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THTR 220.02: Acting I

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University of Montana, School of Theatre & Dance

Fall 2014

Acting I - THTR 220 – 02

3 Credits MWF* 9:10 – 11:00 Masquer Theatre

***Friday Studio Rehearsals by Appointment/Space available to rehearse**

Professor– Dr. Jillian Campana
Office – McGill 216

Email – jillian.campana@umontana.edu
Office Hours – MW: 11-12 T: 9-10

PURPOSE:

THTR 220 is for those considering a career in the performing arts. This studio class deals with cultivating a specific skill set and learning to work with: voice, body, observation, imagination, concentration, improvisation, and character. The class deals with the theories and techniques of Constantin Stanislavski, Stella Adler, Uta Hagen and others to offer a system for the actor's approach to the work (rehearsals and performances) and a method for creating a character. The class will also deal with professionalism, etiquette, and protocol for auditions, critiques, and rehearsals.

OUTCOMES:

In this acting workshop you will:

- Acquire a specific technique for creating a role and begin to develop your own way of working;
- Develop a sense of professionalism and a disciplined work ethic;
- Begin to combine all skills and tools in the service of a role;
- Begin to appreciate the work that must go into creating and sustaining a character;
- Understand your everyday actions and interactions as performances;
- Cultivate a respect for yourself, your peers, and the work;
- Develop a broader sense of confidence;
- Learn to care for your classmates;
- Discover an appreciation for the role of audience and the connection the actor has to the audience.

CONTENT:

For the first half of the semester we will not be working with scripts, but will be exploring different exercises to understand approaches to acting and character development. There will be exercises, workshops in improvisation, and group devising projects. Performances will take place every class. There will be a few class sessions in which the full group of Acting 1 students (both sections) meets together. In the second half of the semester we will begin to work with texts from published plays. We will deal specifically with character and script analysis and the rehearsal process in order to better prepare you for Acting 2, auditions, and productions.

ATTENDANCE:

This class follows a studio practice methodology, which means that you need to be present and on time for every session that meets. The work cannot be covered outside of class. The success of the class, your peers, and your self is dependent upon a close and dedicated ensemble which means that you dedicate yourself to attending every class.

Our School wide policy is that students are expected to attend all classes. A maximum of two class meetings during the semester may be made up; however, it is highly recommended that students do not miss any classes. Classes begin promptly and students should be present and ready to work at the top of class. After two absences your grade will be affected. Three tardies is the equivalent of an absence. One tardy beyond 15 minutes is the equivalent of an absence. If attendance becomes an issue you may be asked to withdraw from the class.

Acting and Design courses may include scheduled, unsupervised rehearsal or studio time where attendance may or may not be taken. Enrolled students are not to schedule other activities during this dedicated time for independent work and collaboration with project and scene partners.

EXPECTATIONS:

- Be on time and ready to work at **every** session;
- Bring water to class;
- Dress appropriately: for the most part this should be movement clothing – no jeans, slacks, or skirts;
- Leave the baggage behind when you enter the studio;
- Take risks- know what you need to work on and don't always take the safe route;
- Support your peers – be kind, appreciative and thoughtful;
- Respect the space, your classmates, your professor, yourself and the work.

TEACHING ASSISTANT:

We have a wonderful teaching assistant with us this semester. The TA will be present during all activities and is available to supplement instruction and feedback should the need arise. Please pay the TA the same level of attentiveness and respect that you show to me.

EVALUATION:

Your semester grade will be based on the following:

- Active participation (which requires being present);
- Attitude toward the process, your work, and the work of your peers;
- Demonstration of skills and techniques taught through exercises and performances;
- Growth in skills, professionalism, rehearsal process and approach to character;
- Writing – 1 review of a production and 1 in depth character and script analysis;
- Solo and partner work.

GRADING SCALE/BREAKDOWN:

- A 100 – 90%

- B 89 – 80%
- C 79 – 70 %
- D 69 – 60%
- F 59 and Below

In terms of acting participation and attitude toward the work, if the student was actively participating in class, well prepared, and positively engaged with the material and fellow classmates they should expect to earn an A or a B in this area. If the student was present, somewhat prepared, but not fully engaged the student should expect to earn a B or a C in this area. If the student was unprepared, disruptive or disrespectful in any way, or absent the student will earn a D or an F in this area. A solid work ethic is expected so high marks should be the norm. Poor work will stand out. Students receiving low marks for participation should meet with me to discuss the problem and how it will be resolved.

In terms of skill assessment, your performances and professional growth will be evaluated in terms of how your technical skills have developed over the course of the semester. The following scale will be used to assess your performances and professional growth throughout the semester.

- **A Superb Acting.** The student has transcended the level of craft they brought to the course, mastered the intellectual preparation, and has begun to play imaginatively “in the moment.”
- **B Good Skills.** The student has mastered the intellectual preparation necessary to move on to more advanced skills, made some basic advances in craft, but is not yet playing fully “in the moment.”
- **C Fair Work.** The student is prepared intellectually for the work, and is making progress with some of the skills, but stronger choices could be made and more rehearsal is necessary.
- **D Poor work.** The student has not or is not prepared for the work and it is obvious to the both the student and the audience.
- **F Failure.** The student has not or is not prepared at all, has made no specific choices.

TEXT:

Stanislavsky, Konstantin. *An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary*. Translated by Jean Benedetti. London: Routledge, 2008.

POLICY:

Theatre students are expected to attend all classes. A maximum of two class meetings during the semester may be made up; it is highly recommended that students do not miss any classes. Classes begin promptly and students should be present and ready to work at the top of class.

Acting and Design courses may include scheduled, unsupervised rehearsal or studio time where attendance may or may not be taken. Enrolled students are not to schedule other activities during

this dedicated time for independent work and collaboration with project and scene partners. After two absences or three tardies, your grade will be affected.

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.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.

No food or drink is allowed in the classroom. The exception is a bottle of water, which you should bring to class every day.

You are required to see the Theatre shows each semester. This fall those include *Cyrano de Bergerac* and *A Christmas Carol*. BFA intendees are required to audition for the shows and are required to attend talk-backs with the cast and faculty on the Monday following the closing of the play.

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.umt.edu/theatredance/about/handbook>.

There is inherent risk involved in many Theatre & Dance classes as they are very physical in nature. Please proceed through class, shop time, or rehearsal with caution. Always be mindful of your personal safety and the safety of others. Students participating in class/shop/rehearsal/performance 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.

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154.