

Fall 2017

MWF 10:00-10:50 / 11:00-11:50

Class Location: PAC 180

Office hours: By appt.

Office Location: UTC-113

Tom Prior, Instructor

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Advanced Acting: Modern Theatre

Course Syllabus

THEA 3369

Continuing the Exploration: The Meisner Technique

THIS SYLLABUS, SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GRADES CAN BE FOUND ON THE BLACKBOARD WEBSITE-PLEASE CHECK IT FREQUENTLY!

<http://blackboard.shsu.edu>

Class objective:

To explore the skills and tools necessary for *advanced* scene work using the Sanford Meisner technique. We will be utilizing the plays of Tennessee Williams during the semester, primarily *Streetcar Named Desire*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Glass Menagerie*; however, there may be others added to the list. The student will be led through a series of Meisner-based exercises along with ensemble building exercises, scene and monologue work. These activities are designed to lead to the understanding of advanced concepts and techniques as they apply to the acting process. Using the Meisner approach, more advanced work on *the moment before*, *using personal experiences for character work*, *listening on-stage* and *making strong, creative choices* will be explored. The student will also be introduced to meditation for active relaxation and other centering techniques.

Required Text:

None

Classroom Attire: Please wear clothes in which you feel comfortable moving.

Classroom Protocol: This class is a CELL PHONE FREE ZONE!! Turn them off when you walk through the door!! You may NOT use electronic devices to take notes in the class. Please DO NOT enter the room until AFTER meditation, scenes or exercises are finished.

Attendance

By university policy for classes that meet three times each week (MWF classes), you may not be penalized for up to 3 absences, nor for any absence due to preapproved religious observance; beyond that depends on the instructor's discretion. ***After 3 absences, you will be penalized -3 points from your final course grade for each excess absence, unless there is written intervention from the Office of the Dean of Students (in the LSC).*** Three tardies will result in one absence. If you know it is going to be difficult to arrive to this class punctually because of another class, let me know at the beginning of the semester. *An actor must have discipline and professionalism; this is most important in working with scene partners. If you know you are going to be absent, you must contact me AND your partner either the night before or the morning of the absence.*

Participation:

ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL ACTIVITIES AND EXERCISES AND DISCUSSIONS. Participation is **vital** in this class and will count for a good portion of your grade (see grade breakdown below). Exciting, breathing, vibrant theatre is not possible without *everyone* contributing artistically: giving his or her own 'creative' input. Evaluations

will be made on all exercises, monologues and scene work. This evaluation also expands to the day-to-day involvement of each student.

Due to the physical nature of this training and out of the necessity to communicate a full understanding of the material, the instructor will use PHYSICAL TOUCH as a method of correction and instruction. Students will also be asked to partner in pairs or small groups where the use of touch is also employed. This method will always be approached with RESPECT. Please see the instructor with ANY CONCERNS OR ISSUES that you may have on this subject.

Course Requirements

Monologue Work. Each student will continue to build their monologue repertoire and will be expected to find *four* monologues; one from a play from each of the following years:

- 1945-1965
- 1966-1985
- 1986-2005
- 2006-2014

Students, on a volunteer basis, will workshop ONE monologue in class *chosen from the last two categories*.

Scene work: I will assign each student one play by Tennessee Williams and a scene partner(s). The group will then choose a scene from the assigned play. You will be workshopping each scene two times, culminating in a final “performance level” attack of the *Williams* scene at the end of the semester with suggested props and costumes.

** All performance assignments will be scheduled in a particular order, if you are ABSENT on a performance day, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE UP THIS PERFORMANCE ASSIGNMENT and will receive a ZERO for the scene. Your partner will NOT be penalized.

Actor’s Notebook: The student is required to keep a notebook with monologues and scenes with all notes that you have made. This notebook must be a 1” binder and all the sheets must be hole punched. In this notebook, you will keep a journal of acting discoveries made, new personal challenges that arise, or anything else you deem important in your work. I will be providing the sheet to use for this, it will be on Blackboard. Also in the notebook, you will keep a *character journal* from your character’s point of view. I’ll explain this in class.

One Critique on Department Production: *Learn by viewing:* Each of you is required to attend all department productions this semester (Erica Starr and Showcase productions) *One 3-5 page critique is required of one production-- your choice.* These critiques should be written in 12 pt. font and double-spaced. You should concentrate on the acting: what worked, what didn't work and base it on concepts learned in class. You will be uploading these critiques to the *Turnitin* section of Blackboard. More information on this TBA.

Talk to me! I want you to feel that you can contact me anytime regarding anything in class. You can email me (I check it twice a day, sometimes more), or drop me a note in my box in the office. *Please do not hesitate to contact me regarding questions on class activities or scenes throughout the semester.*

Academic Honesty: The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Please consult the following link for a full description of the university’s academic honesty policy:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/728eec25-f780-4dcf-932c-03d68cade002.pdf>

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy A student desiring to miss a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) should present a written statement concerning the religious holiday to me at least 2 weeks before the absence. I will then notify the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments are to be completed.

Students with Disabilities Policy It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/187f9029-a4c6-4fb4-aea9-2d501f2a60f3.pdf>

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

	Points
Activity Prep	200
Williams Scene Workshop 1	100
Williams Scene Workshop 2	100
Notebook, including character journal	200
Production Critique	100
Participation**	100
Final	200
Total Points	1000

**** (There is a direct correlation between your attendance and this grade)**

RECOMMENDED READING

On Acting..... Sanford Meisner
Audition..... Michael Shurtleff
The Actor and the Target..... Declan Donnellan

<u>The Sanford Meisner Approach (series)</u>	Larry Silverberg
<u>The Actor's Art and Craft</u>	William Esper / Damon DiMarco
<u>An Actor Prepares</u>	Constantin Stanislavski
<u>Respect for Acting</u>	Uta Hagen
<u>A Challenge for the Actor</u>	Uta Hagen
<u>Method-Or Madness</u>	Robert Lewis
<u>The Actor's Ways and Means</u>	Michael Redgrave