

Introduction to Acting**Theater 121, Fall 2009**

Prof. Mary Lynn Owen

Rich 225A

contact: mowen3@learnlink.emory.edu

Office Hours: MWF by appointment; I'm also free to speak for a few minutes following class.

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to introduce you to the art and craft of creating and performing a role. Basic acting technique will be developed through group and individual exercises, weekly assignments, journal entries, production attendance, and prepared scene work.

Course Objectives:

To build foundational acting skills – in particular, the physical, vocal, intellectual, and imaginative skills necessary for communicating effectively onstage

To begin to analyze text

To learn to work in collaboration with fellow actors, and to build ensemble

To instill an appreciation for the art of acting and for the theater

Grading

Your grade will be based on the following criteria:

- Active, focused participation in class exercises
- Careful preparation of assignments, including written assignments, and exams
- Regular journal entries
- Acquisition of skills, and evidence of growth
- Class attendance and Production attendance

Grade Breakdown

Class/Event Attendance 25%

Because of the experiential and collaborative nature of acting training, attendance at all class sessions is required. Your semester grade will not be directly affected by one or two absences, but each absence beyond two will drop your final grade by one step (A to A-, A- to B+, etc.)

If you wish to be accommodated regarding religious observances or other personal commitments that may conflict with class attendance or class work, please make this request as soon as possible in the semester. Even when such absences are approved, you must assume responsibility for making up missed work and learning missed material. It is important to note that, with the building-block nature of the class exercises, a missed class makes successive exercises harder to grasp.

Class will begin promptly and it is imperative that you arrive on time. Three tardies will affect your grade in the same way as an absence.

Participation 25%

I grade you on your focused participation, and the level of your commitment to classwork and exercises, not on how naturally talented you may be. Acting training demands that you "show up" mentally, emotionally, and imaginatively as well as physically. Acting is an artistic discipline, and though collaborative and fun (hopefully!) the focus must always remain on the work at hand. You are a crucial participant, whether taking part in a group exercise, performing solo work, or watching the work of your fellow classmates.

Weekly assignments, Journal entries, Pop Quizzes 20%

When exercises are assigned, you will prepare the assignment outside of class, and present it, individually, or in pairs, before the class. In addition to your journal (see below) you will occasionally write short responses to plays or scenes you've read. Once scene work begins, rehearsal outside of class, and thorough reading of at least one script, will be expected. Bring all necessary props and costumes to class. Be prepared to schlep!

Journal - Your journal will be your personal creation; think of it as your own acting textbook, custom made by you, for you. It should include your personal reflections, but may also include personal responses to articles, movies, plays, photographs, and may include original drawings and poetry. An actor's ability is linked to his/her experience of the world. Engage your senses, mind, imagination, even your dreams, as you create your journal. Many times, I will suggest a weekly topic that pertains to our work in class; other times you may follow your own inspiration. Journals will be collected on the following dates: **September 24, October 29, and December 3.** Forgetting your journal on due days, as well as failing to create it, will result in a small deduction each time. If there are pages you would prefer to keep private, simply fold them over, lengthwise.

Pop Quizzes will cover basic information. Expect at least one, but no more than two.

Midterm 10%

The midterm will be held on **Tuesday, October 20.** This will consist of two "open scenes," performed with a partner, and will contain certain applications from the class assignments and exercises. I will outline more clearly as we progress in the term.

Final Paper 10%

After reading and attending, "Our Town," you will submit a 3 page minimum paper. Guidelines will be forthcoming. **Due December 8, the last day of class.**

Final Exam 10%

Final exam will be held on **December 8, the last day of class.** Scene performance.

Additional class information:

- Attire: Class will always begin with a physical warm up. Wear comfortable, casual, non-binding clothes that permit physical flexibility and deep breath work. Wear shoes that permit active movement (no flip-flops, clogs, sandals)
- Nature of class exercises and material: Group exercises are, at times, strenuous and aerobic, and often involve close proximity to others. Texts may include adult subject matter.
- Material to bring to class: your notebook, assigned scripts, and props/costumes when exercise or scene requires. *If you must miss a class, you are expected to come to the next class fully prepared. I will leave handout material outside Dr. Lemons' door.*
- I will finalize our Learnlink class conference as soon as possible after drop/add. Please use this to keep in touch with one another, ask questions, let class members know of your activities, etc.
- Because I'm also a professional actor, I may, at times, have conflicts with rehearsals, auditions, and the occasional day of shooting. I always work around class, but when necessary, use a substitute, usually my husband, Rob Cleveland, also a professional actor.
- The Emory Honor Code is in force in this course. Please note: plagiarism is the act of submitting someone else's work as your own, whether it is from another student, the Internet, or from using a published source without documentation.
- Students with documented needs for certain accommodations must consult with me asap.