

Introduction to Acting - Texas Tech - THA 1301-009
Syllabus - Texas Tech University – Spring 2020
THA 2301, 002
MON/WED/FRI: 12PM-12:50PM
Classroom: English 160

PROFESSOR CONTACT INFORMATION:

C. Alex Webster – Instructor, Voice for the Actor/Intro to Acting

Office Location: National Wind Institute, Basement

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Section A, Pages 1-3

I. Course Purpose

II. Component Content Description

III. THECB Core Objectives

IV. Texas Tech University Creative Arts Core Curriculum Competency Statement

V. TTU Student Learning Objectives (1-3)

VI. Expected Course Student Learning Outcomes

VII. Further Specific Assessments

I. Course Purpose:

All people are performers. Every day we “present” a different side of ourselves to the various persons with whom we come in contact. We are all skilled at a kind of “deception” which allows us to transform our voices and our bodies as needed to get what we want. As children, we learn what works and what doesn’t work in our interactions with adults. These become ingrained in us. In this course, we remind ourselves what our different sides consist of, we learn strategies for acquiring our needs, we learn to relate to each other, to sympathize and even empathize with people different from ourselves. We become better citizens in a global society. In the study of acting we learn to be better sociologists, psychologists, public speakers, athletes, managers, anthropologists, parents, children, friends. In short, we learn much more about the human condition in order to reflect it to others. This course satisfies three hours of the Creative Arts requirement in the Core Curriculum

The objective of the creative arts in a core curriculum is to expand the student’s knowledge of the human condition and human cultures, especially in relation to behaviors, ideas, and values expressed in works of human imagination and thought. Through study in disciplines such as the creative arts, students will engage in critical analysis, form aesthetic judgments, and develop an appreciation for arts as fundamental to the health and survival of any society.

II. THECB Creative Arts Core Foundational Component Area Content Description

Courses in this category focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.

III. THECB Core Objectives

1. **Critical Thinking Skills (CT):** to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information. Assessments will include reading quizzes, participation in group discussions, script analyses, journal entries, exercises, and performances. 80% of the students will make a grade of 90 or better on the script and character analyses, as well as on the peer critiques on the final scenes which are a synthesis of all of the exercises which culminate in one performance.
2. **Communication Skills (CS):** to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication. Assessments will include reading quizzes, participation in group discussion, script analyses, journal entries, exercises, and performances. 95 % will communicate the motives of the characters they are playing through intonation, articulation and attitude to realize the conflicts within scenes and final performances. 95% of the students will make a grade of 90 or better on journal entries that describe how they are preparing their exercises and performances.
3. **Teamwork (T):** to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal. Assessments will include participation in group discussion, script analyses, journal entries, group exercises, and performances. 90% of the students will make a grade of 90 or better on journal entries which express their rehearsal methods with their partners and the way in which they worked together to create the scenes and final performances.
4. **Social Responsibility (SR):** to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities. Assessments will include reading quizzes, participation in group discussion, script analyses, and journal entries. 90% of the students will write essays (journal entries) comparing and contrasting the different environments in which their characters operate according to the given circumstances provided by the playwrights' texts. In these essays, they will also describe how the messages and themes of the dramas they are performing reflect civic responsibility. 100% of the students will choose civically responsible theatre pieces to perform.

IV. Texas Tech University Creative Arts Core Curriculum Competency Statement: Students graduating from Texas Tech University should be able to: construct, present, and defend critical and aesthetic judgments of works in the creative arts.

V. TTU Student Learning Objectives (1-3)

1. **Identify and describe a body of works (individually and collectively) in the creative arts.**
Lectures, text and play readings, and performances will expose students to the elements, methodologies, aesthetic, cultural and historical foundations of theatre that show the importance of theatre in social context of everyday life. The students will be able to present an appreciation of theatre as an art form and enable students to critically evaluate both scripts and theatrical performances as well as to articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities. Assessments will be through exams, written responses and oral presentations.
2. **Explain and differentiate creative works as expressions of values within cultural and historical contexts.**
Students will be able to perceive and analyze how theater of other times and places relates to (or differs from) "mainstream," contemporary American theater, as well as demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities. Students will be able to associate works in the arts and humanities as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context and demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature philosophy and the arts on

intercultural experiences. Assessments will be through play critiques, analytical essays, exams, quizzes, class discussions, and class presentations.

