

**SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
THEA 1322-001 STAGE MOVEMENT**

Fall 2016
Tues/Thurs
12:30 pm – 1:45 pm
Marshall Auditorium
MAB 209

Marjorie Scott, Assistant Professor of
Communication & Theatre
432-837-8039
Office: FAB 203A
msscott3@sulross.edu
Office Hours: MW 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
All other times by appointment

Course Description

Stage movement is comprised of more than just being able to remember your blocking. As an actor you must learn to free your instrument (your body) so that you know how to move in a controlled and spontaneous way. As an actor you must be ready to react to whatever stimuli you encounter on stage.

As an actor, it is your job to explore and develop movement that supports your character, your relationship to the other actors, and the space around you on stage. How do you do that? The first step is to connect your breath to the movement. Next, unlocking your body so that you can be free to make choices based on your impulses. If your shoulders or knees are locked up, then you are not free to explore how your character moves and what moves your character. The next step is to be conscious of yourself, the other people, space, and objects around you, and how you move in relationship to these other people, spaces, and objects.

This course is an introduction to movement for the stage. We will study the philosophies of The Viewpoints developed by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau. We will also study the fundamentals of Laban technique, including breath support and the 8 Efforts. We will also study and practice Michael Chekhov's philosophy of movement, including the Leading Center.

You will probably discover throughout your acting career that certain roles call for different techniques. This class is intended to introduce you to a variety of techniques so that you will be able to apply them to our work as needed.

Required Text *(available at Amazon)*

- 1) Bogart, Anne and Landau, Tina, *The Viewpoints Book*, 2005, Theatre Communications Group, Inc.

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) Comfortable clothing that allows your skin to breathe and your body to move freely. You will work barefoot quite a bit in this course.
- 4) I strongly encourage you to bring a bottle of water to each class meeting.

Student 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 Laban, Chekhov, and Viewpoints terminology
- Demonstrate beginner-level mastery of Laban, Bartenieff, Chekhov, and Viewpoints techniques
- Identify, analyze, and evaluate artistic progress of peer scene work and exercises
- Demonstrate progress in utilizing a playing space more completely and effectively in the context of 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 attendance and participation grade combined comprises 20% of your overall grade. If you're not present, you can't participate so show up! But attendance does not equal participation. I invite you to ask questions, take risks, and collaborate with your classmates so that you all have a satisfying and rich experience. After two (2) unexcused absences, I will deduct one half-letter grade from your overall attendance grade for each unexcused absence.

The following is the 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 are all strictly prohibited. If you choose to engage in such activities you may be asked to leave the class and you will be marked as absent.

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.

Warm-up: Each class will begin with a warm-up. Warm-ups will vary in length depending on where we are in the semester. Minimum amount of time on a warm-up is 10 minutes. You will learn Laban and Bartenieff Fundamentals as well as Sun Salutations and a variety of other centering and stretching exercises.

Exercises: Throughout the semester, you will learn and practice warm-ups and exercises aimed at helping you free your body, support your movements with your breath, and establish a physical warm-up routine that prepares you for the physical and emotional demands of acting. I invite you to approach these exercises with humility, discipline, and an open mind and heart. Allow yourself to feel silly and live in the unknown. You will gain confidence with more practice. I urge you to practice these exercises outside of and beyond this class.

Laban/Bartenieff: Rudolph Laban (1879-1958) was a choreographer, teacher, philosopher, and writer. He is considered one of the most important movement theorists from the early 1900s to present day. You will learn about the Laban Still Shapes, the importance of Body, Effort, Shape, and Space (BESS) and the Eight Efforts. Irmgard Bartenieff was a German dancer, researcher, physical therapist, and pioneer in the field of dance therapy. Her work with Laban led her to develop her physical re-education method known as Bartenieff Fundamentals. We will learn and practice some of the fundamentals of the Bartenieff technique as a way to prepare and free the body for stage work.

