

**THE 213 – FUNDAMENTALS OF ACTING  
COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2013**

**T/H 12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.  
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER #126**

**Instructor: Samantha Grace**

**Office Location: Performing Arts Center 116A (costume shop)**

**Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00 AM-12:00 (and by appointment)**

**Office Phone: 903-886-5240**

**Office Fax: 903-468-3250**

**University Email Address: [Samantha.Grace@tamuc.edu](mailto:Samantha.Grace@tamuc.edu)**

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Required Textbook:**

***The Stanislavski System*** by Sonia Moore

This book is available at the University Bookstore and on-line at Amazon.com.

**Required Viewing:**

***The Compleat Works of Wllm Shkspr (abridged)***

by Jess Borgeson, Adam Long, and Daniel Singer

directed by Samantha Grace

produced by the University Playhouse at Texas A&M – Commerce

Tuesday, Oct. 8 through Saturday, Oct. 12 @ 8 p.m. and Sunday, Oct. 13 @ 3 p.m.

***Kiss me, Kate***

by Cole Porter

directed by Joe Reynolds

produced by the University Playhouse at Texas A&M – Commerce

November 5-10

you may make advance reservations by phone at any time by calling 903-886-5900

*\*Note: Please understand that viewing a performance of both of the University Playhouse shows listed above is an absolute requirement of the course. Part of becoming a skilled actor is viewing other actors' successes and challenges. Clear your schedule now!*

**Catalog Course Description:**

This course focuses on introducing and developing the basic acting techniques of characterization, role analysis, stage movement, voice, and body control.

**Course Introduction:**

Welcome! This course is required of all Theatre majors and minors at Texas A&M University – Commerce and aims to teach specific fundamental techniques associated with the acting process per the Stanislavski System. The methodologies used to reach determined objectives/learning outcomes are as follows: guided discussions of readings and performances, rehearsals, workshops, performances, small group and large group activities, written and creative assignments, and quizzes.

This is a class that 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. Begin by considering yourself to be part of a learning community where members support one another with suggestions and constructive criticism. We are here to support and learn from each other. There will be no negative criticism or hostile actions with our partners! Learning, observing, and sharing are central to this course. Active participation in discussion and presentation of projects within the class is not only welcome, it is an essential requirement. 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. You will be up on your feet and moving almost every single day. *If you have no plans or interest in sincerely exploring the artistic process of acting and accomplishing significant growth as a performer, this is not the class for you.*

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

1. understand and utilize the fundamental foundations of the Stanislavski's approach to realistic acting for the stage.
2. display effective skills in working with others via a disciplined, collaborative, professional, respectful, and productive approach throughout the rehearsal and performance processes.
3. take on acting challenges to create rounded characters, and control body and voice as one.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:**

**PARTICIPATION AND GROWTH (25%):** *Note that attendance alone does not constitute participation.* Participation is a major part of this course. This is a "doing" class. We will be up on our feet moving and exploring. This is an acting class; you must then do the action of acting. This is all part of your participation grade. If this is something you don't want to do, then I would advise you to drop the class now. You will get out of this class what you put into it. It is up to you how many points you have toward your participation. \*Note that the plays of the University Playhouse are also part of your participation grade. 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.

Participation will be calculated daily and Growth reflected upon/tabulated at the end of the semester. Under normal circumstances, if you are scheduled to work with a partner(s) on a day you are absent, your participation grade will be reduced double the amount it normally would for an absence. Responsibility to the people you are working with is essential for success in this class. *Each student will begin with a mid-passing Participation and Growth grade of an 80.* Strong effort or lack of effort during each class and over the course of the semester as a whole will either raise or lower that grade.

*\*Measures Course Learning Outcomes #1, #2, and #3.*

**QUIZZES (15%):** There will be three short quizzes given in this class that will generally focus on the assigned readings, lectures, activities, etc. Questions about the required viewing of University Playhouse productions may also be covered on these quizzes. Quizzes will be comprised of matching, multiple choice, true/false, and/or short answer questions. Telling me that you were absent after the fact will not excuse you from a quiz. You must contact me before your absence.

