

**SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
THEA 3301-001 ACTING II**

Spring 2016

Tues/Thurs

9:30 am – 10:45 am

Studio Theatre

FAB 105

Marjorie Scott, Assistant Professor of
Communication & Theatre

432-837-8039

mscott3@sulross.edu

Office Hours: MWF 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

T/TH: 11 am – 12:00 pm

Office: FAB 203A

Course Description

This course is intended to be a continuation of Acting I and is more of a workshop environment rather than a traditional “classroom.” You will study and practice exercises developed by Uta Hagen, Sanford Meisner, and Viola Spolin. All exercises are rooted in Stanislavsky’s system of acting (popularly referred to as “The Method”). While both Meisner and Hagen stem from the same system, they are unique approaches to the craft. They are both equally valuable and are not mutually exclusive. This class will help you discover and develop your individual process in creating full and honest performances in your work as an actor.

You will also learn to develop a role by analyzing the script for objective and action. You will be provided with a scene for which you will break down the individual beats and the actions/adjustments/overt actions using the Harold Clurman “Three-Column” method.

The techniques you learn in this class should transfer to the roles you play on stage at Sul Ross and beyond. Theater Department productions are the labs in which you demonstrate the application of the techniques and craft learned in this class.

There is no room for passivity in this class or in a career as an actor. Whether you are on stage or in the audience, you must be actively listening to and observing the work of your classmates. We learn by doing *and* by watching. Stay engaged!

Required Text *(available at the Sul Ross Bookstore or www.amazon.com)*

- 1) Hagen, Uta, *A Challenge for the Actor*, 1991, Scribner.
- 2) Meisner, Sanford, *Sanford Meisner on Acting*, 1987, Random House.

Materials Required

- 1) A working e-mail account. You are required to check your Sul Ross email account daily.
- 2) A working blackboard account.

- 3) I strongly suggest you bring paper and a writing utensil to every class meeting.
- 4) You will be expected to supply your own props (as needed) for scenes and exercises.

Program Learning Outcomes *The graduating student will demonstrate*

- 1) Knowledge of eras and contributions made throughout Theatre History and Musical Theatre History.

Additionally, the graduating student with a concentration in Acting/Directing will demonstrate:

- 2) The ability to express themselves creatively through appropriate theatrical performance
- 3) The ability to analyze a script.
- 4) The ability to work creatively with actors and technicians in mounting a laboratory theatrical production.
- 5) The ability to apply standard requirements to all aspects of technical production.

Additionally, the graduating student with a concentration in technical/design will demonstrate:

- 6) The ability to apply all approaches to the theatrical design and rendering of the design.
- 7) The ability to address all technical aspects of a theatrical production.

Additionally, the student will be able to:

- 8) Describe the theater process and compose a functional definition of the theatre event.
- 9) Describe the close link between theatre and religion.
- 10) Name the basic responsibilities and roles of the playwright, director, actor, and designer in the theatre production
- 11) Have a basic understanding of the difference between tragedy, comedy, melodrama, farce, epic, and absurdist theater.
- 12) Describe the uniqueness of the theatre art.
- 13) Understand and describe the elements necessary to bring about a unified production.
- 14) Identify a variety of theater spaces.
- 15) Know the names and works associated with key figures in the theatre.
- 16) Demonstrate an understanding of acting, directing, playwriting, or design in the areas of set, sound, or makeup.

Course Objectives

Among other topics, students will:

- Articulate a working vocabulary of Meisner and Hagen techniques
- Demonstrate intermediate-level mastery of Meisner and Hagen-based exercises
- Analyze a scene using the Clurman “Three Column” approach
- Identify, analyze, and evaluate artistic progress of peer scene work
- Articulate a process of self-analysis to chart progress of personal artistic growth

Course Requirements

Attendance & Participation: Regular attendance is expected and you should come to class prepared to offer thoughtful comments and questions about the material. Your participation grade is 10% of your overall grade. If you’re not present, you can’t participate so show up! But attendance does not equal participation. So, speak up, too! After two (2) unexcused absences, I will deduct one half-letter grade for each unexcused absence.

