



THE 345: ACTING PERIOD STYLES
COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2020
TTR: 11am-12:15 pm
PERFORMING ARTS #100

Instructor: Christian Casper

MFA, Assistant Professor of Theatre/Pedagogy

Office Location: Performing Arts Center #128

Office Hours: MWF 11am-1pm, TTH 1-2pm

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COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook:

STYLE FOR THE ACTORS

Robert Barton

If you purchase an earlier edition of the text at a cheaper cost, it is your responsibility to remain proactive in determining changes in chapter breakdowns, supplemental material needed, etc.

Additional Readings:

Most of your reading for this course will come from the above text.

Additionally, I encourage you to put money aside to order new scripts. This will be a good opportunity for you to begin (or continue) building your own script library. Most scripts cost around \$7 a piece plus shipping. I would suggest putting some money aside for this expense now and begin budgeting that regularly in semesters to come. Searching for and buying new scripts will give you a leg up in as a performer and expand your personal repertoire.

Suggested Texts:

Public and Performance in the Greek Theatre, Peter D. Arnott

Thinking Shakespeare, Barry Edelstein

Kiss and Tell: Restoration Comedy of Manners - Monologues, Scenes, and Historical Context, Michael Dixon and Michele Volansky, eds.

Required Viewing:

Somewhere in Between

Directed by Christian Casper

Produced in the Main Stage by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce

February 25-29 8pm, March 1 3pm

Constellations

Directed by Micah McBay

Produced in the Studio Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce

April 7-11 at 8pm April 12 at 3 p.m.

Tickets are available for a nominal fee from the University Playhouse Box Office (PAC 101) from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. Or, you may make advance reservations by phone at any time by calling 903-886-5900 or by email at playhouseboxoffice@tamuc.edu.

**Note: Please understand that viewing a performance of both of the University Playhouse shows listed above are absolute requirements of the course. Clear your schedule now! If you cannot attend all of these events, for whatever reason, you must consult with the instructor in advance in order to receive an alternate written assignment(s) for these portions of your overall grade in the course.*

Course Description:

For the intermediate and advanced student actor, this course places primary emphasis on the development of characterization techniques, participation in physical and vocal acting exercises, and practical performance application through stylistic scene and monologue work.

Prerequisite:

The 213 - Fundamentals of Acting or transfer equivalent with a grade of “C” or higher.

Course Introduction:

Welcome! This course provides a practical introduction to the various period styles of acting. This class will be challenging, invigorating, and participatory. Please consider yourself to now be a part of a workshop rather than a classroom as it is usually understood.

Although there is a lecture/discussion component to this course, by nature actor training requires substantial studio work – both inside and outside of the classroom. Please consider yourself to be part of a learning community where members support one another with suggestions and constructive criticism. Learning, observing, and sharing are central to this course. *Attitudes of awareness and openness are essential to your development and your contribution to the development of the other members of this class.* Please leave your worries, frustrations, competitiveness, and negativity outside the classroom door as much as possible.

Active participation in discussion and presentation of projects within the class is not only welcome; it is an essential requirement. Positive, helpful and constructive attitudes are also required! Presentations must be well prepared and shared with the understanding that questions and discussion will follow. The ongoing critique of performance is crucial to everyone’s learning process. You should be aware that the vast majority of class time is composed of activities in which you are **REQUIRED** to actively participate. *If you have no plans or interest in sincerely exploring auditioning techniques and accomplishing significant growth as a performer, this is not the class for you.*

In this course, I will serve as your teacher, acting coach, director, guide, and outside eyes/ears as we work very specifically on your individual performance efforts. I ask that you trust me and approach the work with an open mind, an open heart, discipline and commitment, and a willingness to try new things. Then, we can work through our artistic challenges together!

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding and practical proficiency in developing and executing artistically effective performances of period/stylistic texts.
2. Provide evidence of the acquired essential knowledge needed by the broadly trained actor regarding historical theatrical conventions, period scripts, and stylistic performance considerations.

- Exhibit increased proficiency in accepting and incorporating constructive criticism into his/her own performance work, while honing the skills needed to humanely and insightfully evaluate both personal artistic efforts and the work of others.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

Participation and Growth (10 pts.): *Note that attendance alone does not constitute participation.* Participation and Growth is a large portion of your grade in this course – for good reason! As mentioned above, participation is vital in this class. This is an interactive environment and students must not only attend, but must also actively contribute to each class.

Furthermore, the completion of miscellaneous homework assignments will also be considered part of your participation grade. There will be quite a few of these short assignments and they are all important in the development of your skills as an actor. Further, as also mentioned above, each student is required to attend both of the University Playhouse’s productions this semester.