*\*Measures Course Learning Outcome #1.*

OPEN CHARACTER SCENE (15%): In pairs, students will rehearse, workshop, and perform a memorized Open Character Scene that has been selected by the instructor. The Open Character Scene will be rehearsed, workshopped (worth 5%), and presented as an improved performance (worth 10%). The length of the scenes will vary depending on the choices made by the actors but will generally run around 3-4 minutes. Further criteria for this assignment will be given at a later date.

*\*Measures Course Learning Outcomes #1, #2, and #3.*

MONOLOGUE (15%): Each student will work individually and perform a memorized monologue that is approximately 2 minutes long. The performance will be rehearsed, workshopped (worth 5%), and presented as an improved performance (worth 10%). Further criteria for this assignment will be given at a later date.

*\*Measures Course Learning Outcomes #1 and #3.*

CHARACTERIZATION COLLAGE PRESENTATION (5%): Each student will create one characterization collage of at least twenty images. The collage will be based on the character that the student is portraying in the Monologue. The collage will be presented to the class via a formal presentation by the student. This is a creative project that requires you to analyze your character in abstract and concrete terms in order to yield a more truthful portrayal onstage. This is an individual activity. More specific criteria will be discussed at a later date.

*\*Measures Course Learning Outcome #1 and 3.*

SCRIPTED SCENE PERFORMANCE (25%): This will consist of a 5-10 minute scripted scene performance in which you work with another person. The scene will be one of yours and your partners choosing. The scripted scene will be memorized, rehearsed, workshopped (worth 5%), and shown as an improved performance (worth 15%). Further criteria for this assignment will be given at a later date.

*\*Measures Course Learning Outcomes #1, #2, and #3.*

### **Grading:**

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

A 90%-100% (Exceptional Quality Work)

B 80%-89% (Above Average Quality Work)

C 70%-79% (Average Quality Work)

D 60%-69% (Below Average Quality Work)

F 0%-59% (Fails to Meet Acceptable Expectations in Quality of Work)

### **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 may be times that I need to contact you with important information and email is often the speediest and easiest way of doing so.

WRITTEN WORK: Unfortunately, papers/projects do occasionally get lost. Please, for your

sanity, save your work on a disc or 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 Samantha Grace:**

Please feel free to visit me during my office hours at any time during the semester. I am here to help! If you can't make my office hours due to a scheduling conflict, please set up an appointment with me. The easiest and most reliable way to contact me is via email. I check it fairly frequently.

### **Student Resources:**

#### **Department of Mass Media, Communication and Theatre**

Performing Arts Center (PAC) #101

Phone: 903-886-5346 (Main Office)

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Course Specific Policies and Procedures:**

**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, workshops, and performances in class.

**ATTENDANCE:** You should realize the vital importance of daily student attendance for developing new skills and understanding new material. *You are expected to attend every class meeting.* I am very strict about this. *There is no way to make up a missed acting class!* If you do not attend class, you may be leaving your partner stranded if in-class time is devoted to partner work, which it often will be! You cannot learn if you are not in class. **DON'T MISS CLASS!**

**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. The class will begin promptly at 12:30 p.m.!

**CELL PHONES AND LAPTOPS:** NO LAPTOPS OR CELL PHONES! PERIOD! You can go an hour and a half without googling something on your phone. If you cannot go an hour and a half without your phone, then college may not be the place for you.

**LATE WORK:** *Workshops and Performances – Under normal circumstances, a missed workshop or performance may not be made up. Sorry, you missed the boat.*

**EXTRA CREDIT:** there is no extra credit offered in this class

**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. Students are not allowed to smoke during class time – even when in individual/partner rehearsals at an outside location.

**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 and instructor 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.* There is also a policy in this class that a performer is required to inform his/her audience that the performance piece may be offensive to the audience. 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 unit 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 significant crossover, these two art forms are different in a number of ways. Further, when choosing 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 a selection in this class, you must have access to the entire play from which the piece comes.

