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THTR 520.01: Graduate Acting I

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Grad Acting I

THTR 520 – Section 01 – 3 Credits – SG 124

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays – 9 AM-10:50 PM

Instructor – John Kenneth DeBoer
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Office Hours – TWR 1-2, PARTV 110

Aim

This course is designed as a comprehensive introduction to Graduate Acting, applying techniques and theories learned in that course to intensive scene and monologue work. We will thoroughly explore the nuances of action through choice, intention, and emotion. This also includes the concepts of playing character: out of self (Objectives) and into the other (Tactics). The course will also introduce the writing and journaling process that will culminate in the third-year final creative project.

By the end of the semester you must...

- Integrate physical and vocal skills learned in co-requisite course work into text and actions explored in the studio.
- Expand strategies for dynamic partner interaction and character development.
- Address the continued growth and needs identified in mid-year graduate student reviews.
- Articulate your preparatory, studio, and rehearsal processes—orally and in writing—at an advanced, professional level.

Textbooks and Required Materials

- *True and False* by David Mamet
- *A Practical Handbook for the Actor* by Melissa Bruder, Lee Michael Cohn, et.al.
- *Acting Power* by Robert Cohen
- *The Actor's Art and Craft* by William Esper
- *The Miracle of Mindfulness* by Tich Nhat Hanh
- Access to [Moodle](#) and the ability to read PDF files of assigned readings and scenes.

Attendance and Promptness

As a graduate level acting course there are no un-excused absences. Unexcused absences drop the final grade a third of a letter and so on. Two late arrivals equal one absence.

Grading Scale and Breakdown

Grades will be determined by attendance, involvement, intellectual and creative contribution to the process, engagement, and preparedness.

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|---|--------------|
| A | 100 – 90% |
| B | 89 – 80% |
| C | 79 – 70 % |
| D | 69 – 60% |
| F | 59 and Below |

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Participation: | 20% |
| Writing/Research: | 40% |
| Performances | 40% |

Skill Assessment and Professional Growth

Your performance and growth grades are my evaluation of how your skills have developed over the course of the semester:

- A Superb Acting. The student has transcended the level of craft they brought to the course, mastered the intellectual preparation, and has begun to play imaginatively “in the moment.”
- B Good Skills. The student has mastered the intellectual preparation necessary to move on to more advanced skills, made some basic advances in craft, but is not yet playing fully “in the moment.”
- C Fair Work. The student is prepared intellectually for the work, and is making progress with some skills, but stronger choices could be made and more practice is necessary.
- D Poor work. The student has not or is not prepared for the work and it is painfully obvious to the both the student and audience.
- F Failure. The student has not or is not prepared at all, has made no specific choices, and is wasting theirs and the audience’s time.

Performances must take place on the date noted on Moodle or assigned in class by the instructor. Due to a tight schedule and limited class time, they may not be made up without prior permission from the instructor.

Professional Growth

Hopefully you will develop the skills necessary to begin playing “in the moment.” However, participation is often not enough. You are expected to show some growth in artistry by the semester’s conclusion and achieve the outcomes laid out in the syllabus.

Assignments and Performances

All readings and assignments are available on the Moodle weekly schedule. Assignments may be turned in late for partial credit. Performances must take place on the date noted on Moodle or assigned in class by the instructor. Due to a tight schedule and limited class time, they may not be made up without prior permission from the instructor.

Procedure/Policy

You are expected to abide by the following School regulations. There is no eating, drinking, or gum chewing during class. Please let me know if 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 Theatre 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 my consent. Presence of such unauthorized persons in a class, shop, or any backstage/off-stage area will negatively affect a student's grade.

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.

School of Theatre & Dance Student 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/umarts/theatredance/About/handbook.php>.
is available online at the link above.

Disability Services for Students (DSS):

If you have a disability for which accommodations are needed please provide me, in writing, your official DSS accommodation letter. Please visit the website linked below for more information. <https://www.umt.edu/dss/>

Tentative Schedule

We will follow this schedule for the semester, although exact dates are subject to change. Fridays will generally be reserved for independent studio time. Please complete all reading assignments by the date listed. Supplemental readings might be introduced as time allows.

Partner Scene 1

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| W 9/5 | <i>True and False</i> |
| M 9/10 | <i>A Practical Handbook for the Actor</i> |
| W 9/26 | Final Performance |
| F 9/28 | Reflection Journal Due |

Partner Scene 2

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|----------|--|
| M 10/1 | <i>Acting Power, "Out of the self"</i> |
| M 10/8 | <i>Acting Power, "Into the other"</i> |
| M 10/15 | <i>Acting Power, "Playing Character"</i> |
| W 10/ 24 | Final Performance |
| F 10/16 | Reflection Journal Due |

Monologue 1

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|---------|--|
| M 10/29 | <i>The Actor's Art and Craft</i> , pages 3-63 |
| M 11/5 | <i>The Actor's Art and Craft</i> pages 64-126 |
| M 11/12 | <i>The Actor's Art and Craft</i> pages 127-180 |
| M 11/19 | <i>The Actor's Art and Craft</i> pages 181-233 |
| M 11/26 | <i>The Actor's Art and Craft</i> pages 234-284 |
| W 11/28 | Final Performance |
| F 11/30 | Reflection Journal Due |

Monologue 2

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|---------|--|
| M 12/3 | <i>Miracle of Mindfulness</i> |
| W 12/12 | Final Performances from 8-10 AM and Final Reflection Due |