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THTR 120A.04: Introduction to Acting

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THTR 120A Section 4
3 Credits
INTRODUCTION TO ACTING
Spring 2016
Class meeting times: 11:10-12:00p MWF, SG124
Final Exam: 10:10a-12:10p Friday May 13th
Instructor: Natasha Conti
Email: natasha.conti@umontana.edu
Office: EDU Lobby
Office Hours: 1:00p – 2:00p Tuesday & Wednesday and by appointment
Phone: 406-243-4481

AIM:

This course is designed to help you broaden your communication, presentation, and social skills. By studying the craft of acting you will come to develop a more articulate, responsive, and expressive identity and begin to view your everyday actions and interactions as performances. By the end of the semester, it is expected that you leave with an extended understanding of yourself and of other people and that you will have a stronger sense of public presentation skills leading to better social and professional interactions. I hope that you enjoy the experience, have fun, and make friends with your classmates.

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 dramatic performance;
- An understanding of, and appreciation for, the craft of acting, the skills that actor's employ, and ways non-actors can also use acting skills;
- An understanding of, and respect for, performers and audiences.

CONTENT:

This course is divided into 4 sequential units.

Unit 1: WHAT IS ACTING AND WHAT IS PERFORMANCE?

- An introduction to the history and theory of acting, vocabulary, and audience etiquette. You will create performances and learn how to see yourself as an actor.

Unit 2: DEVELOPING ACTING SKILLS

- Building skills through group exercises, including warm-ups, games, and acting exercises. You will learn how to use specific acting skills in your everyday life.

Unit 3: PERFORMING A CHARACTER

- Rehearsing and performing short scenes with a partner, creating new and original characters, and analysing characters and scripts. You will learn how to use the skills you have developed in the service of a role.

Unit 4: GAINING INFORMATION FROM REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE

- Techniques for learning more about your world through performance. You will learn more about other people through role-play and improvisation.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Campana, Jillian. *ACTING SUCCESSFUL using performance skills in everyday life*. Cognella Press, 2014. Available in the UM Bookstore.

The text is also available in paperback and digitally through the publisher's website: universityreaders.com. That website will prompt you to create a password in the student's store section. You will need to identify the institution (University of Montana) as well as the class (THTR 120A). The text is also available on amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com. The prices are the same at all locations. The Bookstore is definitely the easiest and most convenient way to purchase the text and costs no more than other sellers.

EVALUATION:

Participation: class projects and performances	25%
Effort/respect/attitude	25%
Writing assignments	25%
Production attendance	25%

• 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 also 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. You will receive a weekly grade in this area.

• Effort/Respect/Attitude

Effort and respect are two very important requirements. You are expected to respond to 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. Once that happens, the fun begins. You will receive a weekly grade in this area.

• Writing Assignments

There are several worksheets in our text that you will be asked to fill out and discuss with the groups well as an in depth character analysis, also referred to in the text. There will also be another writing assignment, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the class which will be creative in nature.

• 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.

TICKETS:

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 120A 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: 4

Your instructor's name is: Natasha Conti

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 (You have free tickets to these shows!)**

The three productions you will be seeing this semester are:

All My Sons. The Montana Theatre. Jan. 28-30 & Feb. 4 & 6

Hot N' Throbbing. The Masquer Theatre. Feb. 23-27 & March 1-5

Romeo and Juliet. The Montana Theatre. April 27-30 & May 3-7

:

- **Suggested Production/Extra Credit (\$6.00 discounted ticket)**

All in the Timing. The Montana Theatre. March 15-19.

Attendance and Promptness is also considered in your final grade:

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. After 1 week of absences (3 classes), your grade will begin to be affected. Generally speaking after a week of absences your grade will be lowered a letter grade.

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 two instances of tardiness—of whatever duration—will equate to one absence. If you have excessive absences or lateness please speak to me.

POLICIES:

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.
- No smoking in class. Ever.
- 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 can be physical in nature. Please proceed through class and rehearsal 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 or serving on a production (in any capacity) should non-enrolled persons be guests of that student without the instructor's consent. Presence of such unauthorized persons in a class, shop, or any backstage/off-stage area will negatively affect a student's grade.

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.

School of Theatre & Dance Handbook:

For 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/umarts/theatredance/About/handbook.php>.

UM 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://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php.

DSS:

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. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.