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THTR 120A.06: Introduction to Acting

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THTR 120A.06, 3 Credits
INTRODUCTION TO ACTING I
Spring 2014

Instructor	COHEN AMBROSE
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Office	MLIB TBA
Office Hours	T, R 3-4pm
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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;
- and an understanding of the importance and contribution theatre makes to our world.

Attendance and Promptness

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. School policies will be strictly enforced. Only documented absences will be excused. No student may miss more than one week of class. For every subsequent absence, the grade will be lowered a full letter grade.

Furthermore, besides adversely affecting your own learning, arriving late for class 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 an illness should cause you to miss excessive class time to the point of failing, it is your responsibility to pursue a medical withdrawal so that the course may be attempted again once you have recovered.

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 HUMANLY POSSIBLE. Don't be embarrassed ... just turn it off and all will be forgiven. Having said that, anyone caught texting in class will be immediately dismissed from class, resulting in an absence for the day.

Evaluation

Assignments including final scene performance	60%
Participation	20%
Daily grades of effort/respect/attitude	15%

Assignments

- Quizzes 10%
 - There will be 3 in-class quizzes: audience etiquette and theatre vocabulary; Act 1 of the play *Book of Days*; and Act 2 of the play *Book of Days*.
- Production reviews 20%
 - You will write a review of two productions of your choice that are no less than 350 words in length. These pieces will be read aloud in class and discussed. You will upload your reviews to Moodle for submission.
- Scene rehearsals and final performance 30%
 - The "final" for this course is the performance of a scene with a partner. You will apply a specific technique or techniques that you learn about in class to the development of your character.

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. Each time you miss a class, your participation grade is affected because if you are not present, you cannot participate.

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. Passing this class requires openness and a willingness to take risks.

Production Attendance

You are required to attend three of the School of Theatre & Dance's theatrical performances produced 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 earn a failing grade in the class. Production attendance is a part of this class – there are no exceptions and there will be quizzes on the productions.

The materials fee you paid when you registered for this course allows you to obtain one 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.

You must present your Griz Card to pick up your ticket and you must identify which class you are taking. Therefore you must know your section number and instructor's name. Do not try to be identified by giving the class days and times.

You are in section:

Your instructor's name is: **COHEN AMBROSE**

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 Miracle Worker – by William Gibson

Montana Theatre

January 30 and 31 at 7:30pm; February 1 at 2:00pm; February 1, 6, and 8 at 7:30pm

Book of Days – by Lanford Wilson

Masquer Theatre
March 4-8 and 11-14 at 7:30pm; March 15 at 2:00pm

A Midsummer Night's Dream – by William Shakespeare
Montana Theatre
April 29 and 30 at 7:30pm; May 1-3 and 6-10 at 7:30pm

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 follow MLA format, typed, saved as a .doc or .docx Microsoft Word document, and uploaded to Moodle for submission. I will accept late papers at the penalty of one letter grade per 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. Students are encouraged to wear appropriate movement attire to class. 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.

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.umt.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.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.

Movement Clothes

Please wear clothing to class that does not restrict movement: tight-fitting and restrictive clothing and anything too revealing (showing skin) will not be acceptable. No hats will be permitted in class. Hooded sweatshirts, hats, and hair that cover the face are detrimental to proper evaluation by the instructor, so remove them before work commences. Please be sure to 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 at my discretion.

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 having a "Wounded Warrior" day. However, frequent sitting out is a sign that you might not be ready to advance in your training. If deemed necessary by the instructor, any student with such issues will be asked to meet with the Head of Acting/Directing and me to discuss how we might better facilitate you through the course.

This course is divided into 4 sequential units.

- Unit 1: Ensemble – Weeks 1 – 3
- Unit 2: What is Theatre? What is Acting? – Weeks 4 – 6
- Unit 3: Scene Work with a Partner – Weeks 7 – 11
- Unit 4: Applying Theatre in Your Life – Weeks 12 – 15

*****There will be NO meeting during finals week*****