



THA-110: FUNDAMENTALS OF ACTING

Effective Term

Fall 2026

BOT Approval Date

12/11/2025

Discipline

THA - Theater Arts

Course Number

110

Course Title

Fundamentals of Acting

Short Title

Fundamentals of Acting

Credit Status (CB 04)

D - Credit - Degree applicable

Units**Lecture Units**

3.00

Total Units

3.00

Hours**Lecture Contact Hours**

48-54

Out of Class Hours Lecture

96-108

Total Contact Hours

48 - 54

Total Out of Class Hours

96 - 108

Total Student Learning Hours

144 - 162

Distance Education

No

C-ID (Admin Only)

C-ID THTR 151

Catalog Description

This course introduces beginning acting students to the foundational principles of the actor's craft through lectures, class discussions, improvisation, and practical exercises. With a focus on creating an inclusive and supportive environment, students will explore diverse perspectives and lived experiences in the development of characters and stories. Through rehearsal and performance of monologues and scene work, students will learn warm-up techniques, audition practices, theater etiquette, terminology, safety protocols, and the fundamentals of the acting profession. Emphasizing respect for cultural differences and equitable representation,

the course encourages students to engage with a broad range of theatrical characters and develop critical analyses of a live performance in relation to the art and craft of acting.

Codes

TOP Code (CB 03)

1007.00 - Dramatic Arts

CIP Code

50.0506 - Acting.

Repeatability Code

No

Grading Option

Letter grade OR P/NP

Minimum Qualifications

Minimum Qualifications	And/Or
Theater Arts (Masters Required)	End

GE Information

Check GE Types Requested

AA/AS C - Humanities

Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

Learning Objective
1. Develop comfort, confidence, and skill in a performance/presentation
2. Apply terminology related to theatre, performance, and stage geography
3. Demonstrate proper warm-up techniques necessary for the vocal and physical demands of acting
4. Synthesize major fundamental concepts of acting into performance, such as objective, super-objective, obstacle, beat, and circles of attention
5. Analyze Stanislavski's "method" in comparison to other theories of contemporary acting
6. Evaluate beginnings of personal, emotional, behavioral, sensory and cognitive resources in performance
7. Analyze a scene or play through a culturally responsive lens, examining the dramatic action, plot, and given circumstances while considering historical, social, and cultural contexts
8. Prepare a written character biography in order to help create and support character choices
9. Perform monologues, dialogues and scenes from published plays with developing use of voice and body instruments
10. Present themselves and their work as would be required in a professional audition situation
11. Evaluate a scene, or a production, from an observer's perspective and identify the strengths and weaknesses of that presentation in terms of fundamental acting technique.

Learning Outcome Information

Course Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome
1. Students will identify major fundamental concepts in acting into performance, such as objective, super objective, obstacle, beat, and circles of attention.
2. Students will perform monologues, dialogues and/or scenes from published plays and recognized resources taking into account ethnic and gender diverse voices, using body and voice as the primary instrument of dramatic expression.

3. Students will evaluate a monologue/scene/production from an observer's perspective and identify the strengths and weaknesses of that presentation from a fundamental technique point of view.

Content

Course Lecture Content

Course Overview

1. Introduction to Acting

- a. Overview of the Course
- b. What is Acting?
- c. The Actor's Role in Storytelling
- d. Class Expectations and Participation Guidelines

2. Importance of Stage Directions

- a. Understanding Stage Directions (Upstage, Downstage, Stage Left, Stage Right)
- b. Practical Exercises in Following Directions
- c. Blocking Basics
- d. The Relationship between Blocking and Character Development

3. Goals and Objectives in Performance

- a. Defining Goals and Objectives in Acting
- b. The Importance of Motivation
- c. Breaking Down a Scene into Objectives
- d. Partnered Practice: Identifying Objectives in Scripted Scenes

4. Introduction to Embodying a Character

- a. Physical Awareness and Movement
- b. Developing a Character Walk
- c. Creating Physical Distinctions between Characters
- d. Improvisational Exercises for Physicality
- e. Creation of a character based on an autobiographical event.

5. Voice and Speech

- a. Vocal Warm-ups
- b. Understanding Projection and Diction
- c. Exploring Tone, Pitch, and Pace
- d. Monologue Preparation

6. Emotional Preparation

- a. Identifying Emotional Triggers
- b. Developing Emotional Honesty
- c. Personalization Techniques
- d. Emotional Recall Exercises

7. Writing a Character Biography

- a. Researching Background Information
- b. Writing Detailed Character Histories
- c. Motivations and Relationships
- d. In-Class Writing Workshop

8. Scene Study: Application of Character Biography

- a. Selecting Scenes for Study
- b. Applying Character Biographies to Performance
- c. Partnered Rehearsals
- d. Feedback and Discussion

9. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Acting

- a. Defining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Theatre
- b. Discussing Representation on Stage
- c. How Bias Can Influence Character Interpretation
- d. Group Discussion and Reflection

10. Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity

- a. Understanding Cultural Contexts of Plays
- b. Avoiding Stereotypes
- c. Case Study: Performances that Challenge Bias

