

FUNDAMENTALS OF ACTING: THE 1351

SPRING 2021 Syllabus

Texas A&M Univeristy Commerce

Instructor Contact Information

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Office Location: PAC112

Office Hours: By Appoitment, via Zoom.

Course Information

Course Title: Fundamentals of Acting

Course Number: THE 1351

Section Number: 22006

Semester/Year: Spring/2021

Credit Hours: 3

Class Meeting Time/Location: Tuesday & Thursday 11a-12:15p, via ZOOM

ZOOM LINK: *TBC Check your emails

Certification Date: January 27, 2021

Last Day to Withdraw: April 16, 2021

Required Textbooks:

- *Letters to A Young Artist: Straight-Up Advice on Making A Life in the Arts for Actors, Writers, Performers, and Artists of Every Kind* by Anna Deveare Smith (2006)

Course Prerequisites

None

Course Description

Basic acting techniques of characterization, role analysis, stage movement, voice and body control.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Analyze scripts from the viewpoint of the actor.
- Analyze, develop, and perform a character.
- Demonstrate effective and safe use of the voice and body.
- Define and discuss terms and concepts using extended vocabulary of theater.
- Perform at an appropriately skilled level in ensemble building exercises and performance-based projects.
- Analyze and critique personal and peer acting performances.

Required Course Materials & Technology

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- *Letters to A Young Artist: Straight-Up Advice on Making A Life in the Arts for Actors, Writers, Performers, and Artists of Every Kind* by Anna Deveare Smith (2006)
- *Love and Information* by Caryl Churchill (2012) *provided

TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT AND REQUIREMENTS

- A strong internet or mobile connection
- Device with ability to join the Zoom App, with an internal or external camera and microphone connected
- An ability to upload video files (up to 3 mins) to eCampus or mobile site like Dropbox (Flashdrive transfer in person also possible)
- A device that you can record high-quality videos of yourself on (like a phone or digital camera)

SCRIPTS

- *Love and Information* electronic script version will be available for classroom use, you may also purchase a copy for yourself.

- Please have your *Love and Information* script on-hand by Tuesday February 23
- For the Contemporary Monologues, I have some perusal scripts available, and can point you in the right direction for finding a script online or the library.
- You are responsible for printing a hard copy of your script.
- The scene cuttings used in class discussions will be available online

REQUIRED VIEWING

- We will be using the TAMUC Library Services to view performances **and** will be using streaming sites like YouTube, Vimeo, etc. to view filmed theatre shows as they become available.
- For the acting performance critiques, you can attend one of the Spring 2021 University Playhouse Productions (\$5 for TAMUC students) as long as you are not in the show.
 - *Recipe of Life* by Jaylan Fennell February 23-28
 - *Chumbox: Stories from the Web* by Austin Roberts April 13-18
- Some streams may cost a viewing price that won't exceed \$15. No subscriptions will be required.

REHEARSAL CLOTHING, PHYSICAL SPACE, COSTUMES

- When we meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays please wear comfortable clothing that you can move in and layers. Wear a comfortable pair of shoes or go barefoot.
- If possible, clear a small space where you can stand & move around. We will be doing a warmup at the beginning of each class, enough space for a yoga mat let's say.
- Costume/Uniform Look: For our Filmed Audition Monologues, you will need a professional look and a solid background with good lighting to film. For our Virtual Scenes, you and your team will decide on costumes.

Graded Work

The tables below provide a summary of the graded work in this course and an explanation of how your final course grade will be calculated.

Summary of Graded Work

Assignments	Points	Totals
Performance Critiques	3 @ 75 points each	225 points
Contemporary Audition Monologue (Text Analysis	1 @ 225 points	225 points

Assignments	Points	Totals
Worksheet, Memorization, Filming)		
Love and Information Scene (Script, Performance, Integration of elements)	1 @ 150 points	150 points
Participation (Attendance to classes, read scripts and contribute to discussions)	1 @ 150 points	150 points
Imitation Speech	1 @ 100 points	100 points
ACTING PORTFOLIO (Examples of each will be given) -Headshot or Photo -Acting Resume -Short Personal Bio and Artistic Statement -Audition Monologues	1 @ 75 points	75 points
<i>Letters to a Young Artist</i> Responses	3 @ 25 points each	75 points

TOTAL: 1,000 points

Final Grade

Points	Percentages	Letter Grade
900-1,000	90-100%	A
800-899	80-89%	B
700-799	70-79%	C
600-699	60-69%	D
0-599	0-59%	F

Description of Graded Work

CONTEMPORARY MONOLOGUE: Students will work on an individual two-minute monologue from a contemporary play and we will study creating character, establishing stakes, and working on delivery through video. I will make suggestions of monologues but am open if you have one you already want to work on.

LOVE AND INFORMATION SCENE PERFORMANCE: Working in groups and using techniques of ensemble theatre, students will create four scenes from Caryl Churchill's

Love and Information—working on story arc, tempo, and virtual theatre and physical acting.

PERFORMANCE CRITIQUES: Students will be expected to write 3 750-word performance critiques of an actor's performance (Choose 2 online and 1 of the Spring 2021 University Playhouse Performances or 3 online Performances) We will go over the details of this assignment more in class.