Positive, respectful and helpful attitudes are mandatory. ***I would like to make this very clear: I will make every effort to treat you with the respect that I believe you deserve. You are also expected to treat your peers and myself with that same respectful attitude.*** If I believe that a student is disrespectful, I will ask that person to leave the classroom. In this event, the student will receive a zero for any activities conducted that day in class and receive a zero for his/her participation grade for the day (no matter how long you have been in class). Disrespect, rudeness, disruptive behavior, or negative attitudes will ***NOT BE TOLERATED***. It should go without saying that refusal to participate in any activity or part of an activity during class will result in a substantial and appropriate loss of participation points for the student.

Previous acting experience will not guarantee you a good grade in this course. Significant growth and a genuine attempt within the class will. This is a class that regards self-competition as a goal. You and your peers will arrive at various levels, and you will leave at different levels. However, growth from the beginning to the end of the semester can be evaluated. I challenge you to push yourself to grow and succeed. This class is concerned with developing *your* skills to the best of *your* ability. The community in the class is here to help all of us grow and expand our abilities.

Participation and Growth grades will be calculated daily and reflected upon/tabulated at the end of the semester. *Each student will begin with a Participation and Growth grade of a 0.* Strong effort or lack of effort during each class and over the course of the semester as a whole will either raise you grade or not.

Monologue/Scene Presentations (4 @ 10 pts each = 40 pts.): Each student will work individually or with a partner and perform memorized monologues and scenes. The length of the monologues and scenes will vary as appropriate to individual assignments and goals associated with the unit. Each of these performances will be rehearsed, workshopped at least once, and performed. You will be required to independently cut, score, and block each of these monologues/scenes appropriately. These monologues and/or scenes will derive from the dramatic texts of varying historical periods (Greek, Shakespeare, Restoration, and Farce). Specific requirements for these assignments will be given at a later date.

Working Sessions (4 @ 5 pts. each = 20 pts.): Each student will participate in four formally graded 15-20 minute working sessions with me. The Working Sessions will take place prior to each performance. The student will be graded on the level of artistic quality presented, the professionalism of the preparation, and the effectiveness of his/her ability to work with a director/acting coach in achieving growth during the determined time period. More in-depth expectations will be discussed in class at a later date.

Script Work (4 @ 5 pts. each = 20 pts.): Each student will be required to submit four formal sets of script work (one per developed performance). Script work will minimally include cutting, effective scoring/scansion, and formal determination/writing of the basic given circumstances of each character portrayed in the performance, as well as other criteria based on the needs of the period. Students will be graded on both content (70%) and construction (30%). More in-depth expectations will be discussed in class at a later date.

Research/Reading Presentation (10 pts.): Students will work in a small group to prepare a presentation over a specific reading assignment that includes outside research regarding the appropriate historical time period in theatre history as assigned by the instructor. The group will come prepared to lead the class discussion for the day, lead appropriate class activities, and offer outside material in a formal, well-researched, professional, creative, interactive, and interesting presentation for the class. Specific requirements will be outlined at a later date.

Grading:

The following grading scale will be used to determine all individual grades as well as the student's overall grade in the course:

90-100 =	A
80-89=	B
70-79=	C
60-69=	D
59 and below=	F

Please note: A grade of "A" will not be assigned to an individual who has not completed ALL outside of class assignments, regardless of average.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

WORKING EMAIL REQUIREMENT: It is a course expectation that you have a working email address that you check daily. If you have not already acquired an email address through the university or otherwise, please make arrangements to do so before the next class meeting. There **WILL** be times that I need to contact you with important information and email is often the speediest and easiest way of doing so. Additionally, I will provide electronic copies of the plays and any supplemental reading through eCollege and/or email.

WRITTEN WORK: Unfortunately, papers/projects do occasionally get lost. Please, for your sanity, save your work on a thumb drive, etc. Do not depend on your paper staying on the hard drive of any university computer, as it will be deleted, altered, or worse - turned in by someone else as their work! Be aware that it is a course expectation that you keep copies of your assignments until you receive your final grade for the semester.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Contacting Me:

Please feel free to visit me during my office hours at any time during the semester. I am here to help! If you cannot make my office hours due to a scheduling conflict, please set up an appointment with me. It is not an

imposition. Communicate, communicate, communicate! If something presents you with difficulties in this class, let me know. I cannot help you if I do not know what is going on. The easiest and most reliable way to contact me is **via email**. Please do not leave a message for me in the main department office.

Email Policy:

Before sending me an email with a general course-specific question, **review your syllabus/look at the handouts/check eCollege/ask a classmate first**. If your question has already been addressed in one of those places, then you will have the answer you need. If you cannot find the answer, please feel free to email me.

