Fall 9-1-2018

THTR 320.01: Acting III

Pamyla Stiehl

University of Montana, Missoula, pamyla.stiehl@umontana.edu

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.
Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/8970

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
Acting III - THTR 320-01 – CRN 72091

3 Credits, Fall 2018

Instructor: DR. PAMYLA STIEHL
Class times/place: MWF 9:00-10:50pm / Montana Theatre
Email / Office / Office Hrs: Pamyla.stiehl@umontana.edu / McGill 212c / T/R 2:30-4:00 pm – by appt.

Description:
This studio class aims to foster in the acting student an ability to devise a systematic approach to scene work/processes, character development, and monologue work/processes, focusing on new and burgeoning American playwrights of the contemporary era (21st century). We will use elements of various theatre and actor training methods to interrogate a wide-ranging body of texts. Scene work with given texts and devised monologues will be explored in an intensely focused, professional, studio approach. Through in-class rehearsals of scenes and monologues, we will address and develop techniques for approaching diverse, contemporary American works.

Outcomes:
In this setting you will achieve:
• A demonstrated knowledge and application of the acting techniques covered by the course
• An enhanced approach to character creation and scene work with partners
• A demonstrated knowledge and application of a variety of approaches to a contemporary text
• A fuller understanding of the potentials of these techniques in the theatre and in actor training
• Further development regarding pursuit of objectives through rehearsals, exercises, and monologue/scene work
• An increased range of choices to achieve your objectives
• Further development in regards to actor concentration, commitment and risk-taking
• An extension to your range of acting articulation and documentation
• A broadened exposure to contemporary theatre scripts.

Required Texts:
Acting Power by Robert Cohen (available in UM bookstore)
Play scripts as listed in Course syllabus (provided on Moodle)
Any supplemental reading assignments (supplied during the course through email or Moodle)

Course Requirements and Graded Assignments:

1) Attendance & 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 of Theatre & Dance policies will be strictly enforced. Absences can only be excused if formal documentation is provided (e.g., doctor’s note, court notice, obituary with travel itinerary) or if I am notified as to a religious observance conflict. For every unexcused absence, the grade will be lowered a third of a letter grade. If absences persist, the student must take the responsibility to withdraw from the class or risk a failing grade. For example, 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.

Furthermore, arriving late to 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. “On time is five minutes early!”

2) Class Participation, Progress and Attitude/effort/collaboration (20 pts): Following is the 20-point grading rubric for overall class participation, progress and attitude/effort/collaboration. This component will also reflect class punctuality/attendance:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation/Progress/Attitude/Effort/Collaboration</th>
<th>20 pts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monologue Work (Process = 10 pts/Product = 10 pts)</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process – 4 scenes/10 pts each</td>
<td>40 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product – 4 scenes/10 pts each</td>
<td>40 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Actor Scores (4 scenes/5 pts each)</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Class/Personal Reflection (4-pg)</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Course Points Possible = 160 pts</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COURSE SYLLABUS:** The week’s general work is designated below, as well as specific “day” assignments/deadlines in bold type (always subject to change and variation of dates, if necessary). Please note that you can skip the reading of any “exercise” in the Acting Power assignments.

**WEEK ONE Aug 27-31**
- Monday – Orientation
- Wednesday – Have read William Ball’s “Objectives” (Moodle) and accessed Actor’s Thesaurus (Moodle)
  - Must have a 21st-century monologue ready to perform
- Initial contemporary monologue work (non-graded)

**WEEK TWO Sept 3-7**
- Monday – LABOR DAY; NO CLASS
- Wednesday – Have read “Introduction” and Chapter 1 of Acting Power, “Out of the Self” (pp. 1-35)
- Friday – Have read plays End of Shift and This Random World for SCENE 1 (Moodle)
  - Studio work/exercises, discussions of Acting Power sections and plays

**WEEK THREE Sept 10-14**
- Monday – Have read portion of Chapter 2 of Acting Power, “Into the Other” (pp. 37-72)
- Wednesday – Finalized SCENE 1 material
  - Studio work/exercises; discussions of Acting Power section
- Initial rehearsals of SCENE 1

---

1 Please make contact with a colleague or two to find out what has been changed/assigned if you miss class.
WEEK FOUR Sept. 17-21
• Monday – Have read remainder of Chapter 2 of Acting Power, “Into the Other” (pp. 73-98)
• Studio work/exercises; discussions of Acting Power section
• In-class rehearsals/coaching of SCENE 1

WEEK FIVE Sept. 24-28
• Monday – PERFORMANCES of SCENE 1 (ACTOR SCORES DUE)
  o Have read plays Tiny Houses, Partners and Little Man for SCENE 2 (Moodle)
• Wednesday – Finalized SCENE 2 material
• Studio work/exercises, rehearsals, discussions of plays
• Initial rehearsals of SCENE 2

WEEK SIX Oct. 1-5
• Monday – Have read Chapter 3 of Acting Power, “Playing Character” (pp. 99-144)
• Studio work/exercises, discussions of Acting Power section
• In-class rehearsals/coaching of SCENE 2

WEEK SEVEN Oct. 8-12
• Monday – PERFORMANCES of SCENE 2 (ACTOR SCORES DUE)
• Wednesday – Have read plays Cow Camp and Sender for SCENE 3 (Moodle)
• Friday – Have selected Monologues for graded work (needs instructor approval)
• Studio work/exercises, discussions of plays

WEEK EIGHT Oct. 15-19
• Monday – Have read Chapter 4 of Acting Power, “Playing Style” (pp. 146-169)
• Wednesday – In-Class Monologue Process work (graded)
• Studio work/exercises, discussions of Acting Power section