LETTERS TO A YOUNG ARTIST RESPONSES

You will be expected to read and respond to excerpts of Anna Deveare Smith's book *Letters to a Young Artist*. You are only required to respond to 3—extra credit can be earned by responding to the remaining sections (4 max).

These responses must be no less than 400 words each.

We will cover the format of these responses in class.

IMITATION SPEECH PROJECT: Student will choose a speech of 3-5 minutes and analyze the vocal patterns, inflections, rhythms and environment and then create an imitation of that speech that the class will critique

ACTING PORTFOLIO: You will compile an acting portfolio that will include a resume, headshot, short and long form biographies and artistic statements for playbills or jobs, and copies of your contemporary audition monologue as well as an alternative monologue you would do in an audition.

VIRTUAL SHOWCASE: Each student will film their monologue and we will compile them into an online showcase.

PARTICIPATION: Quality participation includes:

- Regular attendance to classes, on time and having read the materials
- When giving feedback to fellow classmates, the critique is thoughtful and appropriate
- Creativity, collaboration and team work are used in group projects
- Asks probing questions, asks for clarification when needed
- Willingness to try, and receive feedback

Attendance and Your Final Grade

Due to the nature of acting as an art which requires collaboration over a period of time , attendance to all classes is required unless you have emergency, health or personal

circumstances that make it prohibitive to come to class. If you know you will be absent from class, please contact me as soon as possible.

Absences will be considered excused if you contact me at least 2 hours before class. Only 2 excused absences will be accepted before it affects your grade. You will be expected to complete any missed work.

Absences will be considered unexcused if you do not contact me or contact me during or after the missed class. Only 1 unexcused absence will be accepted before it affects your grade. You will be expected to complete any missed work.

Late Work Policy

All online course work is due by Thursday April 29 at 5pm.

Other Course Policies

1. Some coursework, readings, and discussions may include adult subject matter and situations including sex and violence. These will be handled with mature thinking, mutual respect, and proper safety measures if necessary.
2. Extra credit is available by writing additional *Letters to a Young Artist Responses* (25 points each, Max 100 points).

Institutional Policies

[Institutional Policies](#) include information about tutoring, Disabilities Services, class drop and repeat options, Title IX, and more.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading and Assignments	Due Date
1. 1/12 and 1/14	SYLLABUS, GO OVER CLASS WARMUP IMITATION SPEECH:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Memorize Class warmup• Imitation Assignment, Creating a Character, Environment	

Week	Topic	Reading and Assignments	Due Date
	CREATING CHARACTER		
3. 1/19 and 1/21	IMITATION SPEECH CONT' <u>GO OVER LETTERS TO A YOUNG ARTIST ASSIGNMENT</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on imitation speech • Read introduction in <i>Letters to a Young Artist</i> 	
4. 1/26 and 1/28	IMITATION SPEECH SCRIPT ANALYSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Imitation Speeches in Class on 1/26 (FEEDBACK) 	
5. 2/2 and 2/4	SCRIPT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET FITZMAURICE VOICE TECHNIQUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on script analysis assignment • Do online Fitzmaurice exercise 	
6. 2/9 and 2/11	INTRO TO LABAN MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to move 	
7. 2/16 and 2/18	INTRO TO LABAN MOVEMENT <u>GO OVER PERFORMANCE CRITIQUES ASSIGNMENT</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to move • 	
8. 2/23 and 2/25	LOVE AND INFORMATION INTRO & ASSIGNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign groups • Pick Scenes • Improvisation <p>UNIVERSITY PLAYHOUSE PRODUCTION THIS WEEK</p>	
9. 3/2 and 3/4	LOVE AND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups will have a 'rough draft' of their 	

Week	Topic	Reading and Assignments	Due Date
	INFORMATION	characters and setting for the scenes by March 4	
10. 3/9 and 3/11	LOVE AND INFORMATION SCENES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual Group Scenework 	
11. 3/16 and 3/18	LOVE AND INFORMATION SCENES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual Group Scenework <p>UNIVERSITY PLAYHOUSE PRODUCTION THIS WEEK</p>	
12. 3/23 and 3/25	LOVE AND INFORMATION SCENES	Present Scenes This Week	
13. 3/30 and 4/1	<u>GO OVER AUDITION PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT</u> INTRO TO CONTEMPORARY MONOLOGUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pick your contemporary audition monologue by 4/1 	
14. 4/6 and 4/8	CONTEMPORARY AUDITION MONOLOGUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual Coaching 	
15. 4/13 and 4/15	CONTEMPORARY AUDITION MONOLOGUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual coaching 	
16. 4/20 and 4/22	FILM CONTEMPORARY MONOLOGUE COMPLETE ALL COURSEWORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual coaching 	
17. 4/27 and 4/29	FINALS WEEK	<u>All online coursework due THURSDAY 4/29 at 5pm</u>	

Week	Topic	Reading and Assignments	Due Date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Acting Portfolio -Imitation Speech Worksheet -Text Analysis Worksheet for Monologue -Mp4 Video File of Contemporary Monologue -Letters to A Young Artist Responses -3 Performance Critiques 	

DISCLAIMER

The Instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary during the course. Changes will be communicated in class and through email.

1/13/21 Version