

Acting 1: Fundamentals

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

Course description

Students are introduced to and apply foundational techniques of acting through scene study, text analysis, and solo performance.

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

1. Articulate their experience of performance in order to become better collaborators and artists.
2. Identify the key fundamentals of performance: Space, Shape, Time, Emotion, Movement, and Story.
3. Identify and personalize given circumstances based upon key fundamentals.
4. Begin reifying story based upon individual exploration of text and story.
5. Articulate the difference between awareness and analysis.
6. Develop working knowledge of action, tactic, given circumstances, objective, beat, and story.

Materials

Personal journal or notebook and writing utensil; computer for accessing readings and research; assigned reading materials.

Practice & progression

Reflection

Students respond to prompts throughout the course, articulating their experiences of the work.

Text analysis

Students complete and present text analysis through both physical exploration and written work.

Reading

Responses to assigned texts include class discussion, exploration of the material, and written assignments.

Performance

Ensemble-based exploration progresses into scenes for two to four actors.

Final evaluative exercise

A two-person scene and a moving tableau exploring the course readings.

Curricular progression

Space; Shape; Time; Movement; Emotion; Story; given circumstances; monologues; assigned and self-selected scenes; final scenes and ensemble moving tableau.

Supplementary resources

Standing in Space: The Six Viewpoints by Mary Overlie; Sanford Meisner on Acting; Respect for Acting by Uta Hagen; An Actor Prepares by Konstantin Stanislavsky; The Actor and the Target by Declan Donnellan; Lorca on Duende; Elinor Fuchs on the world of the play.

Assessment philosophy

Professionalism, participation, preparation, and effort are central to assessment. Questions and curiosity are encouraged. Evaluation centers on doing the work and engaging in exploration.