

**Acting Fundamentals**  
**Theater 120, Fall 2012**

Prof. Mary Lynn Owen

Emory: Rich 225A; Oxford: Dr. Lemons' office

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Office Hours: immediately following class; I'm also available by appt.

**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, including reading/writing 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 and honestly 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
- 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 extenuating 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.

Use of cell phone, or unapproved use of computer, during class will count as one absence.

#### Participation 25%

I grade you on your focused participation, and the level of your commitment to class work 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. Participation includes warmups, partner/group work, class exercises, and class discussions, particularly as we read and analyze scripts. It also includes weekly assignments, including written assignments, and scene preparation.

Emory students: At least one of your assignments will involve attending a Monday night evening of the "Breaking Ground" series. 5 – 8 in the Schwartz Lab. Sept 10, October 8, October 29, November 19, December 3.

#### Midterm 10%

The midterm will be held for **EMORY on Wed, October 24–** and for **OXFORD on Thursday, October 25..** This will consist of two scenes from "365 Days – 365 Plays," by Suzan Lori- Parks. Scenes will 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 20%

After attending a professional production, you will submit a minimum 3-page paper, due **the last day of class.** This paper will evaluate the actors' work, considering the particular lessons we've learned in class, and will also reflect on your own growth as an actor. Specific guidelines to be given.

*Possible productions include: Theater Emory, THE COMIC MYSTERIES, or GRIM, GRIMMER, GRIMMEST: TALES OF A PRECARIOUS NATURE – <http://theater.emory.edu/Theater-Emory/current-season.php>*

Additional venues: The Alliance Theater, Theatrical Outfit, Horizon Theater, Georgia Shakespeare Festival

#### Final Exam 20%

This will be a scene performance, held on the last day of class. In the tradition of the Theater Studies Dept., we will open this performance to an invited audience of your friends, etc.

### **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: a notebook or binder for notes, handouts; 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 my office door, or outside Dr. Lemons' (Oxford) 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. Refer to: [http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/policy/honor\\_code.html](http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/policy/honor_code.html)
- Every effort will gladly be made to accommodate the needs of students with special requirements. Students must notify the instructor and work out accommodations before the end of the add-drop period. For information from Emory College, please visit:

[http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/advising/forms\\_resources1.html](http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/advising/forms_resources1.html)

and

<http://www.ods.emory.edu/>