- d. Ethical Considerations in Casting and Performance

11. Text Analysis

- a. Breaking Down the Script
- b. Identifying Subtext
- c. Marking Beats and Transitions
- d. Scene Work

12. Improvisation Techniques

- a. Basic Improv Games
- b. Listening and Responding
- c. Building Characters through Improv
- d. Creating Spontaneous Scenes

13. Monologue Performance

- a. Selecting a Monologue
- b. Analyzing the Text
- c. Rehearsing for Performance
- d. Peer Feedback Sessions

14. Audition Preparation

- a. Understanding the Audition Process: What Directors Look For
- b. Selecting an Appropriate Audition Monologue
- c. Preparing and Polishing a Monologue for Audition Settings
- d. Audition Etiquette and Professional Presentation
- e. Cold Reading Techniques
- f. Managing Nerves and Building Confidence
- g. Mock Auditions and Instructor Feedback

15. Ensemble Work

- a. Building Ensemble Trust
- b. Scene Work
- c. Collaborative Blocking
- d. Ensemble-Based Improvisations

16. What is a Technical Rehearsal?

- a. Incorporating Props and Costumes
- b. Working with Lighting and Sound
- c. Finalizing Blocking
- d. Dress Rehearsals

17. Final Performances (Part One)

- a. Monologue Performances
- b. Peer and Instructor Feedback

18. Final Performances (Part Two)

- a. Ensemble Scene Performances
- b. Peer and Instructor Feedback

19. Final Performances (Part 3)

- a. Outline a piece based on a personal event incorporating one's cultural perspective
- b. Workshop in class
- c. Perform a live version of the piece

Methods of Instruction**Method**

Experiments

Integration

Experiments are provided in student creation of an autobiographical piece that incorporates their cultural background, monologues, dialogues and published scenes as a means of demonstrating craft, skill, and aesthetic awareness.



Method

In-class Exercises

Integration

Exercises are provided to demonstrate proper warm-up techniques necessary for the vocal and physical demands of acting.

Method

Lecture

Integration

Lectures provide students with terminology related to theatre, performance, and stage geography

Method

Live Performance Viewing

Integration

A way of giving students the opportunity to see and analyze stage performances in terms of the fundamentals they are studying.

Method

Observation and Demonstration

Integration

Observation and demonstration provide students with an opportunity to develop critical analysis skills by identifying strengths and weaknesses in order to better present work from a fundamental technique perspective.

Method

Projects

Integration

Projects provide students with an opportunity to conduct an in-depth textual analysis of a scene or play, examining the dramatic action, plot, and given circumstances.

Method

Role Playing/Simulation

Integration

Role Playing/simulation events are provided to teach students to present themselves and their work in a professional audition situation.

Methods of Evaluation**Method**

Class Performance

Integration

Class presentations are evaluated using oral feedback/critique based on instructor's provided rubric. This may be based on student's understanding of given circumstances, use of vocal and physical resources, and appropriate professional behavior during class performance.

Method

Papers

Integration

Papers are graded using the departmental rubric for writing a successful theatre critique which take into consideration the following: critical analysis, proper use of terminology, and the supported evaluation of the artistic merits of the production while using a culturally responsive lens, considering the historical, social and cultural contexts of the piece.

Method

Peer evaluation of scene study presentations

Integration

Peer evaluation of scene study presentations use rubrics that assign point values for specific elements within the student's work, based on student's applied understanding of major fundamental concepts of acting--objective, super-objective, obstacle, beat, and circles of attention.

Method

Quizzes and examinations

Integration

Quizzes and examinations are evaluated, using raw scores and percentages, based on the correct application of terminology related to theatre, performance, and stage geography.

Method

Self-Evaluation

Integration

Student written self-evaluation of work presented, based on student's personal commitment to emotional, behavioral, sensory, and cognitive resources in performance.

Assignments**Assignment Type**

Other

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

The "Autodrama" is a 10 minute creative representation of your life thus far. The subject matter must be based on an event that changed your life or life path, it can also be based on a social issue that directly affects you or that you are extremely passionate about. You will write, stage, block, design and supply all props for your "Autodrama". It is important to incorporate aspects of your cultural identity into the piece, included but not limited to, music, dance styles, language, characters, traditions, etc. You will use the lessons you learn throughout the semester, the terminology, and stage positions to create your piece. You can write and perform your piece in person for the class or you can create a film and play it for the class. It must be between 7 and 10 minutes long.



Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Attend a live theatre production and write a critical analysis of the performance, focusing on acting choices, staging, and the impact of the production on the audience. Consider how the actors embodied their characters, the effectiveness of their emotional and physical choices, and how the set, lighting, and sound design contributed to the storytelling. Reflect on how cultural, historical, and social contexts influenced the production and whether diverse perspectives were represented. Your critique should be 4-5 pages, demonstrating thoughtful engagement with the performance and applying key concepts from the course.