WEEK NINE Oct. 22-26
• Monday – PERFORMANCE of MONOLOGUES (graded assignment)
  o Have read play Rape of the Sabine Women for style work
• Wednesday – Finalized SCENE 3 material
• Initial rehearsals of SCENE 3
• Style exercises using Rape of the Sabine Women
• Studio work/exercises

WEEK TEN Oct. 29-Nov. 2
• Monday – Have read portion of Chapter 5 of Acting Power, “Playing the Performance” (pp. 175-191)
• Friday – Have read remainder of Chapter 5 of Acting Power, “Playing the Performance” (pp. 192-216)
• In-class rehearsals/coaching of SCENE 3
• Studio work/exercises, discussions of Acting Power sections

WEEK ELEVEN Nov. 5-9
• Wednesday – PERFORMANCES of SCENE 3 (ACTOR SCORES DUE)
• Friday – Have read plays That Poor Girl and How He Killed Her and Do You Feel Anger for SCENE 4
• In-class rehearsals/coaching of SCENE 3
• Studio work/exercises, discussions of plays

WEEK TWELVE Nov. 12-16
• Monday – VETERANS DAY; NO CLASS
• Wednesday – Have read Chapter 6 of Acting Power, “Acting Power: A Synthesis” (pp. 217-229)
• Friday – Finalized SCENE 4 material
• Initial rehearsals of SCENE 4
• Studio work/discussions of Acting Power section
WEEK THIRTEEN  Nov 19-23
- In-class rehearsals/coaching of SCENE 4
- Wednesday-Friday – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY AND TRAVEL, NO CLASS

WEEK FOURTEEN  Nov. 26-30
- In-class rehearsals/coaching of SCENE 4
- Studio work/exercises

WEEK FIFTEEN  Dec. 3-7
- Monday – PERFORMANCES of SCENE 4 (ACTOR SCORES DUE)
- Friday – Revisit/perform SCENE 1
- Rehearsals/revisits of SCENE 1
- Studio work/exercises

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. 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.

Appropriate Attire / Movement Clothes
Please wear clothing to class that does not restrict movement: tight-fitting and restrictive clothing (jeans) and anything too revealing (showing skin) will not be acceptable. We will often be warming up with physical exercises. Hooded sweatshirts, hats, and hair that cover the face are detrimental to proper evaluation by the instructor, so remove them before work commences. For this class please be prepared to work in stockings or bare feet.

Cell Phones & Digital Devices
Please turn off your cell phone in class. Stow away all digital devices. My phone will be set to vibrate in case an emergency text message should be sent by the University.

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. If deemed necessary by the instructor, any student with such issues will be asked to meet with the head of the Acting/Directing Division and the instructor to discuss how we might better facilitate you through the course.

School Handbook
All Theatre & Dance students 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 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://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php.

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. http://life.umt.edu/dss/.
ACTING CLASS TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

In order to foster an appropriate environment for our work, we will treat the acting studio as a sacred space, respecting the facility and each other as we work on the craft of acting. Here are some reminders as to artistic and professional protocol:

• **Arrive to class early and ready to work.** Warm up a bit on your own, getting into a focused, positive, and receptive state -- physically, emotionally, and mentally. As noted above, three late arrivals equal one absence. We leave class only after restoring the space to its original state.

• **WEAR EXERCISE CLOTHING** that promotes a "neutral" state of being (not flashy, controversial logo-bearing or overtly skin-revealing). Treat this class as a phys-ed course. If you need other "character" clothing for scene work, bring items that you can slip on over your exercise clothing or change during class. **We will be physically warming up. Be prepared to work barefoot and on the floor.** We will most likely be working up a sweat. Keep hair back and out of your face. We will also be working our voices. Bring water (in a capped container). **LEAVE ALL DIGITAL DEVICES IN BACKPACKS,** with phones set to "Airplane Mode." Phones are never to make an appearance, unless permitted by the instructor (needed for a scene). **ALL SCRIPTS NEED TO BE IN HARDCOPY FORM – NOT DIGITAL ON PHONES.** No texting EVER in class. I will grant an exception if you are Googling something related to class or using tech for a class project, but you must ask permission and/or let me know.

• **Come to class with an open and willing attitude.** Be willing to try all the exercises before you pass judgment on them. And then be willing to try them again.

• **Participate in discussions.** Your thoughts and observations are integral to our development in this class, and I expect you to share them. Ask questions! Challenge assumptions (and me – I have thick skin).

• **Be respectful of your classmates:** listen to them during the exercises and in the discussions and respond thoughtfully, even if you disagree with their choices or comments. Frame responses in a constructive manner. **NEVER ATTEMPT TO "DIRECT" YOUR FELLOW ACTORS.**

• **Always communicate with me about any concerns or questions** you have regarding the course, your progress, further areas of exploration, how this connects to other coursework you’re doing, and so on.

• **Decide to enjoy the work we do together.** If you find yourself overwhelmed, step back and practice the mantra: "I am enough for me today." Then, do your best to dive back in and be ready to share yourself with others in a variety of playful and inquisitive ways. If you are having a particularly rough day (physically or emotionally), please feel free to speak with me in private and we will discuss strategies by which you can still participate in and contribute to class that day. **If an illness should cause you to miss class to the point of failing, it is up to you to obtain a medical withdrawal** so that the course can be attempted again once you have recovered.

• **This course requires work outside of class hours.** All Acting courses include independently scheduled, unsupervised rehearsal or studio time. You will be required to coordinate with your acting partner/s to find space and time to rehearse outside of class. Failure to do so is notable in your final product.