

SYLLABUS

THEA101.023/Acting One/ Spring 2016

Instructor: Rebekah Lane Room: TBD

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Office Hours available by appointment only

Catalog Course Description:

"Development of imagination through improvisations, exercises, and simple scenes."

Course Description

Beginning exploration of the theory and practice of acting.

Course Objectives:

to apply basic acting concepts and vocabulary to her/his own work and the work of others

to communicate this analysis verbally and in writing

to play an action/objective

to develop a character at a basic level

to work spontaneously, playfully and imaginatively

to act with focus and honesty

to work at the basic level of an actor's discipline

to perform with confidence before others

to provide opportunities for imaginative application of acting concepts and skills in exercises, compositional explorations, self-generated performances, and scripted work.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply in practice a range of expression within a specific art while exhibiting rigorous standards of technique.
2. Demonstrate content knowledge through analysis and synthesis of representative examples, ideas, and skills.
3. Articulate by means appropriate to the discipline the ways in which theory and practice meet in the creation of the specific art form. These means may include verbal, written, and observable products and/or presentations.
4. Show how history, aesthetics, form, and composition, techniques, and/or pedagogy contribute to the process of creative development.

Participation

Participation is 20% of your final grade. This grade will reflect the level of discipline and rigor you apply to all classroom exercises and activities. This includes the active engagement of your imagination, the willingness to contribute to classroom discussions, your commitment, preparation, and attitude. When you are not actively involved in an exercise or presentation, you are expected to be an attentive observer, ready to discuss the work of your fellow actors.

Text and Notebook:

You are required to purchase one play. This play will be assigned to you in the middle of the semester. Handouts will be given periodically throughout the semester. You are required to bring a notebook to class so you can jot down any observations and/or assignments.

Device-Free Environment

Cellphones, computers, and other electronic devices are not to be used in the classroom. That means that you need to turn off all sounds on your phone before you enter the classroom and put the phones off to the side with your bags and backpacks. If your phone repeatedly goes off in class you will be asked to sit out of class, which will lower your participation grade.

Attendance and Punctuality:

Since much of the work is experiential, class attendance is especially important. (Please consult the Towson University catalogue Class Attendance/Absence Policy.)

You may miss four (4) class periods before your course grade is affected. These four allowed absences are intended to cover the categories which the University considers excused absences. If you are absent more than four times, even for a University-excused reason, your grade will be lowered.

[For example, if you miss

1. one class because you are sick,
2. a second class for religious observance,
3. a third class because of a court appearance and
4. a fourth class because you are playing in a University athletics away game,
5. a fifth absence, even for one of the reasons listed above, would lower your grade.]

Your course grade will be lowered by a letter grade for each of a fifth, sixth or seventh absence. An eighth absence lowers any course grade to F.

You are expected to arrive promptly. Three latenesses equal an absence.

Extended absences due to documented medical issues or circumstances verifiably beyond the student's control will be handled on an individual basis.

Class Format

The class will consist of a series of exercises, activities, and improvisations, two written assignments, and three formal presentations. Outside rehearsal time and memorization will be required.

- Two formal written assignments:
 - The first will be a critical analysis based on a theatre production (You may choose between *Dance on Bones* playing March 2-5 and *The*

Good Person of Szechwan playing March 31-April 9) seen on campus.

- The second is a self-reflection paper due at the end of the semester. This self-reflection paper will not be graded, yet the student's final grade will not be posted until the assignment has been received.
- There will also be homework assignments that include written components and in-class discussions.
- There will be three graded performance assignments:
 - 1. Story Performance – This will be a solo piece created entirely from a personal story or memory.
 - 2. Scripted Scene – This will be a two-person (duet) performance of a brief (~5 minute) scene drawn from a written play. Script analysis will be involved in the process.
 - 3. Final Composition – This will be a group performance (~5 minutes) devised entirely by the group around a historical event.