#### **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, 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.*)

#### **Students with Disabilities:**

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**

**Room 132**

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

**Fax (903) 468-8148**

[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

**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 *Student's Guide Handbook*, Policies and Procedures, Conduct.)

## **COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

**Tentative Schedule:** (subject to change at the discretion of the instructor)

\*Tuesday, August 27

Introduction to Course

Pre-test

\*Thursday, August 29

Warm-up Activities

Activity/Discussion – What is acting?

Homework-the most interesting person-you

\*Auditions for Complete works of William Shakespeare Abridged

\*Tuesday, September 3

Warm-up Activities

Lecture/Exercises

The most interesting person presentation

Overview of Open Character Scene Projects/Partners Assigned

\*Thursday, September 5

Warm-up Activities

Open Character Scene Rehearsals

Homework-read chapter :The Method of Physical Actions in *The Stanislavski System*

Tuesday, September 10

Warm-up Activities

Lecture/Exercises

Open Character Scene Rehearsals

\*Thursday, September 12

Warm-up Activities

Lecture/Exercises

Open Character Scene Rehearsals

Homework-Read chapter: Elements of an Action(and all sub-headings) in *The Stanislavski System*

\*Tuesday, September 17

Quiz #1 over *The Stanislavski System*

Lecture on Characterization Collage Presentation

Open Character Scene Rehearsals

\*Thursday, September 19

Warm-up Activities

Open Character Scene Workshops #1

\*Tuesday, September 24

Warm-up Activities

Open Character Scene Workshops #2

\*Thursday, September 26

Warm-up Activities

Open Character Scene Performances

Overview of Monologue Project/Selection of Monologue

\*Tuesday, October 1

Warm-up Activities

Lecture/Exercises/ Improv

Lecture Characterization Collage Presentation

Homework- have Monologue Selections

\*Thursday, October 3

Warm-up Activities

Lecture/Exercises

Monologue Approval

\*\*Due: Monologue Selections

\*Tuesday, October 8

Warm-up Activities

Characterization Activities

\*Opening night of Compleat works of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged) make sure you have a ticket!

\*Thursday, October 10

Warm-up Activities

Lecture/Exercises

Monologue Rehearsals

\*Tuesday, October 15

Warm-up Activities

Lecture/Exercises

Monologue Rehearsals

Homework- Read chapter: Analysis through Events and actions in *The Stanislavski System*

\*Thursday, October 17

Warm-up Activities

Lecture/Exercises

Monologue Rehearsals

Homework- Read chapter: The Super-Objective and the Through Line of Actions in *The Stanislavski System* and Characterization Collage and Developed Presentation

\*Tuesday, October 22

Characterization Collage Presentations

Lecture

Monologue Rehearsals

\*Thursday, October 24

Warm-up Activities

Monologue Workshops #1

Homework: Read chapter: The Actor's Physical Apparatus in *The Stanislavski System*

\*Tuesday, October 29

Warm-up Activities

Monologue Workshops #2

\*Thursday, October 31

Warm-up Activities

Contemporary Monologue Workshops #3

Overview of Scripted Scene Projects/Partners Assigned

\*Tuesday, November 5

Quiz #2 (over The Stanislavski System and Compleat works...)

Warm-up Activities

Monologue Performances

Opening night if *Kiss me, Kate*. (have your tickets)

\*Thursday, November 7

Warm-up Activities

Lecture/Exercises

Overview of Final Project

Improv

\*Tuesday, November 12

Warm-up Activities

Scripted Scene Rehearsals

\*Thursday, November 14

Warm-up Activities

Lecture/Exercises

Scripted Scene Rehearsal

\*Tuesday, November 19

Warm-up Activities

Lecture/Exercises

Homework: read hand-out

Scripted Scene Workshop #1

\*Thursday, November 21

Quiz #3 (over- Hand out and *Kiss me, Kate*)

*Scripted Scene Workshop #2*

\*Tuesday, November 26- Thursday, November 28-Thanksgiving Break!

\*Tuesday, December 3

Warm-up Activities

Scripted Scene Final Performances

\*Thursday, December 5

Scripted Scene Final Performances

Post-Test

\*December 9-13 finals week

NO CLASS

You last project is your final.