The Viewpoints: Developed by Anne Bogart (Artistic Director of SITI Company and Professor of Directing at Columbia Univ.) and Tina Landau (Director at Steppenwolf Theatre Company), The Viewpoints is a technique for 1) training performers; 2) building ensemble; and 3) creating movement for the stage. The Viewpoints themselves are nine points of awareness that a performer utilizes while working. We will explore the Viewpoints through a series of exercises and improvisations. The key word is “awareness.” It is essential that you, as an actor, are aware of your body, your breath, the space around you and the people and objects in your environment.

Midterm/Composition and Laban Warm-Up: I will split the class into three groups of three. Each group will be required to create and present to the class an original composition incorporating the nine Viewpoints and list of “ingredients” I assign. Each student will also be required to choreograph a 10-minute Laban/Bartenieff-based warm-up before we begin the composition presentations.

Final Scene: Working in pairs, you will rehearse and present your scene to the class. You must incorporate all Viewpoints in your scene and determine your character’s Psychological Gesture and Leading Center. I will provide you with scripts. You must provide props and costumes appropriate for the scene. Your performance will count as the final exam.

Format: All written assignments must be typewritten in 12-point type, Times New Roman or comparable font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins.

Late Work: Assignments must be submitted on their due date. I do not accept late work.

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/Assignments	30%
2) Midterm (Composition/Warm-up)	20%
3) Final Scene	30%
4) Class Participation/Attitude	10%
5) Attendance	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-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: [432-837-8698](tel:432-837-8698). E-mail: mschwartz@sulross.edu.

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	Aug 23	Review syllabus. Warm-up	
Thursday	Aug 25	Warm-up. Laban Exercises Breathing Through Still Shape Forms/From Shape to Sound and Bartenieff Fundamentals.	
Tuesday	Aug 30	Laban Warm-up & Exercises	Laban Handout #1
Thursday	Sep 1	Laban Warm-up & Exercises	Laban Handout #2
Tuesday	Sep 6	Viewpoints Group Warm-up and Exercises	The Viewpoints Book Chapters 1-3
Thursday	Sep 8	Viewpoints Group Warm-up and Exercises	The Viewpoints Book Ch. 4
Tuesday	Sep 13	Viewpoints Group Warm-up and Exercises	
Thursday	Sep 15	Individual Viewpoints	The Viewpoints Book Ch. 5
Tuesday	Sep 20	Individual Viewpoints	
Thursday	Sep 22	Individual Viewpoints	
Tuesday	Sep 27	Putting Viewpoints Together	The Viewpoints Book Ch. 6
Thursday	Sep 29	Putting Viewpoints Together	
Tuesday	Oct 4	Putting Viewpoints Together/Improvisation	The Viewpoints Book Ch. 7
Thursday	Oct 6	Improvisation	
Tuesday	Oct 11	Starting to Speak	The Viewpoints Book Ch. 9
Thursday	Oct 13	Starting to Speak	
Tuesday	Oct 18	Viewpoints in Rehearsal The Viewpoints Book Ch. 10/ ASSIGN PARTNERS AND SCENES	
Thursday	Oct 20	Viewpoints in Rehearsal	

Tuesday	Oct 25	Composition Work	The Viewpoints Book Ch. 11
Thursday	Oct 27	Composition Work	
Tuesday	Nov 1	Composition Work	
Thursday	Nov 3	Composition/Laban Warm-up Midterm IN CLASS	
Tuesday	Nov 8	Michael Chekhov Imaginary Center	GO VOTE! Chekhov Handout
Thursday	Nov 10	Michael Chekhov Imaginary Center	
Tuesday	Nov 15	Michael Chekhov Psychological Gesture	
Thursday	Nov 17	Michael Chekhov Psychological Gesture	
Tuesday	Nov 22	Revisit Individual Viewpoints or continue with Chekhov	
Thursday	Nov 24	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING	
Tuesday	Nov 29	Revisit All Viewpoints Together or continue with Chekhov	
Thursday	Dec 1	DEAD DAY – NO CLASS	
FINAL EXAM	Wednesday, December 7th 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Please note that the final is on a Wednesday.		