Absence Policy, from the Sul Ross State University 2012-2014 Course Catalogue:

“Regular class attendance is important to the attainment of the educational objectives of the University. Each instructor will keep class attendance records, and the instructor's policy on class attendance will be explained at the beginning of the semester or term.

The instructor will drop a student from a course when the student has a total of nine (9) absences.

An absence is defined as non-attendance in fifty minutes of class; for example, non-attendance in a one and one-half hour class will constitute one and one-half absences and non-attendance in a three-hour class will constitute three absences. An absence because of participation in an official University activity is considered to be an authorized absence.”

Cell phones, texting, and engaging in activities unrelated to class on your computer are all strictly prohibited while you are in this class. IF I CATCH YOU USING YOUR CELL PHONE OR COMPUTER FOR ACTIVITIES NOT RELATED TO CLASS, first I will belittle you, and then I will lower your overall participation grade by 20%. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave the class.

Excused Absences: Excused absences from class include: religious holidays, an illness (a doctor’s note must be submitted to the instructor), a death in the family (an obituary or funeral program must be submitted), or court dates (an official notice from the court must be submitted). If you miss a quiz or project deadline due to illness you must provide written documentation from the Health Center (or an outside health care provider), verifying dates of treatment and the time period during which you were unable to meet academic responsibilities. All other absences will be marked as unexcused.

Exercises: Throughout the semester, you will learn and practice exercises that are intended to help free you both emotionally and instinctually as well as hone your craft.

These exercises are the foundation of your work. They are indeed simple, yet they can take years to master. Approach these exercises with humility, discipline, and an open, vulnerable heart. Be free to get it wrong, but always try your best. For the Uta Hagen exercises, I will provide you with instructions before the exercise is due but you must complete the Six Steps for each and hand it in to me on the due date. Six Steps papers need to be typed!

Word Repetition Exercise: The Repetition Exercise is the most well known of Sanford Meisner's work and is an invaluable foundation for truthful, spontaneous acting. We will work on this exercise in class but you must meet with your Repetition partner twice a week for a minimum of 15 minutes each time to practice. Think of it as the equivalent of a musician practicing scales, or a ballet dancer practicing barre work. The more you do it, and commit to the practice of focusing on your partner, the more developed your instincts will become. Keep at it!

Weekly Journal: Each Friday by 5 p.m., you are required to email me a 2-3-paragraph journal entry in which you analyze the work you did in and out of class that week. How did the exercises and scene work feel to you? How present and focused on your scene partner were you? Are you experiencing any roadblocks in your practice of any of the exercises or scene work? Any breakthroughs? Be honest in your assessments. This is an opportunity for you to think about your work and communicate about your experience. You may use this journal as an opportunity to ask questions, but I encourage you to ask questions in class as this will help clarify ideas for your classmates as well.

Reading: You must do the required reading. Period. You will not pass this class if you do not read the two required books because you won't know what the heck is going on.

Scene Presentation 1: I will pair you with a scene partner and provide each pairing with a scene. You are required to break down, or "score," your script using the Clurman Three-Column method, which we will go over in class. The first presentation of your scene will take place before Spring Break and will incorporate Meisner's Emotional Preparation.

Scene Presentation 2: This is your final. Working in pairs, you will rehearse and present your scene (same partner and scene as Presentation 1) during finals week. The Meisner and Hagen-based exercises, improvisation, reading, discussions, and rehearsals will culminate in this final scene. You must be off-book, emotionally full and present, and supply appropriate costumes and props for your scene.

Format: All assignments must be typewritten in 12-point type, Times New Roman or comparable font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins. I don't have time to decipher your chicken scratch so please don't give me anything handwritten, unless it's a birthday card.

Late Work: Assignments must be submitted as soon as class begins on the day that they are due. For every day that an assignment is late, I will deduct 20% of the total grade. After three days late, the assignment will be an "F" no matter how brilliant it is.

