

MWF 1:00-1:50  
Fall 2017  
Class Location: PAC 180  
Office Location: UTC-113

Instructor: Tom Prior  
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Phone number: 294-1328  
Office hours: By appt.

## **Advanced Acting: Classical Theatre**

### ***Course Syllabus***

#### **THEA 3370**

*Demystifying Shakespeare: An Actor's Approach to the Text*

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

***<http://blackboard.shsu.edu>***

#### ***Course Description:***

To explore the skills and tools necessary for *advanced* scene work as they pertain to Shakespeare's text. We will be using Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* during the semester. This scene work will be supplemented with various exercises designed to lead to the understanding of more advanced concepts and techniques of the acting process as they apply to this playwright. Using Barry Edelstein's book *Thinking Shakespeare* and other supplemental texts and videos, we will explore how to marry the *modern* Stanislavski-based acting tradition to the *Elizabethan* text and acting tradition. Finally, we will be delving into monologue work, examining the structure of blank verse pieces. Prose pieces will be examined as well.

#### ***Course Objectives:***

- To find an organic approach to Shakespeare's language as it pertains to the acting process.
- To gain a basic understanding of Shakespeare's text through analyzing it as a map for the actor.
- To learn the tools of discovering character through *language*.
- To construct a personalized vocal regimen for each actor in preparation of monologue & scene work.
- To make the analysis of Shakespeare's plays less sacrosanct and academic and more as a practical tool for the actor to enable creative freedom in performance.

***Required Texts:***      ***Thinking Shakespeare.....Barry Edelstein***

Shakespeare:      ***Macbeth / Hamlet / King Lear / Romeo & Juliet***  
                         ***Taming of the Shrew / Twelfth Night / As You Like It / Midsummer Night's Dream***

*Thinking Shakespeare* and the plays will be posted to Blackboard. There may be additional plays added to the list above.

#### ***Course Requirements:***

**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.*

- **Monologue work:** Each student will be required to workshop a blank verse monologue of his / her choice. These will be workshopped once only. On the day of the workshop, you must turn in the speech with all scansion markings, key words, etc. and a paraphrased version of it.
- **Scene work:** Each student will workshop two scenes: one from both a tragedy and a comedy listed above. On the day of the workshop, each actor must turn in the scene with all scansion markings, key words, etc., a paraphrased version of it, and all rehearsal diary entry sheets. ***ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO READ ALL PLAYS, and be able to intelligently discuss them in class.***

**\*\*All performance assignments will be scheduled in a particular order, if you are ABSENT on your performance day, you WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE UP THIS GRADE.**

- **Actor's Rehearsal Notebook:** Students are required to keep a notebook with scenes marked with scansion, division of beats, full stops, etc. (terms we will be discussing in class). The actual text of the scene must be handwritten. This notebook must be a 1" binder and all the sheets must be hole punched. You must also include in this notebook a section of paraphrased versions of all monologues and scenes to help with clarification of the text. In this notebook, you will also keep a rehearsal journal of discoveries made, new challenges that arise, time span of rehearsal day to day, etc. I will be furnishing you with a sheet for this. You will fill one out for EACH rehearsal and then place them in your Notebook.

### ***GRADE BREAKDOWN:***

Monologue Workshop	150 pts.
Tragedy Scene (1 workshop)	150
Comedy Scene (2 workshops)	200
Rehearsal Notebook	200
Final (Performance of Comedy Scenes)	200
Participation **	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000</b>

Grading Scale	
900-1000 pts	~~~~ A
800-899 pts	~~~~ B
700-799 pts	~~~~ C
600-699 pts	~~~~ D
0-599 pts	~~~~ F

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

### ***IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP TRACK OF DUE DATES***

The instructor reserves the right to change or alter the calendar to meet the individual and unique needs of the course. You are responsible for noting any and all changes to the syllabus.

### **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](mailto: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>

### **Academic Honesty**

Any incident of academic dishonesty, most notably submitting someone else's work with your name on it, will result in a grade of zero for the project as well as a report to the department chair. Any subsequent incident will result in automatic course failure and a report to the Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication and the Dean of Students.

Plagiarism is not a matter of opinion. If you copy and paste without citing or even paraphrase, then you have plagiarized. If you do so, you will receive a zero (0) for the assignment and be reported to our department chair.