3. Analyze and summarize aesthetic principles that structure creative works.

Students will be able to examine a basic understanding of the definitions, processes, personnel, styles, and periods of various kinds of theatre productions and to develop an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide or govern the humanities and arts.

VI. Expected Course Student Learning Outcomes (Additional):

1. Analyze scripts, making critical judgements about characters and techniques in a scene or play.
2. Describe and analyze various characteristics and motivations of human beings in order to better understand their places in the play and in society.
3. Demonstrate acting skills learned in exercises and scenes.
4. Use the vocabulary of the theatre.
5. Apply knowledge of acting in interactions with people from other fields.

VII. Further Specific Assessments:

1. Journal entries: Students will be writing about topics given in class and doing paperwork for their exercises. These may also be submitted by email. (Handouts to follow.) (Outcomes 2, 4, 5)
2. Exercises: Students will perform various exercises that complement the specific techniques being taught in class. (Handouts to follow.) (Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4)
3. Rehearsals in Class: Students will perform a rehearsal of their major scenes as guided practice for scenes learned in class. (Handouts for each exercise to follow.) (Outcomes 1, 2, 3)
4. Scene Score: Students will analyze scenes using criteria given to them by the instructor. (Handouts to follow.) (Outcomes 2, 4)
5. Major Scene: Students will perform scenes at the end of the semester which will be critiqued by the instructor and peers based on principles learned during the course. (Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
6. Peer critiques: Students will constructively criticize all scenes using criteria to them given by the instructor. (Handout to follow.) (Outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5)
7. Show attendance: Students are required to attend 2 mainstage productions. (Outcomes 1, 2, 4)
8. Show Critiques: One short essay on each play will be required dealing with an aspect of acting technique being studied in class. (Handouts to follow.) (Outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5)

Section B, Pages 4-12

I. Methods

II. Attendance and Participation

III. Grading

IV. Written Work

V. Performance attendance and information

VI. Content Disclosure

VII. Additional Course Information and Policies

VIII. Course Calendar

I. Methods: Acting techniques we will study this semester

Constantin Stanislavski: The Stanislavski Method, *An Actor Prepares*

““One cannot always create subconsciously and with inspiration. No such genius exists in the world.

Therefore our art teaches us first of all to create consciously and rightly, because that will best prepare the way for the blossoming of the subconscious, which is inspiration.”

Uta Hagan: *Respect for Acting*

“Overcome the notion that you must be regular. It robs you of the chance to be extraordinary.”

Stella Adler: The Adler Technique,

“Growth as an actor and growth as a human being are synonymous.”

II. Attendance and Participation: Understanding the high level of engagement required for this class.

Participation: A successful student is present, prepared, participating, professional, and passionate.

1. Present: Attend every class, and arrive on time. Your presence in class, both physically and mentally, is required for your highest level of success. Distractions should be left at the classroom door. We have a daily warm up to assist with mental and physical preparedness. Attendance of regular, productive practice/rehearsal sessions outside of class will be documented.
2. Prepared: Bring a water bottle, notebook, writing utensil, and any homework, worksheets, or readings with you to each class. All papers must be typed, with your name clearly visible on every page. You must meet college-level writing standards to receive a passing grade (TTU has a fantastic writing center that offers on-site tutorials: <http://uwc.ttu.edu>.) All work must be thorough, consistent, and on-time.
3. Participating: You must fully participate in exercises and active observation of the work of others, including note-taking and focused observation to give informed feedback when called upon. Participation is both a physical and mental discipline.
4. Professional: A high level of professionalism is expected. This means taking the initiative of “going the extra mile” in pursuit of excellence without prompting from the instructor. We will experience and offer critique throughout the course. Your ability to welcome and incorporate critique directly reflects your professionalism.
5. Passionate: This class is “serious fun” – Energy, focus, enthusiasm, positive attitude, self-motivation are all components of your passion. The course should reinforce goals that you have for yourself, while inspiring you in new and exciting ways.

Attendance: Your presence matters.