When emailing me: Please make your emails clear, concise, and written with proper grammar in order to assure my earliest attention. In addition, please follow some common “email etiquette” procedures in order to keep our electronic communication effective and efficient. Specifically:

- Write a relevant subject line (e.g., “Period Styles question,” or “THE 345 meeting request”)
- Address me by name (ie: "Dear Professor Casper")
- Bonus: "meaningless niceties" are never a bad idea!
- Concisely state what it is you need. If it can't be communicated in a concise manner, perhaps request an appointment. **If requesting an appointment**, give me times that you are available **in the initial email!!!** My office hours are posted above.
- Use a "sign-off" ("Thank you" is always good) and **sign your name**.

Not following these guidelines potentially puts you at the bottom of my list for response time.

Student Resources:

Department of Theatre

Performing Arts Center (PAC) #101

Phone: 903-886-5346 (Main Office)

<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/mmct/default.asp>

Communication Skills Center

Hall of Languages #103

<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/litlang/CSC/index.htm>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES
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Course Specific Procedures:

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory and grades will be lowered ½ letter grade per absence. That being said, I do understand that there are unavoidable, *emergency* situations in life. You are allowed two *emergency* absences in this course with no attendance grading penalty (although you are still responsible for all work during said absences).

Late Arrivals:

To further foster a high level of commitment—and because the work we will be doing this semester will involve intensive focus—the class will adopt the following late entry policy. Students must be on time for every class. Entering a class late or leaving early is disruptive to the flow of the class and indicative of a less than disciplined/committed artist. Please be on time out of consideration to your learning process and the processes of others. If you are late for class, your participation grade will reflect this. The class will begin promptly at 11am! If you arrive after 11:10 am, please do not enter the classroom (you will be marked absent regardless). If you arrive within the ten minute grace period, please do so discretely in order to avoid disrupting the class activities/discussions. *It is your responsibility to make sure that you find me after class and document your late*

attendance for the day—otherwise, your initial marked absence documented during roll will remain. Also, you are expected to stay until you are dismissed from class. An early departure will significantly reduce your participation grade as well. **Two late arrivals (within the ten-minute grace period) or early departures (or any combination of the two) may be counted as one absence in the class.**

Cell Phones and Laptops:

Please turn off all cell phones upon entering the classroom. Please do not check messages or engage in text messaging during class. This is disruptive to the flow of the course. Further, you are welcome to take class notes on a laptop or other electronic device. However, these devices should only be used for taking notes over the current discussions/activities – and you must type very quietly and turn off all sound so as not to disturb other class members. If I suspect that laptops are being used for other purposes, I will ban them from the classroom.

Late Work:

I do not accept late work.

Please note that failure to present any part of a Working Session or Audition Presentation may result in administrative dropping or an automatic failure in this upper-level performance course.

Extra Credit:

As a general rule, there is no extra credit offered in this class – please, do not even ask.

Adaptation of Assignments:

Due to the fluid nature of this performance-based class, some assignments/scheduling may need to be adapted. All changes will be announced prior to implementation.

Food, Drink, Gum, and Smoking:

Please do not bring food or drinks into the classroom at any time (exception: you may bring bottled water with you to class). As this is a course focusing on practical performance, chewing gum is not allowed at any time during class. Smoking during class time (even when in individual rehearsals outside of the building) is never allowed.

Clothing:

Dress for maximum freedom and movement. You may occasionally be lying and rolling on the ground. Fair warning: the floor may or may not be spotless. Wear comfortable shoes that you can move around in or bring other shoes. Heels, boots, short skirts, tight jeans, and low-cut shirts will all restrict movement (and consequently restrict your ability to participate in class). Do not wear jewelry that will affect your freedom of movement or speech. No hats are allowed to be worn during warm-ups, activities, performances, etc. Also, please keep your hair securely away from your face during all exercises, working sessions, and performances in class. (It is essential that I be able to see your face during all practical acting work.) *No one will be excused from a class activity because of clothing concerns; you are required to wear clothing that will not inhibit participation in class activities.*

If scene work requires minimal costume pieces – please be prepared to change quickly. **All actors will need to find and wear rehearsal shoes and/or clothing appropriate to the life of the characters they portray.** While conducting monologue/scene work, actors must commit to wearing appropriate clothing in both out-of-class and in-class rehearsals, as well as in performances (for example, rehearsal skirt and/or character shoes).

Incompletes:

Under normal circumstances, an Incomplete (I or X) will NOT be given for a final grade in this course. Per University policy, students who **because of circumstances beyond their control** are unable to attend classes will, upon approval of their instructor, receive a mark of X (incomplete) in all courses in which they were *maintaining passing grades at the time of the request* for an incomplete.

