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MAR 470.01: Advanced Acting for Film I

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THTR 321 Acting IV-MAR 470 Advanced Acting for Film I
Spring 2016 - The University of Montana, Missoula

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Office Hours: MWR 1-2

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is designed to introduce the basic techniques involved in realistic film acting. The class will consist of scene work, exercises in class, interaction with film directors, study of film actors, and discussion of issues encountered over the course of the semester. You will also experience the collaborative process of filmmaking by performing various roles in front of the camera and crewing in-class shoots behind the scenes.

Responsibilities

Come to each class prepared to work:

- **Physically:** Lines memorized, costumes and props secured and ready, full text read and analyzed, scenes divided into beats and named.
- **Emotionally:** The world of the character and the story thoroughly studied and research. The goals and intentions of the character have been personally explored in a manner that allows you to “arrive” at the scene ready to engage.

Outcomes

By the end of the semester you must demonstrate the ability to:

- Anticipate and navigate continuity restrictions called for by the editing process.
- Create blocking that can be repeated exactly from take-to-take—this, while keeping the “improvisational” nature of your acting work.
- Work in an uninflected, non-presentational, and emotionally available manner:
Acting requires presence in each unfolding moment of time that you inhabit. It requires that you allow the camera to come to you and that you open yourself to the process. You need to be in contact with your partner on a moment-to-moment basis, approaching the scene “as if” for the first time.
- Create grounded, believable business during your performances. Truth of physical action is one of the keys to the work.
- Layer your character development with imaginative sensory details:
Goals/Objectives are important for the work, but working with the five senses is critical as well—hearing, seeing, smelling, touching, and tasting.

Required Materials

Brown, D.W. *You Can Act On Camera*. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions, 2016. Print.

Helm, Zach, Marc Forster, and Lindsay Doran. *Stranger than Fiction: The Shooting Script*. New York: Newmarket, 2006. Print.

Recommended Materials

An SD card (32 GB is usually a good size) if you would like to keep your own footage.

Crew/Support Work Criteria

You must demonstrate the ability to:

- Show up on time and ready to work
- Stay concentrated on the scene and your 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
- Be competent in set up and breakdown of equipment

Grading

You will be graded on the following:

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| Scene Work: | | 45% |
| Preparation | 30% | |
| Competence in Acting: | 15% | |

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| Attendance, Collaboration, and Participation: | | 55% |
| Written Work | 15% | |
| Crew Assignments | 15% | |
| Attendance: | 25% | |

Film Work

- Assignment #1: Film Monologues
- Assignment #2: 5-Shot Exercise (Monologues into Scenes)
- Assignment #3: Seated Coverage Scene with Props
- Assignment #4: Continuity: *Stranger than Fiction*

Written Work

- Crew Reflection
- *Stranger than Fiction* character and sensory analysis
- Final Reflection

POLICIES and PROCEDURES

Attendance

Acting is participatory: there is no way to learn without doing, no adequate substitute for a missing partner, and no way to “make up” missed experience. School policies will be enforced strictly. You may present documentation for two excused absences without affecting your final grade. **Further excused absences and any unexcused (undocumented) absences will drop your final grade one-third of a letter.** If an illness should cause you to miss class to the point of failing, it is up to you to pursue a withdrawal so that the course can be reattempted once you have recovered.

Arriving late for class disrupts the learning process of your fellow students. Tardiness in excess of 10 minutes will be considered a complete absence, and every two instances of tardiness—of whatever duration—will equate to one absence for grading purposes. I reserve the right to declare a “no lateness” policy should the need arise. Briefly put, if the door to the class is shut and you are not inside you are absent: no exceptions. Likewise, be sure to visit the rest room before class. Leaving class during exercises or performances for a non-emergency is very disruptive.

Film acting courses may include officially scheduled, unsupervised rehearsals or shoots where attendance may or may not be taken. Students are not to schedule other activities during this dedicated time for independent work and collaboration with project and scene partners.

Policies

You are expected to abide by the following regulations. There is no eating, drinking, or gum chewing during the class. Please let us 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.

There is inherent risk involved in many acting 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 our 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 (Theatre Students Only)

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 us in the first week of the semester and provide notification of the specific accommodations you require. 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.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

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| Week 1 Jan. 25-29 | M: INTRODUCTIONS: The Mirror W: THE CAMERA: The Waiting Room F: Student Work: Watch <i>Day for Night</i> |
| Week 2 Feb. 1-5 | M: #1: Shoot Monologue from Film Solo W: #1: View and Discuss F: #2 Rehearse 5-Shot Exercise (Monologue into Scene) |
| Week 3 Feb. 8-12 | M: #2: Shoot 5-Shot Exercise (Monologue into Scene) W: #2: Shoot 5-Shot Exercise (Monologue into Scene) F: #2: Production Boot Camp |
| Week 4 Feb. 15-19 | M: President's Day Holiday W: #2: View and Discuss #3 Assigned F: #3: Object work |
| Week 5 Feb. 22-26 | M: #3: Meisner Exercises W: #3: Meisner Exercises F: #3: Rehearse and Block Seated Coverage Scene |
| Week 6 Feb. 29- Mar. 4 | M: #3: One-Take Coverage Shoot W: #3: One-Take Coverage Shoot F: #3: Editing Boot Camp |
| Week 7 Mar. 7-11 | M: #3: View and Discuss One-Take Coverage Scenes W: #3: View and Discuss One-Take Coverage Scenes F: #4 Editing Boot Camp |
| Week 8 Mar. 14-18 | M: #4: <i>Stranger than Fiction</i> Script Analysis and Discussion W: #4: Blocking Exercises F: #4: Rehearse and Block |
| Week 9 Mar. 21-25 | M: #4 Workshop the Shoot (Rehearsal) W: #4 Workshop the Shoot (Rehearsal) F: TBA |
| Week 10 Mar. 29- Apr. 1 | M: <i>Stranger than Fiction</i> Shoot W: <i>Stranger than Fiction</i> Shoot F: <i>Stranger than Fiction</i> Shoot |
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| Week 11 Apr. 4-8 | Spring Break |
| Week 12 Apr. 11-15 | M: <i>Stranger than Fiction</i> Shoot W: <i>Stranger than Fiction</i> Shoot F: <i>Stranger than Fiction</i> Shoot |
| Week 13 Apr. 18-22 | M: <i>Stranger than Fiction</i> Shoot W: <i>Stranger than Fiction</i> Shoot F: Editing Boot Camp |
| Week 14 May. 2-6 | M: Final Film Festival W: Final Film Festival F: Closing Activities |
| Week 15 | Reflection |