1. You must attend class. If you do not attend class regularly, you will not pass.
2. Each student is allowed one week of unexcused absences before your final grade is affected. Three day-a-week course = Three Absences Allowed

3. For each absence beyond these allotted absences, the student's overall course grade will be reduced by third a letter grade with each subsequent absence. This means if you earn an A+ in the class, but have five absences, then your final grade will be a A- because of your absences. Don't let this sneak up on you.
4. While you are allowed these absences before your grade is affected, remember that this is a performance class, and your daily, active participation is imperative to your success and your grade. I recommend not "taking" the absences simply because you have them, but save them for when we all inevitably fall ill towards the end of the semester.
5. In addition to unexcused absences, three tardy arrivals or early exits will equal one absence, and will affect your final grade accordingly.
6. Participation in official university business must be documented by a written notice from the sponsoring faculty or staff member, and given to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for official university business day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled within a reasonable time frame.

PLEASE NOTE: Days of religious observation in accordance with University policy and serious, verifiable emergencies are and remain an exception to this rule. Texas House Bill 256 requires institutions of higher education to excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day. The student shall also be excused for time necessary to travel. An institution may not penalize the student for the absence and allows for the student to take an exam or complete an assignment from which the student is excused. Additionally, information regarding religious observance can be found in this syllabus under "Religious Holy Day Statement". The student must submit written documentation PRIOR to the absence or tardy.

Missing a class is not an excuse for missing an assignment. You are responsible for keeping up with all assignments that are given, as well as conscientious dedication to out-of-class required rehearsal periods. If, for some reason, you miss a class and/or an assignment given on any day, it is your responsibility to get the information from one of your classmates so that you are prepared when the assignment is due.

III. Grading: 1000 Point Scale

Participation and Performance 600 Points

Participation in class is mandatory. It includes, but is not limited to: attendance in appropriate clothing, hearty participation in the daily warm up, preparedness for the day's class work, full participation, and vocal and written critique.

Written Work 300 Points

This includes your daily notebooks/logs, rehearsal journals, performance responses and course readings. You will be required to hand in a performance response (min 2 pages, 12 pt. font, standard margins) for a minimum of three (3) of the shows in TTU's Spring 2020 production season (listed below). If you attend additional performances and turn in the corresponding performance responses by their due dates, I will consider those responses extra credit to be factored into the "written work" component of your grade. The performance response IS NOT a synopsis of the plot. The response should reflect the specific ideas we are learning in class and how they resonate (or not) with the work you witness on stage. Your Performance Responses are due within one week from closing of each show. Information regarding times and tickets can be found here: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/theatreanddance/News-and-Happenings/season/current.php>

Knowledge of Readings 100 Points

Throughout the semester, you will receive readings from different texts (on Blackboard or as a handout). You are expected to read them in a timely fashion to implement the information into your performance work. There will be either in-class or online quizzes to complete based on the readings. These quiz questions may be incorporated with your journals.

Grading Scale:

A range (90%-100%): Exceptional ability. Excellent reduction of muscular tension as evidenced by significant changes in breath and breath capacity: depth, responsiveness, variety, timing. Warmup is focused, efficient, and integrates new material. Always thoroughly prepared. Shows evidence of required outside practice sessions through excellent incorporation of new material into classwork and performance of text. Excellent written assignments. Always works hard.

B range (80%-90%): Above average to average ability. Some significant reduction of muscular tension as evidenced by moderate changes in breath and breath capacity: depth, responsiveness, variety, timing. Warm-up is focused, efficient, and integrates new material. Always thoroughly prepared. Shows evidence of required outside practice sessions through above average incorporation of new material into classwork and performance of text. Above average written assignments. Always works hard.

C range (70%-80%): Average ability. Small to moderate reduction of muscular tension as evidenced by some changes in breath and breath capacity: depth, responsiveness, variety, timing. Preparation average or inconsistent. Average written assignments. Average work.

D range (60%-70%): Average to below average ability. Very little change in breath and breath capacity: depth, responsiveness, variety, timing. Preparation inconsistent to poor. Some work.

V. Performance Attendance and Information

You must attend THREE (3) performances throughout the semester and complete a 1-page reflection according to class guidelines, which will be distributed and explained in class.

