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Fall 9-1-2000

### DRAM 214A.01: Acting I

William D. Watson

*University of Montana, Missoula*

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# **Course Syllabus for DR 214A - 01: *Acting I***

Instructor: Bill Watson

Semester: Fall 2000

Time: M/W - 11:10-1PM

Room: SG REH S

Office Hours: MW 10:00 - 11:00 am

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

We will examine and explore the actor's function in creating Theatre and aim to provide an understanding of the fundamentals of the actor's process. By doing so, we will explore the actor's relationship with himself, with the text, with her environment and other performers, and with the other elements of the Theatrical event.

## **METHODS:**

### **•IMPROVISATION**

Improvisation will be used extensively to; build honest give and take/talking and listening between actors; pull apart and understand units of action; create personalized and personal "text" that will be used as the text to build scenes from.

### **•PERSONALIZATION**

The function and behavior of memory will be explored and utilized to connect the actor to an honest use of self. personal memory, recalls, sense memory exercises will be used extensively throughout the work.

### **•ACTION/OBJECTIVE**

Open scripted scenes and improvisationally developed scenes will be used to analyze and understand the notions of actions, objectives, obstacles, preoccupations and opposites

### **•VIDEOTAPE**

We will be viewing videotape of a variety of performance styles and performance issues as well as viewing and discussing all departmental productions.

## **REQUIREMENTS:**

- Attendance at all departmental productions
- Written (typed/double spaced) ACTING critiques of two of the departmental productions
- Active participation in all classroom exercises and discussions
- Several exercises prepared and rehearsed outside of class and brought into class for presentation.
- Timely and solid preparation of all out of class assignments.

## **CRITERIA:**

The course deepens and continues exercise work in the principle theories of realistic acting: personalization, action and objective and moment to moment give and take with partner. The course also takes a look at the principles and writings of Stanislavski. The student must demonstrate a beginning

competency of a personal process of acting that has grown through the course of the semester in the following ways:

- Truthful, committed moment to moment give and take with partners
- Responsiveness to coaching
- Increasing depth and creativity of choices
- Clear, committed playing of objectives that intensify throughout the course of a beat, releasing as a result of an event.
- Use of beat/unit structure

The student must prepare and perform in-class performances of partnered, improvisationally built scene work. Scene-work will be evaluated based on the previous as well as the following criteria:

- Professionalism: Preparation of assigned exercises and scenes - with outside rehearsal, & timely learning of lines.
- Full attendance and active participation in all group exercise work.
- Truthful, committed moment to moment give and take with partner
- Personalization of given circumstances
- Strength and truthfulness of actions, objectives and beat/unit changes
- Extensive, truthful and creative incorporation of environmental elements in scene work

The student must write two critiques of departmental productions and must research and prepare in class presentations of selected research topics. They will additionally be responsible for generating a written text, edited from a tape recording of their improvisationally built scene. Written work will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Clear, concise articulation of ideas and conclusions
- Usefulness and appropriateness of research
- Demonstrated comprehension of techniques and principles
- Successful identification and use of terms and vocabulary
- Clear, playable, active edited segment of improvisational text, with clearly identifiable beat changes.

## **ASSESSMENT**

- Observing and responding to the student's comments, insights, and self analysis of exercises and work in class
- Evaluation of tested material
- Evaluation of written material
- Evaluation and observation of the clarity and strength of performance choices.
- Observing and responding to scene and exercise work in class
- Evaluation of application of coaching notes in subsequent performances of comparable exercises and assigned scenes
- Evaluation of their ability to retain principles, notes and techniques throughout subsequent

## **ATTENDANCE AND CLASS POLICIES:**

You are allowed **3 absences** - period - more than three absences and your grade will be **lowered one full letter grade** (100 pts.) and continue to be dropped a letter grade for each 3 after that. Use them at your own discretion if you wish, but if you've used them up playing around or leaving early for Thanksgiving and then get sick, you're out of luck. Be prudent, but better yet - come to class.

- 3 LATENESSES = 1 ABSENCE - Role is taken at the top of class. If you miss role, you're late. If you're ten minutes late, you're absent.

- Late written work will be **DOCKED A FULL GRADE**

- Professional work habits and disciplined, respectful behavior are the expectation in the Theatre as they are in this class. This means you accord respect to your fellow Theatre artists and to the scenes that you work in. Pay attention to your classmates when they work. Focus on their work so you can provide worthwhile and constructive commentary. Leave your rehearsal, classroom and performance to work. **DO NOT COME TO CLASS OR REHEARSAL IN AN ALTERED STATE.** Unprofessional and undisciplined behavior tells me that you're not serious about your work and that you don't belong in the Theatre.

- Missed scene rehearsals with scene partners will not be tolerated. **MISSING REHEARSALS OR CONSISTENT LATENESS IS GROUNDS FOR DROPPING A GRADE AND EVEN FAILING THE CLASS.**

- Missing an in-class presentation or scheduled work session will drop your grade (but not your partner's) 100 pts.

- Missing the performance of your projects **will fail you in the class.**

- You are actors in the Theatre, not just students and you have a different responsibility to this class than you do to your others, as far as your presence is concerned. The Theatre is an ensemble art and cannot succeed as a collection of individuals doing individual work.

## **PARTICIPATION:**

There is the potential for a certain amount of risk of injury in any participatory acting class (just as walking down the street carries some risk with it), and I will at all times stress safety and work to control and minimize the risk in all the work that we do. Take prudent care in the way you work, and understand that by getting physically active there is some potential risk. You are working against yourself and at your own pace and are not in competition with anyone else in the class, nor will your evaluation be based on comparisons with any of your classmates. You will be evaluated on your own progress and the way in which you work. Each person's physical abilities and physical needs differ and I am looking for you to achieve personal growth. If physical demands placed on you in the course of inclass work, feel unsafe to you, you are always entitled, indeed obligated to speak up and/or step out of the exercise. If scene partners engage in risky behavior you are also entitled, indeed obligated to do the same.

## **GRADING:**

- In class improvisation and exercise work 20%
- Preparation and presentation of projects and 30%

exercises

- Production critiques 20%
- Attendance, participation, discipline,  
professionalism, attitude, development 30%