Artistic Content:

Writers and performers have explored a wide range of themes and viewpoints, using a variety of artistic approaches. Pieces will be selected by the students in order to aid their accomplishments in relation to the course learning outcomes. The pieces chosen and presented may contain ideas, language, or depictions of behaviors/images that you personally find offensive or otherwise disturbing. Try to concentrate on the performance rather than your opinion about the material in such an instance. However, there is a policy in this class that a performer is required to inform his/her classroom audience that the performance piece may be deemed offensive. Any class member is always welcome to leave the classroom for that particular performance and return afterward in this case.

Performance Material:

All performance material will come from plays appropriate to the period under study. *No film scripts will be used in this class for performance purposes.* This is a course in acting for the stage – not film. Although there is often significant “cross-over,” these two art forms are different in a number of ways. Further, in the instance that the student is able to choose his/her own material, **a piece found on the Internet or that is not part of an actual play script will not be acceptable. In order to work on selections in this class, you must have read the entire plays from which the pieces derive.**

University Specific Policies and Procedures:

Academic Dishonesty:

This course adheres strictly to the college’s guidelines for Academic Dishonesty printed in the *Student’s Guide Handbook*. Plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), cheating, or otherwise representing another’s work or ideas as your own without proper attribution will not be tolerated. **All work must be new and created for this class during this semester by you.** It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand the definition of Academic Dishonesty at Texas A&M-Commerce. If such an instance occurs, the student will receive an automatic zero for the work in question, and I will immediately report the incident to the Head of the Department. (*You should be aware that this could result in dismissal from school without credit for the semester.*)

Campus Concealed Carry

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Students with a Disability:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

Fax (903) 468-8148

Student Conduct:

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Reading and Assignments are due on the days on which they are listed below.

WEEK ONE

T Jan 14 Intro to Course
 Activities/Discussion - Added Considerations for Performing "Style"
 Review of Given Circumstances

Reading: Preface and Chapter 1 "Recognizing Style"

Th Jan 16 **Discussion:** Preface and Chapter 1 "Recognizing Style"
 EXERCISE: Same story pg 13

Reading: "ANALYZING STYLE"

WEEK TWO

T Jan 21 **Discuss** "ANALYZING STYLE"
 EXERCISE: Same plot different time Pg 26

Th Jan 23

EXERCISE: Playwrights Worlds pg 40

READ CHAPTER 3 MASTERING STYLE

WEEK THREE

T Jan 28 **Discuss** chapter 3
Exercise: Classics vs contemporaries' pg 44

Th Jan 30 **Exercise:** Catching the spirit Pg 73

SCENE ASSIGNMENTS: THE GREEKS

READ CHAPTER 4

WEEK FOUR

T Feb 4 GREEK SCENE WORK/

Th Feb 6 CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION

WEEK FIVE

T Feb 11 GREEK SCENCE WORK

Th Feb 13 GREEK SCENCE WORK

WEEK SIX

SPRING PRODUCTION *SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN* Feb 25-Mar 1

T Feb 25 GREEK SCENE WORK

Th Feb 27 FINAL GREEK PERFORMANCES
 READ CHAPTER 5 Theatre of Earth and Stars
 Scene Assignments

WEEK SEVEN

T Mar 3 Shakespearean Activities/Scene Rehearsals

Th Mar 7 Shakespeare rehearsals

WEEK EIGHT

T Mar 10 Shakespearean Activities/Scene Rehearsals

Th Mar 12 Shakespearean rehearsals

*****SPRING BREAK*** (March 12-16)**

WEEK NINE

T Mar 17 Shakespearean Rehearsals

Th Mar 19 Final Shakespearean Performances

READING: CHAPTER 7 Morals and Manners

WEEK TENT Mar 24 **Discussion: Chapter 7**

Th Mar 26 Manners Scene Rehearsals

WEEK ELEVEN

T Mar 31 Manners Scene Rehearsals

Th Apr 2 Manners Scene Rehearsals

WEEK TWELVE

T Apr 7 Manners Scene Rehearsals

Th Apr 9 Final Manners Performances
Farce chapter handout reading**WEEK THIRTEEN**T Apr 14 Farce Discussion
Farce Scene assignments

Th Apr 16 Farce Scene work

WEEK FOURTEEN

T Apr 21 Farce Scene Rehearsals

Th Apr 23 Farce Scene Rehearsals

WEEK FIFTEEN

T Apr 28 Farce Scene Rehearsals

Th Apr 30 Farce Scene Rehearsals

May 5th 10:30am- 12:30pm Farce Scenes Final presentations