

Spring 2018
MWF 10:00-10:50
Class Location: PAC 180
Office hours: By appt.
Office Location: UTC-113

Tom Prior, Instructor
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Special Topics: The Meisner Technique

Course Syllabus
THEA 4094.01

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. The student will be led through a series of Meisner-based exercises, activities and scenework. These activities are designed to lead to the understanding of advanced concepts and techniques as they apply to a personalized acting process. Using the Meisner approach, more advanced work on *using personal experiences for character work*, **listening** *on-stage* and *making strong, creative choices* will be explored.

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 4 absences, you will be penalized -5 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 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

Repetition Work: Each student will work and practice repetition outside of class for an hour each week with three different partners. You will fill out a summary sheet each week with the pertinent information regarding these sessions. More information is forthcoming.

Activity Work: The bulk of the student's grade will be in this category. Sanford Meisner built his technique on a series of activities that have special and personal meaning for the actor while working with a partner. Each student will bring in four of these activities over the course of the semester. More information on these will be forthcoming.

Scene work: I will assign each student a scene partner and one scene. You will be workshopping the scene once and will end the semester with a "performance level" attack of the scene for the final.

****** 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.

Self-Assessments: There will be a total of four self-assessments which the students will write on Blackboard. All assessments are private and can only be viewed by the instructor. These assessments follow each of the four activities done over the course of the semester. Each self-assessment is worth 10 points. More information is forthcoming.

Peer Assessments: There will be a total of four peer-assessments which the students will write on Blackboard. All assessments are private and can only be viewed by the instructor. These assessments follow each of the four activities done over the course of the semester. Each peer-assessment is worth 10 points. More information is forthcoming.

Scene Assessment: Each student will turn in an assessment on their scenework speaking to their process and how it changed with the Meisner work. These are worth 20 points. More information is forthcoming.

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
Repetition work	100
Activity 1: Genuine Task	100
Activity 2: A Little More Important	100
Activity 3: In the Extreme	100
Activity 4: In the Extreme with Expectancy & Urgency	100
Scene Workshop	100
Final Scene	100
4 Self-Assessment Assessments @ 20 pts ea	80
4 Peer-Assessment Assessments @ 20 pts ea	80
Scene Assessment	40
Participation**	100
Total Points	1000

Points

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

RECOMMENDED READING

<u>On Acting</u>	Sanford Meisner
<u>The Sanford Meisner Approach (series)</u>	Larry Silverberg
<u>The Actor's Art and Craft</u>	William Esper / Damon DiMarco
<u>The Actor and the Target</u>	Declan Donnellan
<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