Assignment Type

Reading

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

After reading Lessons 1 and 2 from Acting One by Robert Cohen, and using it as a basis for the assignment. Students will develop a detailed character biography for each role they are assigned to perform. The biography should include personal background, relationships, motivations, fears, and defining experiences that shape the character's actions and emotions. They should consider the historical, cultural, and social context of the character, and how their identity influences their perspective and interactions. This assignment should be 1-3 pages and will serve as a foundation for scene work, helping the student fully embody the characters in each performance.

Course Materials**Textbooks**

Acting One by Robert Cohen (2008) ISBN10: 0073514160 | ISBN13: 9780073514161

The Actor in You 7th edition by Robert Benedetti (2022) ISBN: 978-1478649359

Other Resources

Supplemental play titles are recommended, as students must become familiar and comfortable with the field.

Class Size Information**Class Size**

30

Class Size Category

D - Individualized instruction/group learning/student presentations 30

Diversity and Inclusion

Course Design and Materials: Course will incorporate diverse perspectives, authors, and examples that reflect a variety of cultures, identities, and lived experiences. Instructional materials will be reviewed regularly to ensure representation, inclusivity, and alignment with equity-minded practices across disciplines.

Inclusive Learning Environment: Instructors will establish classroom norms and policies that promote respect, civil discourse, and belonging in both online and face-to-face classes. Clear expectations for communication and engagement will support a learning space where all students feel valued and heard.

Accessible Instruction: Course content will be delivered using accessible design. Materials will follow accessibility guidelines within the CMS, including captioned media, readable document formats, and multiple means of engagement to support diverse learning.

Equitable Teaching Practices: Instructors will use transparent and grading criteria, varied assessment methods, and timely feedback to promote fairness and student success. Opportunities for revision, reflection, and multiple demonstrations of learning may be incorporated when appropriate to the discipline.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogies: Instructional strategies will encourage critical thinking about diverse perspectives and systems of power relevant to the course content. Faculty will foster opportunities for students to connect course material to real-world contexts.

Ongoing Reflection and Improvement: Faculty will engage in continuous professional development related to IDEAA principles and reflect on course practices using metacognition to identify opportunities for increased equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Explain how diversity and inclusion(e.g., gender, culture/race, sexuality, etc.) is infused into the course.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are infused into this course through the exploration of diverse cultural perspectives in theatre and discussions on how social identities impact character representation. Students engage in conversations about bias, stereotypes, and equitable casting practices, encouraging them to approach roles with cultural sensitivity and respect. The curriculum encourages students to incorporate their own cultural perspectives and to consider choosing plays and scenes from underrepresented voices, promoting an appreciation of multiple viewpoints. Reflective writing assignments challenge students to consider their own perspectives while fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Describe how assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions are contextualized for diverse learners promoting an equitable course.

The course assignments, instruction, evaluation, content, and interactions are designed to support diverse learners by offering multiple modes of participation such as written reflections, oral presentations, and collaborative group work. Instruction is delivered with flexibility to accommodate varying learning styles and accessibility needs. Evaluations prioritize process and growth over final outcomes, providing constructive feedback to encourage each student's artistic development. Course materials are carefully selected to reflect diverse voices and experiences, while classroom interactions promote respectful dialogue and mutual understanding among all participants.

Interactions

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-student interaction.

Student-to-student interaction is a key component of this course, fostering collaborative learning through ensemble scene work, partnered exercises, and group discussions. Students engage in peer feedback sessions, offering constructive critiques to support one another's growth. Improvisational exercises and ensemble-based projects promote active listening, cooperation, and creative problem-solving. These interactions create a supportive environment where students learn to respect diverse perspectives and build trust within the ensemble.

Explain how the course will incorporate instructor-to-student interaction.

Instructor-to-student interaction is integral to this course, with the instructor providing personalized feedback on performances, written assignments, and character development. The instructor facilitates one-on-one coaching sessions, guiding students through the creative process and offering constructive critiques. Regular class discussions allow the instructor to clarify concepts, answer questions, and encourage reflective thinking. The instructor also creates an inclusive environment by acknowledging diverse perspectives and encouraging open dialogue, ensuring that each student feels supported in their artistic journey.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-content interaction.

Student-to-content interaction is embedded through active engagement with scripts, character research, and performance exercises. Students analyze and interpret dramatic texts, exploring thematic elements, cultural context, and character motivations. Hands-on activities such as scene rehearsals, monologue practice, and journaling exercises encourage students to apply theoretical knowledge

in a practical setting. Reflective writing assignments and classroom discussions prompt students to deepen their understanding of the material and connect it to their own experiences, fostering a comprehensive learning process.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-self interaction (metacognitive).

Student-to-self interaction is an essential part of this course, encouraging self-reflection and personal growth. Through journaling assignments and reflective writing, students evaluate their own artistic development, set goals, and articulate their evolving understanding of the craft. Guided meditation and mindfulness exercises help students connect with their emotions and physical presence. Self-assessment forms and individual progress reviews prompt students to critically analyze their performances, identify strengths, and areas for improvement, fostering a deeper connection between their artistic practice and personal identity.

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