

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for THEA 3

THEATER IMPROVISATION

Effective: Fall 2005

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

THEA 3 — THEATER IMPROVISATION — 3.00 units

Introduction to Improvisation. Workshop exercises in theater experience through the operational structure of the game. Mime, characterizations, scene setting, mood and material for extended ensemble improvisation. Recommended for non-theater as well as theater majors.

3.00 Units Lecture

Grading Methods:

Discipline:

Family: Theater Improv

	<u>MIN</u>
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 4

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. Participate comfortably in improvised group scenes and sketches;
- B. Perform in individual monologues, pantomimes and improvisations;
- C. Express him/herself effectively through body language, pantomime and facial expression;
- D. Express him/herself effectively through the spoken word;
- E. Contribute to the creation of group scenes and sketches;
- F. Lead a class in doing theater games, warm ups and improvisations;
- G. Evaluate in writing and in speaking the effectiveness and artistry of improvised scenes;
- H. Experience a greater sensitivity to and awareness of self and others;
- I. Describe the use of improvisation in styles and groups such as Commedia del Arte, Creative Dramatics, Second City

V. CONTENT:

- A. Introduction to improvisation
 - 1. Purposes
 - 2. Rules and Etiquette
- B. Warm Ups and Preparation Exercises
 - 1. Body
 - a. Relaxation
 - b. Centering
 - c. Energizing
 - 2. Voice
 - a. Breath support
 - b. Articulation
 - c. Resonation
 - 3. Mind
 - a. Concentration
 - b. Imagination
 - c. Awareness
 - 4. Examples
 - a. Mirroring
 - b. Stretches and shakes
 - c. Tongue twisters
 - d. Guided imagery
- C. Improvisations and Theater Games
 - 1. Establishing setting
 - 2. Creating character
 - 3. Establishing, building and progressing scenes
 - 4. Work on rhythm and timing
 - 5. Staging and blocking

- 6. Objectives and emotions
- 7. Finding and developing material for improvisation
- 8. Extended improvisations into prepared performances
- 9. Use of improvisational techniques with scripted scenes
- 10. Improvising with music
- 11. Competitive Theater Sports
- D. Improvisation Backgrounds
 - 1. Commedia del Arte
 - 2. Creative Dramatics
 - 3. Viola Spolin and Theater games
 - 4. Second City, The Groundlings

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. Leadership of the theater games, warm ups and improvisations
- B. Instructor responses to the work/play 1. Evaluation a. Of individual performances b. Of the group performing 2. Coaching
- C. **Demonstration** -
- D. **Lecture** -
- E. Leadership of class discussions and evaluations

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Active, creative participation in the activities of each class session. B. Keeping a journal of in-class activities 1. Description of the game or exercise 2. Level of participation by the students 3. Personal observations of their own work and reaction to the improv or exercise (e.g. Thing learned or discovered) 4. Observations of the work of other students C. Leading a class session, individually or as part of a group 1. Advance planning, including a written outline 2. Leading the session 3. Evaluating the session in terms of student participation and goals accomplished 4. Attending a performance of an off-campus improv group, including a written evaluation 5. Reading articles on the history of improvisations

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

- 1. Exams/Tests
- 2. Projects
- 3. Field Trips
- 4. Class Participation
- 5. Other:
 - a. Student response and participation in the workshop sessions
 - b. Demonstration of growing awareness, imagination and creativity
 - c. Completion and quality of required projects
 - 1. Journal
 - 2. Leadership of a class session
 - 3. Improv group field trip
 - d. Evidence of ability to handle self-directed material
 - e. Evidence of ability to work actively and supportively with others
 - f. Tests on reading material

B. **Frequency**

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- 1. Spolin, Viola *Improvisation for the Theater*. 3rd ed., Northwestern University Press, 0.
- 2. Belt Lynda, and Stockley Rebecca *Thespis Production.*, -, 1995.
- 3. Articles on Commedia del Arte and modern era improv groups
- 4. Handouts on improvisation purposes, rules and etiquette

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

- A. Loose, comfortable clothing