Ticketing: Tickets to TTU shows are \$5 for students and they can be purchased at the Maedgen Theatre Box Office M-F 12-6PM and Saturday 12-5PM, and two hours before each show. One free sneak peak performance will be available for students for each show. Free student rush tickets are also available an hour before the show but this is risky in case the show sells out. A sold out show is not an excuse for not seeing the play. Buy tickets ahead of time. Attendance at these productions is required.

Productions for Spring 2020:

Venue: Maedgen Theatre

Title: Hayfever

Run: February 6-9 & 13-16 at 7:30PM (Sun. at 2PM)

Venue: Devitt Blackbox Theatre

Title: DanceTech

Run: March 5-7 at 7:30PM

Venue: Devitt Blackbox Theatre

Title: RROAPS/RRADS

Run: April 2-5 at 7:30PM (Sun. at 2PM)

Venue: Maedgen Theatre

Title: Guys and Dolls

Run: April 23-26, 29-May 3 at 7:30PM (Sun. at 2PM)

VI. Content Disclosure:

Courses within the School of Theatre and Dance deal with works of dramatic literature, both on the page and stage. Sometimes the situations, actions, and language of these

works can be off-putting or offensive to some students, who might be offended on the grounds of sexual explicitness, violence, blasphemy, or other topics. As the School is devoted to the principle of free expression, artistic and otherwise, and it is not the School's practice to censor these works on any of these grounds, students who might feel unduly distressed or made uncomfortable by such expressions should withdraw at the start of the term and seek another course.

VII. Additional Course Information & Policies

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT:

Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one's own class and/or course work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Academic achievement includes scholarship, teaching, and learning, all of which are shared endeavors. Grades are a device used to quantify the successful accumulation of knowledge through learning. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures grades are earned honestly. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers. [Texas Tech University ("University") Quality Enhancement Plan, Academic Integrity Task Force, 2010)

ADA STATEMENT:

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note: instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact Student Disability Services in West Hall or call 806-742-2405.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONICS:

Cell phone use is not permitted in the classroom or during any class activity. Phones and other electronic devices are to be turned completely off (not just silenced) the moment you enter the studio and must remain off during the class period. Text messaging is prohibited in the classroom or during any class activity. Students utilizing the phone or messaging during class will be asked to leave the classroom and will receive an absence for the day. Messaging during an exam will be considered an act of academic dishonesty. Computers and iPads can be used in class for note taking and research. Students misusing their computers (i.e. being online, or on social media) will lose their computer privileges for the duration of the course.

CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM STATEMENT:

Texas Tech University is a community of faculty, students, and staff that enjoys an expectation of cooperation, professionalism, and civility during the conduct of all forms of university business, including the conduct of student–student and student–faculty interactions in and out of the classroom. Further, the classroom is a setting in which an exchange of ideas and creative thinking should be encouraged and where intellectual growth and development are fostered. Students who disrupt this classroom mission by rude, sarcastic, threatening, abusive or obscene language and/or behavior will be subject to appropriate sanctions according to university policy. Likewise, faculty members are expected to maintain the highest standards of professionalism in all interactions with all constituents of the university (www.depts.ttu.edu/ethics/matadorchallenge/ethicalprinciples.php).

DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE STATEMENT:

Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations are not tolerated by the University. Report any incidents to the Office for Student Rights & Resolution, (806)-742-SAFE (7233) or file a report online at titleix.ttu.edu/students. Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are: TTU Student Counseling Center, 806-742-3674, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/> (Provides confidential support on campus.) TTU 24-hour Crisis Helpline, 806-742-5555, (Assists students who are experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor.) Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center, 806-763-7273, voiceofhopelubbock.org (24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence.) The Risk, Intervention, Safety and Education (RISE) Office, 806-742-2110, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/rise/> (Provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness.) Texas Tech Police Department, 806-742-3931, <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/tttd/> (To report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus.)

