

Course: Acting Styles: Theatrical Realism and Postwar Theatre

PEIMS Code: N1170125

Abbreviation: ACTMET3

Grade Level(s): 10-12

Number of Credits: 1.0

Course description:

This course is part of a cluster of courses designed to develop proficiency in acting by promoting an understanding of the methods, principles, practices and vocabulary common to all acting styles from Greek through Shakespeare to modern texts. In this course, the students study texts from the 1890's to the present. The students learn the acting elements required in theatrical realism, and other post-war styles to include Theatre of the Absurd and modern theatre. They expand knowledge of the processes used to research a character. They study appropriate stage diction and learn to project their voices in all spaces with a wide range of characters. They physically create characters. The course challenge the students to use a process of character development and expand their creative processes. This course emphasizes the complexity and thoroughness required to become a successful performer and use the material found in a majority of productions in the modern theatre.

Essential knowledge and skills:

- a) General requirements: This course is intended for intermediate to advanced actors. Theatre I or the innovative course Acting Methods are recommended prerequisites.
- b) Knowledge and Skills:
 - (1) The student develops the concepts and skills necessary to perform theatrical realism, specifically Stanislavski's Method. The student is expected to:
 - (A) relate social and political elements which led to the development of theatrical realism as the dominant acting style, including the work of Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud;
 - (B) evaluate the elements of theatrical realism as the dominant acting style, including middle class settings, ordinary language, and characters;
 - (C) summarize the role of Konstantin Stanislavski in the development of theatrical realism specifically in actor training;
 - (D) analyze the elements of The System and The Method, including physical action, given circumstances, motivation, the "Magic If," and objectives;
 - (E) differentiate between The System and The Method, including emotional recall and the role of the imagination; and

- (F) collaborate with a partner to rehearse and perform scenes from theatrical realism such as from authors Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, William Inge, or Eugene O'Neill using The System and The Method to inform the characters choices;
- (2) The student develops the concepts and skills necessary for performing characters from the Theatre of the Absurd. The student is expected to:
 - (A) analyze the themes and ideas explored in plays from the Theatre of the Absurd, including the meaninglessness and futility of life in the modern world;
 - (B) relate the social and political elements responsible for the development of the Theatre of the Absurd, including World War II, the Cold War, and the threat of nuclear war;
 - (C) examine the elements of the Theatre of the Absurd, including meaningless language and the lack of rational characters and situations; and
 - (D) collaborate with a partner to rehearse and perform scenes from Theatre of the Absurd such as from authors Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, or Harold Pinter using theme and idea to inform character choices.
- (3) The student develops the concepts and skills necessary for performing characters in the naturalistic acting style required for the modern theatre. The student is expected to:
 - (A) relate the social elements, including post-modern philosophy, to the development of naturalistic acting as a dominant acting style;
 - (B) explain the elements of modern theatre including non-realistic settings, ordinary language, character, and situation comedy; and
 - (C) collaborate with a partner to rehearse and perform scenes from modern texts such as from authors Thornton Wilder, Lorraine Hansberry, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Neil Simon, Neil LaButte, August Wilson, or Horton Foote in the naturalistic acting style using social and political elements to inform character choices;
- (4) Creative Expression/Performance. The students perform characters in scenes from plays from theatrical realism, Theatre of the Absurd, and the modern theatre. The student is expected to:
 - (A) create and sustain characters from modern texts using a process of character development that is complex and repeatable; and
 - (B) transfer acting skills required in one acting style to the skills required in different acting styles within the context of the course.
- (5) Historical and cultural relevance. The student relates theatre to history, society and culture. The student is expected to:

- (A) read, research, and analyze historically and culturally diverse texts and determine appropriate character choices using a comprehensive character development process;
 - (B) research the playwright and the time period to determine the themes and ideas found in the text for plays found in theatrical realism, Theatre of the Absurd, and or modern theatre; and
 - (C) research and analyze the historical periods from 1890 to the present and determine appropriate character choices within the appropriate style.
- (6) Critical Evaluation and response. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances. The student is expected to:
- (A) develop and incorporate the skills necessary to be a supportive and focused audience member;
 - (B) apply both positive and negative criticism for a proper written and verbal critique of student and professional work;
 - (C) employ appropriate theatrical vocabulary to communicate between director and actor, actor and stage manager, actor and actor, and actor and designer; and
 - (D) transfer knowledge from of one time period to another for the ensuing class or project within the context of this course.

Description of specific student needs this course is designed to meet:

- Opportunity to engage in an in-depth study a wide variety of acting styles and plays from 1890 to the present—theatrical realism, Theatre of the Absurd, and the modern theatre
- Opportunity to develop characters in the acting styles and in plays from 1890 to the present—theatrical realism, Theatre of the Absurd and the modern theatre
- Opportunity to know and use the different elements of plays from theatrical realism, Theatre of the Absurd, and the modern theatre
- Opportunity to focus interests and develop career direction
- Opportunity to develop an acting portfolio of material plays from theatrical realism, Theatre of the Absurd, and the modern theatre
- Opportunity to interact in a professional setting

- Opportunity to collaborate with other actors
- Opportunity for self-discovery and self-evaluation in a student-centered environment
- Opportunities for students to develop individual and creative self-expression

Major resources and materials:

- Adler, Stella. *The Technique of Acting*. Bantam Books. 1988
- Delgado, Ramon. *Acting With Both Sides of Your Brain*. Holt, Reinhardt and Winston. N.Y. 1986.
- Hagen, Uta. *The Art of Acting*. Applause Theatre and Cinema Books. 2000.
- Moore, Sonia. *The Stanislavsky System: The Professional Training of an Actor*. N.Y. 1984
- Stanislavski, Konstantin. *An Actor Prepares*. Theatre Arts Book. N.Y. 1964.
- Stanislavski, Konstantin. *Building a Character*. Theatre Arts Books. N.Y. 1994.
- Stanislavski, Konstantin. *Creating a Role*. Theatre Arts Books. N.Y. 1988.
- Access to library sources such as books and periodicals
- Access to electronic research tools
- Access to professionals in the theatre field
- Access to guest speakers, actors, directors, lecture-demonstrations
- Access to master classes in acting

Suggested course activities:

- Students will perform scenes from theatrical realism, Theatre of the Absurd and the modern theatre
- Read and research modern texts and determine the history that created them and the themes and ideas that drive them
- Create character notebooks for all characters in scenes
- Create complex authentic characters for plays from theatrical realism, Theatre of the Absurd and the modern theatre
- Collaborate with other actors in an ensemble setting
- Understand elements and requirements of a rehearsal
- Demonstrate process of character development
- Demonstrate understanding of theatrical vocabulary at appropriate levels

- Demonstrate an understanding of different approaches to character study
- Research actors and acting styles
- Participate in master classes provided by professionals in the theatre
- Demonstrate appropriate behavior in a professional setting
- View professional performance, live or recorded

Suggested methods for evaluating student outcomes:

- Formative and summative evaluation to monitor student progress and mastery of course content
- Vocabulary tests at appropriate levels
- Skills in monologues and scenes
- Ability to know and use acting types
- Monitoring by instructor of individual progress
- Individual conferences between instructor and student
- Scheduled semester exams and juries on comprehensive work

Teacher qualifications:

- Any secondary theatre certification (e.g. Theatre: EC-12) as defined by SBEC rules, [TAC §231.241](#)
- Recommended: Experience in professional/community theatre
- Recommended: BFA and/or MFA in Acting

Additional information: