

Acting Shakespeare

Curriculum excerpt. Identifying course and institutional information, contact details, dated schedules, administrative policies, and grading logistics have been omitted for portfolio use.

Course description

An advanced acting styles course focusing exclusively on the performance of Shakespearean scenes and monologues. Students develop a creative process for auditioning, approaching, and performing Shakespeare.

Teaching philosophy & methodology

I strive to emphasize separating artistic expression from external validation, urging students to focus on their unique journeys rather than comparing themselves to others. My class will be a space to play and explore. To bring in the work we do on our own and present it free of our own judgment. To deepen our connection to our emotional life so that when we tie it to our own creative process we can produce authentic, undeniable, rigorous characters.

Learning outcomes

- Develop an individualized process for embodying Shakespearean characters through physicalized text analysis and scene study.
- Identify what is being said and to whom it is being said.
- Explore what verse meter, punctuation, stage directions, syllabic makeup, exclamations, vowels and consonants, imagery, and target reveal about character.
- Communicate the language clearly through specific understanding.
- Understand the expectations of an actor in a Shakespeare rehearsal space.

Practice & progression

Text analysis

Students complete and present text analysis using tools developed through class exploration and prior acting study.

Rehearsals, presentations & critiques

Scene study and in-class rehearsals connect textual understanding with given circumstances and objectives. Students present their analysis and explore their choices in performance.

Reflection

Written reflections support articulation of the rehearsal and performance process.

Final evaluative exercise

An ensemble presentation of an abridged Shakespeare play with minimal production elements, emphasizing acting, textual understanding, and storytelling.

Curricular progression

Paraphrasing; punctuation dancing; tonal architecture; monologue selection, rehearsal, and performance; two-person scene study; ensemble rehearsal and presentation; additional monologue work.

Materials & supplementary resources

A reputable edition of Shakespeare's complete works; Federico Garcia Lorca on Duende; Grotowski's reply to Stanislavsky; The Actor and the Target by Declan Donnellan.

Assessment philosophy

Professionalism, participation, preparation, and effort are central. Questions and curiosity are encouraged, alongside a willingness to play, explore, complete the work, and communicate effectively.