also be sending advance notice via e-mail and reminders with the dates as they approach.

Participation in Class Projects and Performances

You will be performing on a weekly basis and will be given grades for your class work and performances in the areas of *process* and *product*. In other words, you will be graded on the finished performance and on all of the rehearsals. Your grade in this area is not based on the natural talent you bring to the class; rather, it will be a reflection of your *developed* talent and the progress that you make over the course of the semester.

Effort/Respect/Attitude

Effort and respect are two very important requirements. You are expected to respond to all assignments and performances with effort and enthusiasm. You are expected to show respect for yourself, your classmates, your instructor, and your classroom environment. An excellent performance hinges upon taking risks, which is impossible to do if the environment is uncomfortable or uninviting. It is expected that when you participate in classroom activities, your peers will encourage you to commit to your actions and characters without embarrassment, remorse, or caution. This class requires openness and a willingness to take risks.

Writing Assignments

There are several writing assignments this semester. Although these assignments are generally creative in nature, they must be representative of university-level writing. You will be graded for your imagination and creativity as well as for the quality of your writing. These papers must be typed and proofread and must meet the demands of the assignment. All written work must be STAPLED. I will not accept it otherwise. No email submissions will be accepted. Please print the assignment the night

before.

Evaluation

Attendance including promptness and participation	25%
Grades/participation in all class projects and performances including the final	25%
Effort/respect/attitude	25%
Production attendance and assignments	25%

Attendance and Promptness

Attendance is compulsory because acting is participatory. There is no way to learn without doing, no adequate substitute for a missing partner, and no way to “make up” a missed experience. You will be given a grade for your attendance and after **2** absences your grade will begin to be effected. Generally speaking after **2** absences your grade will be lowered one increment.

Arriving late adversely affects your own learning and disrupts the learning process of your fellow students. Therefore, tardiness in excess of 10 minutes will be considered a complete absence, and every three instances of tardiness—of whatever duration—will equate to one absence. Every acting teacher reserves the right to declare a “no lateness” policy, should the need arise. Briefly put, this means that if the door to the class is shut and you are not inside by the time class begins, you are absent. No exceptions. If you have excessive absences or lateness please speak to me.

Movement Clothes

Please wear clothing to class that does not restrict movement: tight-fitting and restrictive clothing and anything too revealing is not acceptable. Hooded sweatshirts, hats, and hair that cover the face make it hard for others to see you, so remove them before work commences. Please clean your shoes appropriately before you enter the building to keep our floors as clean as possible. You may be asked to work in bare feet.

Personal Comfort

The study of acting often requires the instructor or peers to touch each other or be in close proximity. We all have bad days when we do not want such contact. Feel free to bow out of a particular exercise if you are in pain. However, frequent sitting out is a sign that you are having a difficult time with the class material.

Cell Phones

Please turn off your cell phone in class. My phone will be set to vibrate in case an emergency text message should be sent by the University. If your phone rings during class, please silence it as quickly as possible. Anyone caught texting in class will be immediately dismissed from class, resulting in an absence for the day.

Procedure/Policy

You are expected to abide by the following School of Theatre & Dance regulations.

- Eating, drinking, or gum chewing during the class are not permitted. Please let me know 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.
- Late work is not accepted; this includes late or unprepared performances.

- There is inherent risk involved in many Theatre & Dance classes, as they are very physical in nature. Please proceed through class with caution. Always be mindful of your personal safety and the safety of others.

Due to safety considerations, at no point during a student's time spent in class should non-enrolled persons be guests of that student without my consent.

School Handbook

All Theatre & Dance students must have an in-depth knowledge of the practices and procedures outlined in the School of Theatre & Dance *Student Handbook*. The *Handbook* is available online at <http://www.umd.edu/theatredance/about/handbook>.

Academic Misconduct and the 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. The Code is available for review online at http://life.umd.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.