Academic Integrity: The University has a Code of Academic Integrity, which prohibits, among other things, cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers or portions of papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, forging signatures, and using unauthorized study aids (including old quizzes and exams). This class abides by that code.

Grading

Assignments are valued as follows:

1) Exercises/Weekly Journal	30%
2) Scene Presentation 1	20%
3) Scene Presentation 2	30%
4) Class Participation/Attitude	10%
5) Growth	10%

Grading Criteria:

A = Exceptional. Demonstrates mastery of material beyond expectation. Professional quality of work. Highest level of scholarship.

B = Above average. Demonstrates mastery of material. High level of scholarship.

C = Average. Demonstrates proficiency with material. Work is of amateur quality. Ordinary level of scholarship.

D = Below Average. Work shows errors, careless mistakes, or is just plain wrong. Poor scholarship

F – Failure. Material incomplete. Work grossly negligent or incomplete. No evidence of scholarship present.

Students with Disabilities

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Mary Schwartz in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: [432-837-8203](tel:432-837-8203).

Class Dates: Assignments and Deadlines

Note that these dates and the details of each class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion

DAY	DATE	IN-CLASS TOPICS/EXERCISES	READING DUE
Tuesday	Jan 19 th	Review syllabus. Observation Exercise. Hagen, Epilogue.	
Thursday	Jan 21	Warm-ups/Set up First Hagen Exercise/Discuss Six Steps	
Tuesday	Jan 26	2-Minute Entrance/Exit Exercise	Uta Hagen, Chapter 11 - The First Exercise: Physical Destination
Thursday	Jan 28	2-Minute Entrance/Exit Exercise	
Tuesday	Feb 2	Word Repetition	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> Chapters 1 & 2
Thursday	Feb 4	Word Repetition w/ Point of View & The Three Moment Game/Pinch & The Ouch	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> Chapter 3
Tuesday	Feb 9	Set up The Phone Call Exercise (The Fourth Side)	Uta Hagen, Chapter 12 –The Fourth Side
Thursday	Feb 11	The Phone Call Exercise	
Tuesday	Feb 16	The Phone Call Exercise	
Thursday	Feb 18	Clurman Three-Column Scene Breakdown – Hand out Final Scenes	
Tuesday	Feb 23	Word Repetition with Independent Activity	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> Chapter 4: The Knock on the Door
Thursday	Feb 25	Word Repetition with Independent Activity	
Tuesday	Mar 1	TBD	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> Chapter 5: Beyond Repetition
Thursday	Mar 3	Discuss Scene Breakdowns	Three Columns Breakdown DUE
Tuesday	Mar 8	Work on Scenes w/Emotional Preparation	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> , Chapter 6 & 8

Thursday	Mar 10	Work on Scenes w/ Emotional Preparation	
Tuesday	Mar 15	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	
Thursday	Mar 17	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	
Tuesday	Mar 22	Moment to Moment Exercise Set up	Uta Hagen, Chapter 14: Moment to Moment
Thursday	Mar 24	Moment to Moment Exercise	
Tuesday	Mar 29	Moment to Moment Exercise	
Thursday	Mar 31	Domestic Exercise	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> , Chapter 7: Improvisation
Tuesday	Apr 5	Domestic Exercise	
Thursday	Apr 7	Set up Re-creating Physical Sensations Exercise	Uta Hagen, Chapter 15: Recreating Physical Sensations
Tuesday	Apr 12	Physical Sensations Exercise	
Thursday	Apr 14	Physical Sensations Exercise	
Tuesday	Apr 19	Work on Scenes: Making the Part Your Own/Particularization	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> , Chapters 9 & 10
Thursday	Apr 21	Work on Scenes: Making the Part Your Own/Particularization	
Tuesday	Apr 26	Set up Historical Imagination Exercise	Uta Hagen, Chapter 20: Historical Imagination
Thursday	Apr 28	Historical Imagination Exercise	
Tuesday	May 3	Historical Imagination Exercise	
FINAL EXAM	Tuesday, May 10th 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Scene Presentation 2		