

DRAM 2010: Introduction to Acting (Non-majors)

Instructor: Harold M. Leaver

Fall, 2007, Section #20-551

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Course Description: An introduction to acting, this course will emphasize developing the actor's instrument, introducing the student to the fundamentals of acting and making the student a more informed observer of the acting experience. The course will also introduce the student to the fundamental rehearsal process culminating in performances of selected scenes.

Course objectives:

1. To develop the student's observational skills towards life, its experiences, towards artistic sensibility and towards becoming a more informed audience member.
2. To introduce the student to the basic imaginative, physical and vocal skills necessary for acting.
3. To develop in the student a beginning rehearsal approach to scripted scenes.
4. To develop in the student an understanding of the cooperative nature of acting.

Required Texts:

Acting One by Robert Cohen (5th Ed.)

Crimes of the Heart by Beth Henley

Beyond Therapy by Christopher Durang

Marvin's Room by Scott McPherson

Please bring a sharpened pencil to every class meeting.

Major Assignments:

1. Presentation of two scripted scenes and accompanying character analysis.
2. Presentation of at least one "open, contentless scene."
3. Participation in class exercises, discussions, performance assignments and group work.
4. Reading of texts and plays as assigned.
5. One written exam and periodic quizzes.
6. Attendance and analysis of the University Theatre production of *Urinetown, the Musical*; performances are November 8-9, 11, 13-16, 18; student price is \$12.

General Notes:

1. Acting is a discipline!
2. Three absences will lower your final grade one full letter; each additional absence will lower your grade another full letter. Two tardies count as one absence. There are NO excused absences unless the instructor finds extraordinary circumstances. This is a

participatory class. Five absences will result in a “D,” and six absences will result in an “F.”

3. NEVER miss class when a performance assignment is due; you will receive a “zero” for that assignment and will not be allowed to make it up.
4. Make up work is allowed only under extraordinary circumstances and through the student’s initiative.
5. All assigned written work must be typed, or it will not be accepted.
6. Do not miss rehearsals with your partner; be respectful of other people’s time. Be available, and be prepared.
7. Wear to class clothing that is suitable for movement and floor work. You will not be allowed to participate and will receive an absence if not dressed for work.
8. Absence is permitted for religious holidays with advance notice.
9. Assignments are due at the beginning of class; otherwise they are late and will lose one full letter grade.
10. You may bring a water bottle to class. ALL OTHER FOODS AND DRINKS ARE PROHIBITED WITHIN THE CLASSROOM!!
11. The nature of acting and this course requires that physical contact occur from time to time with fellow students. On occasion I may have to adjust parts of your body for proper alignment and to release tension. Please see the instructor privately as soon as possible if this presents a problem.
12. Plays written for the theatre sometimes contain language that might be considered offensive to some: profanities, violence, sexual terms or references to religious deities. Please see the instructor privately as soon as possible if this presents a problem for you.
13. If you have a disability or physical injury that hinders you from participating in class activities, please see the instructor privately so arrangements can be made to accommodate you.
14. The use of electronic devices (MP3 players, cell phones, etc.) within the classroom are strictly prohibited AT ALL TIMES!
15. All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Each student is responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing academic work.
16. This course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Grading Criteria:

Though grading a student’s work in an acting class is the subjective right of the professor, there are concrete goals that the student can strive to meet in pursuing a particular grade:

A - Excellent. Always well prepared; extensive outside preparation. Actively pursues improvement and highly self motivated. Student makes significant growth in skills and knowledge during the semester. Active, positive contributor to class. Punctual, always present.

B - Good to excellent. Always prepared; notable outside preparation. Pursues improvement and self motivated. Notable growth in skills and knowledge during semester.

Positive contributor to class. Punctual, always present.

C - Acceptable to good. Generally prepared; acceptable outside preparation. Interested in improvement and often self motivated. Often contributes to class. Punctual, always present.

D - (Failing for majors) Unacceptable to acceptable. Often not prepared; shows little outside preparation. Shows little interest in improvement and is rarely self motivated. Very little skill and knowledge growth during semester. Seldom contributes to class and has negative attitude. Sometimes late; some absences.

F - Largely unacceptable. Rarely prepared and lacks adequate outside preparation. Virtually no interest in self improvement and not motivated. Virtually no growth in skills and knowledge. Does not contribute to class; negative attitude. Not punctual, several absences.

Grade Breakdown:

Open Scene	10%
Prepared scripted scene 1	10%
Prepared scripted scene 2	20%
Final Exam	20%
Quizzes	15%
Participation, prep, use of class time, etc.	15%
Performance analysis	10%

Scenes will be graded on an A-F scale, plus or minus according to the following criteria:

- Level of preparation and rehearsal
- Use of class time
- Ability to determine and play a Goal/Intention/Objective
- Ability to work off, connect and cooperate with scene partner
- Use of body
- Use of voice
- Ability to understand and utilize "given circumstances"
- Overall growth and improvement

Regardless of what response the class gives (or your friends give), the instructor is solely responsible for assigning your grade, and using the above criteria will assess your work and grade accordingly. Your own subjective feelings about your performance are not germane to the grade you receive.

Class participation: Will be a letter grade, plus or minus, based on your attendance, attitude in class, oral participation, punctuality, preparation, commitment to class exercises, positive contributions and your ability to work with the ensemble.

A = 93-100%

A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86
B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79
C = 73-76
C- = 70-72
D = 60-69
F = less than 60

Class calendar (subject to change):

Aug.	16	Syllabus, Introductions
	21	Introductions cont'd
	23	Games, how to read a play
	28	<i>Marvin's Room</i>
	30	Lecture
Sept.	04	Lessons 1-2, Spine work
	06	<i>Crimes of the Heart</i>
	11	Lessons 3-5, assign I'm Going Away (p.44)
	13	<i>Beyond Therapy</i>
	18	Lessons 6-8, GOTE, Rehearsal
	20	Perform I'm Going Away, Lessons 9-12
	25	Performance cont'd
	27	Performance cont'd, Lessons 13-14
Oct.	02	Assign scenes, Lessons 15-17, The Voice & The Body
	04	Lessons 18-20
	09	Lesson 21
	11	Perform
	16	Perform
	18	Perform
	23	Perform
	25	Fall Break
	30	Lessons 22-25
Nov.	01	Lessons 26-27, Assign scenes
	06	Rehearsal
	08	Rehearsal
	13	Improvisation
	15	Perform
	20	Perform
	22	Holiday
	27	Perform
	29	Perform
Dec.	04	No class (Friday schedule)
	06	Review
	11	Final Exam, 12:00-3:00 p.m.