

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY THEA 3301-001 ACTING II

Spring 2017

Tues/Thurs

9:30 am – 10:45 am

Studio Theatre

FAB 105

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Communication & Theatre

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Office Hours: MWF 10:00 am – 11:00 am

All other times by appointment

Course Description

In this course, students will study and practice exercises developed by Sanford Meisner, William Esper, Viola Spolin, and Uta Hagen. All exercises are rooted in Stanislavsky's "System" of acting (a.k.a. "The Method"). The goal of this class is to help students discover and develop their individual processes in creating full and honest performances.

Students will also learn to develop a character by analyzing the script for objective and action. Each student will be provided with a scene, which he/she will analyze for individual beats and the actions/adjustments/overt actions using the Harold Clurman "Three-Column" method.

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

NOTE: 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) Meisner, Sanford, *Sanford Meisner on Acting*, 1987, Random House.
- 2) Hagen, Uta, *A Challenge for the Actor*, 1991, Charles Scribner's Sons.

I will provide you with scripts for your scene work. It is your responsibility to keep track of your script pages. I will not give you additional copies if you lose them.

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, Spolin, and Hagen-based exercises
- Analyze a scene using the Clurman “Three Column” approach and Uta Hagen’s Six Steps.
- 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. After two (2) unexcused absences, I will deduct one half-letter grade from your participation grade for each subsequent unexcused absence. **After 5 unexcused absences, you must withdraw or I will drop you from the course with a grade of an “F.”**

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 while you are in this class. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave the class. Permanently.

Excused Absences: Excused absences from class include: religious holidays, an illness (an official doctor’s note must be submitted to the instructor), a death in the family (an obituary or funeral program must be submitted to the instructor), or court dates (an official notice from the court must be submitted to the instructor). If you miss an assignment 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.**

Weekly Lab: The class will meet once a week for two hours to continue rehearsing the exercises and scene work. We will, as a class, determine when we meet for this 2-hour lab.

Exercises: Throughout the semester, you will learn and practice exercises that are intended to help free you emotionally and instinctually. These exercises are the foundation of your acting work. They seem simple, yet they can take years to master. Approach these exercises with humility, discipline, and an open heart. Be free to get it wrong, but always try your best.

Word Repetition Exercise: The Word 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 to practice. **That's 30 minutes of practice per week.** This is 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 listening, focusing on your partner, and responding truthfully the more you will improve as an actor.

Reading: You must do the required reading. You will not pass this class if you fail to read.

Scene Presentation 1 (Midterm): I will pair you with a scene partner and provide each pairing with a scene. You are required to "score" your script using the Clurman Three-Column method. The first presentation of your scene will take place before Spring Break and will incorporate Meisner's Emotional Preparation.

Scene Presentation 2 (Final): Working in pairs, you will rehearse and present a scene with an assigned partner. 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.

Scene Scoring/Character Bios: You will score the script and create Character Bios for each of your scenes. These written assignments will be graded separately from your presentations.

Spoon River Anthology Speech: Each of you will memorize and perform a speech from the Spoon River Anthology. Speeches will be assigned to you. You are required to score the speech and identify the individual beats. These speeches are not monologues. Monologues imply that the character is speaking to himself/herself. These speeches are spoken to someone (another character). In addition to the scored script, you must determine:

- 1) The identity of the "unseen" character;
- 2) Your character's relationship with the unseen character;

3) The circumstances that led to this speech.

Format: All assignments must be typed, in 12-point type, Times New Roman or comparable font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Your scored scripts are the only assignments that can be written by hand. Please use pencil to score your script.

Late Work: 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 (Repetition, etc.)	20%
2) Script Scoring	20%
3) Spoon River Speech	10%
4) Scene Presentation 1 (Midterm)	15%
5) Scene Presentation 2 (Final)	25%
6) Class Participation	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).

CALENDAR

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 17	Review syllabus. Observation Exercise. One Word at a Time Exercise.	
Thursday	Jan 19	Warm-up/Introduce Word Repetition Exercise (Mechanical and Point of View) Assign Repetition Partners	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> Chapters 1 & 2
Tuesday	Jan 24	Warm-up/Practice Word Repetition Exercise	
Thursday	Jan 26	Warm-up/The Pinch and the Ouch & Three Moment Game	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> Chapter 3
Tuesday	Jan 31	Word Repetition w/ Point of View & The Three Moment Game/Pinch & The Ouch	
Thursday	Feb 2	Script Scoring – Assign Midterm Scenes & Partners	Hagen Handout – Homework & Rehearsal
Tuesday	Feb 7	Word Repetition with Independent Activity	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> Chapter 4: The Knock on the Door
Thursday	Feb 9	Word Repetition with Independent Activity	
Tuesday	Feb 14	Word Repetition with Independent Activity	
Thursday	Feb 16	TBD	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> Chapter 5: Beyond Repetition
Tuesday	Feb 21	Work on Scenes w/Emotional Preparation	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> , Chapter 6 & 8
Thursday	Feb 23	Work on Scenes w/ Emotional Preparation	
Tuesday	Feb 28	Domestic Exercise	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> , Chapter 7: Improvisation
Thursday	Mar 2	Domestic Exercise	
Tuesday	Mar 7	Midterm Scene Presentations	Scored Scripts Due

Thursday	Mar 9	Midterm Scene Presentations/ Assign Spoon River Anthology Speeches	
Tuesday	Mar 14	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	
Thursday	Mar 16	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	
Tuesday	Mar 21	Flat Scene Exercise/Try Not to Wake Her/Him Exercise	
Thursday	Mar 23	Review Script Scoring/ Assign Final Scenes	
Tuesday	Mar 28	Making the Part Your Own/Particularization	Meisner <i>On Acting</i> , Chapters 9 & 10
Thursday	Mar 30	Making the Part Your Own/Particularization	
Tuesday	Apr 4	Spoon River Anthology Presentations	Scored scripts due in class
Thursday	Apr 6	Spoon River Anthology Presentations	
Tuesday	Apr 11	Spoon River Anthology Presentations	
Thursday	Apr 13	Spoon River Anthology Presentations	
Tuesday	Apr 18	Review Word Repetition and Independent Activity	
Thursday	Apr 20	Review Emotional Preparation	
Tuesday	Apr 25	Rehearse Scenes with Independent Activity	
Thursday	Apr 27	Rehearse Scenes with Independent Activity	
Tuesday	May 2	Evaluations	Scored scripts for final scenes due in class
FINAL EXAM	Monday, May 8th 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.		