LGBTQIA SUPPORT STATEMENT:

I (your professor, C. Alex Webster) identify as an ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community, and I am available to listen and support you in an affirming manner. I can assist in connecting you with resources on campus to address problems you may face pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could interfere with your success at Texas Tech. Please note that additional resources are available through the Office of LGBTQIA within the Center for Campus Life, Student Union Building Room 201, www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu, 806.742.5433. Within the Center for Campus Life, the Office serves the Texas Tech community through facilitation and leadership of programming and advocacy efforts. This work is aimed at strengthening the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community and sustaining an inclusive campus that welcomes people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAY STATEMENT:

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20. A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

WEAPONS:

Please see <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opmanual/op10.22.pdf> for details on the Concealed Carry of Handguns on Campus Policy.

WITHDRAWAL:

Students new to Texas Tech as incoming freshman can only drop 6 courses in their time at Tech, irrespective of those dropped during regular add/drop. It is the **student's** responsibility to go to 101 West Hall to withdraw from a course. The last day for a student to withdraw from a course without academic penalty is Friday, January 31. The last day for a student to withdraw from a course with academic penalty is Wednesday, April 22.

VIII. MODIFIED Course Calendar: Updated April 2020

Wednesday	4/1	Individual Work: Rehearse and Record Monologue 1 (CT) (CS) (T) (SR)	Due: Monologue 1 Record (Blackboard Discussion Board), Monologue Packet (Blackboard Assignment Section)
Friday	4/3	Individual Work: Rehearse and Record Monologue 1 1 (CT)(CS) (T) (SR)	Due: Monologue 1 Record (Blackboard Discussion Board), Monologue Packet (Blackboard Assignment Section)
Monday	4/6	NO CLASS	Open office hours
Wednesday	4/8	Discussion: Broadway Backstory Episode 15: Come From Away 1 (CT)(CS) (T) (SR)	Due: Broadway Backstory Podcast/short clips
Friday	4/10	Individual Meetings: Rehearsals for Monologue 2 1 (CT)(CS) (T) (SR)	Sign up for meetings on Doodle Poll (link in Blackboard announcement)/Have Zoom Rehearsals as scheduled
Monday	4/13	Individual Meetings: Rehearsals for Monologue 2 1 (CT)(CS) (T) (SR)	Sign up for meetings on Doodle Poll (link in Blackboard announcement)/Have Zoom rehearsals as scheduled Listen/Watch media series 2 for BEETLEJUICE discussion on Wednesday
Wednesday	4/15	Discussion on Zoom: BEETLEJUICE 1 (CT)(CS) (T) (SR)	Rehearsals for monologue 2 as scheduled
Friday	4/17	Rehearsals (scheduled through doodle poll, held in Zoom classroom) 1 (CT)(CS) (T) (SR)	Rehearsals for monologue 2 as scheduled. Listen/Watch media series 3 for HAMILTON discussion on Wednesday 4/22.

Monday	4/20	Rehearsals (scheduled through doodle poll, held in Zoom classroom) 1 (CT)(CS) (T) (SR)	Rehearsals for monologue 2 as scheduled.
Wednesday	4/22	Discussion on Zoom: Check In 1 (CT)(CS) (T) (SR)	Rehearsals for monologue 2 as scheduled.
Friday	4/24	Rehearsals (scheduled through doodle poll, held in Zoom classroom) 1 (CT)(CS) (T) (SR)	Rehearsals for monologue 2 as scheduled.
Monday	4/27	Rehearsals (scheduled through doodle poll, held in Zoom classroom) 1 (CT)(CS)(T)(SR)	Rehearsals for monologue 2 as scheduled. Begin recording video of monologue performance (Final due date 5/4).
Wednesday	4/29	Open Office Hours, no formal meeting. Available for questions! FINAL PERFORMANCES VIDEOS UPLOADED TO FLIPGRID BY END OF DAY	Begin recording video of monologue performance (Final due date 5/4).
Friday	5/1	Open Office Hours, no formal meeting. FINAL PERFORMANCES VIDEOS UPLOADED TO FLIPGRID	Begin recording video of monologue performance (Final due date 5/4).
Monday	5/4	Open Office Hours, no formal meeting. FINAL PERFORMANCES VIDEOS UPLOADED TO FLIPGRID	Begin recording video of monologue performance (Final due date 5/4).
Friday	5/8	Final Zoom meeting: Wrap up and debrief class. [Monologue Performance Responses due.]	All final drafts of coursework due.

This syllabus and the course calendar are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. All changes will be updated and distributed to students in a timely fashion.