

MWF 12:00-12:50pm
1:00-1:50pm
Spring 2018
Class Location: UTC-151

Instructor: Tom Prior
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Office hours: By appt.

Acting for the Camera **THEA 4331**

THIS SYLLABUS, SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS CAN BE FOUND ON THE BLACKBOARD WEBSITE

<http://blackboard.shsu.edu>

Catalog Description:

An intensive and practical study of the special techniques of acting for film and television with the goal of work in those industries; extensive scene work in front of the camera. Prerequisite: THEA 1364, THEA 2368, THEA 3369, must be a Theatre or Musical Theatre major, and/or consent of the instructor. Credit 3.

Course Description:

A course designed to explore the skills and tools necessary for on-camera acting work. This class is a practical, HANDS ON approach to learning this medium. Using monologues and scenework, immersion in the *process* is the primary focus of the course. It is NOT a lecture class on film or the history of film; although viewing of videos will be utilized to examine both acting and directing technique.

Using Tony Barr's book Acting for the Camera, important terminology to have specific understanding of this specialized field will be introduced. Continuation of more advanced work on *the moment before*, *intentions/motivation of character*, **listening** and *making strong and creative choices* in the application of the film medium. Additionally, this course will cover the latest audition techniques that are utilized for film and commercial work in the field.

Course Objectives:

- To familiarize students with on-camera acting techniques
- To demonstrate the differences between stage and film acting
- To deepen the level of truth and honesty in students' acting work
- To develop the actors' skills of the terminology associated with being on a film or television set
- To develop actors' skills with on-camera blocking, business, subtext, and reactions
- To develop the actors' skills with on camera blocking in relation to the shot being utilized
- To gain practical insight on monologue, cold reading audition techniques for film
- To gain practical insight on improvisational audition techniques for film

Required Text: *Acting for the Camera*.....Tony Barr

Helpful Websites: <http://www.simplyscripts.com/> (find movie scripts here)
 <http://www.script-o-rama.com/> (another great movie script site)

<http://www.imdb.com/> (database for films)
<http://www.sagaftra.org/> (Screen Actors' Guild)

Classroom Protocol: This class is a CELL PHONE FREE ZONE!! Turn them off when you walk through the door!!

Course Requirements

Please note: *You must be fully memorized whenever you are shooting in class. No exceptions. If you are not, I will move on to another person or group and you will receive a “zero” for the assignment.*

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.

Monologue work (2 total)

Choose 1 monologue from stage or film appropriate to your type. These should be 2 minutes in length. A fantastic movie monologue resource: <http://www.whysanity.net/> Additionally, the student will be expected to write a “personal monologue” which will be filmed in a private and confidential setting.

Scenework

Each student will choose one scene from a movie to film in class. You must be fully memorized when we shoot the scenes with rudimentary blocking worked out with your scene partner(s). A detailed explanation of this will be given in class.

Group Project (month of April)

I will split the class into three groups. Each group will create a 2-minute short film based on a word given later in the semester. Each group will have 4 classes in which to shoot. A more detailed explanation of this will be given in class.

Online Acting Journal----Each student will keep an online journal that assesses your work in the class and an assessment of your peers on the day that they shoot. I will be checking these periodically throughout the semester. You'll need to have an entry every time that you or your fellow classmates shoot in class. Things to talk about in these journals: improvements that you or your classmates make, discoveries about your acting process as it relates to film, any technical adjustments you could make in your work, etc.

Paper

Each of you is required to attend all department productions this semester (Mainstage and Showcase productions) ***One 4-6 page paper is required of one production-- your choice.*** How would you approach creatively making the production into a film version? Would it make a strong film? Why or why not? How would you, as an actor, approach one of the parts in a screenplay version of the piece? These critiques should be written in MLA formatting and turned in via Turnitin.com via Blackboard More information on this TBA.

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

Weekly Schedule (subject to change)

THERE WILL NOT BE AN OFFICIAL FINAL EXAM FOR THIS CLASS

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 pre-approved religious observance; beyond that depends on the instructor's discretion. After 3 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 (located in the LSC).

Classroom Conduct

Food and candy are not permitted in the classroom. Beverages are permitted as long as they are in spill-proof containers. Unless otherwise noted, laptops and tablets are not permitted. Please turn off cell phones and refrain from texting during class.

Office Hours

If you have questions or concerns related to this class, you are encouraged to meet with either or both professors in their offices. A brief question before or after class is fine; however, anything substantial should be addressed at another time, when the professor is not setting up or striking class. Please realize that we have personal and professional lives beyond SHSU and are not available 24/7. Please allow 24 hours response time for email and voice mail.

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/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

Academic Dishonesty

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.

Grade Breakdown

Monologue	150
Personal Monologue	150
Scenework	200
Group Project	200
Online Acting Journal	100
Paper	100
Participation*	100

Grading Scale

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

1000 TOTAL

**** (There is a direct correlation between your attendance and this grade. Additionally, all students will be required to assist with technical aspects of filming. This grade will reflect that as well)**

RECOMMENDED READING

<u>Acting in Film: An Actor's Take on Movie Making</u>	.....Michael Caine
<u>The Actor and the Target</u>	.....Declan Donnellan
<u>An Actor Prepares</u>	.....Constantin Stanislavski
<u>Backwards and Forwards</u>	.....David Ball
<u>On Acting</u>	.....Sanford Meisner
<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
<u>A Practical Handbook for the Actor</u>	.....Melissa Bruder (and others)