Class Rules

- Smoking is prohibited on all property owned, leased or operated by the University. See University Smoke Free Campus Policy (<http://www.towson.edu/studentaffairs/policies>)
- Eating and drinking are not permitted in any Theatre Arts Department classroom or theatre (even if the instructor is not there). These activities are permitted within a scene or exercise, but you must clean up after yourself. Please do not leave debris at any time.
- Please move and treat the rehearsal furniture with reasonable care. It must last all semester.
- Please be considerate of your class-mates' work by waiting until a scene or exercise-round is finished before entering or leaving the room. Support your class-mates' work with your full attention.

Dress

You are required to wear clothes you can move in easily. Hair must be pulled back and no large jewelry may be worn. You are expected to wear sneakers or low-heeled soft-sole shoes. Absolutely no flip-flops may be worn.

Written Assignments

All written assignments must be handed to me on time and in person. All assignments must be typed and double-spaced. Correct grammar and spelling must be used. **If an assignment is late the grade will be dropped on full letter grade.** If you are not going to be in class when an assignment is due, you must email it to me on the day it is due before the beginning of class and give me a hard copy at the next class. If you do not give me a hard copy you will receive a five-point deduction.

Theatre Productions

You are required to see either ***Dance on Bones*** (running March 2-5) or ***The Good Person of Szechwan*** (running March 31-April 9) produced by Towson's Department of Theatre. You are responsible for the cost of the ticket. You can receive extra credit for any other theatre production you see on or off-campus by bringing me the ticket stub. For each performance see, three additional points will be added to your final grade. See calendar for dates and box office information.

Grading

Course grades will follow the plus/minus system. You will be graded on the quality of your participation, class projects, and written assignments. Grades reflect your preparation, attitude, commitment, improvement, and ability. Early exercises are not given formal grades, but each student's work is noted.

- Participation.....20%
- Story Performance.....20%
- Scripted Scene.....20%
- Final Composition.....20%
- Personal Response Paper.....15%
- Homework.....5%

A = Consistently Exceptional Work: Student meets requirements of all assignments; reveals clear understanding of acting concepts and skills. Student disciplines themselves to stay fully present and aware. Student brings insightful ideas and questions to work and discussions. Student observes fellow actors' work with attention and is able to articulate observations clearly. Student participates with full commitment within the guidelines of an activity or exploration. Student's written work is thoughtful and well-articulated. It is clear student is rehearsing outside of class.

B = Superior Work: Student meets requirements of all assignments and often reveals clear understanding of acting concepts and skills. Student disciplines themselves to stay fully present and aware. Student is active in discussions. Student observes fellow actors work with attention. Most of student written work is thoughtful and articulate. It is clear that the student is rehearsing outside of class.

C = Satisfactory Work: Student understands some of the acting concepts. Student's presences and awareness is inconsistent. Student participates in discussions at times, but only infrequently initiates lively ideas. Student's written work is inconsistent. Student is not spending enough time rehearsing outside of class.

D = Rarely Satisfactory Work: Student lacks focus and effort is inconsistent in an understanding of acting skills and concepts. Written work is poor and few ideas are brought into discussion. It is clear that student is not spending enough time rehearsing outside of class.

F = Below Satisfactory Work: Student does not participate thoughtfully in class, does not rehearse outside of class, and has not revealed an understanding of acting concepts and skills.

Grading Scale

A	92 points or higher	C	70 - 76 points [lowest grade to pass course in student's major]
A	90 - 91 points	D+	67 - 69 points
B+	87 - 89 points	D	62 - 66 points [lowest grade to pass a course outside student's major]
B	82 - 86 points	F	61 points or lower
B-	80 - 81 points		
C+	77 - 79 points		

Plagiarism: Academic Integrity Statement

The Towson University Code of Conduct prohibits "all forms of dishonesty including cheating (and) plagiarism." Plagiarism is copying the words of another or the use of ideas of another without proper citation. The Student Academic Integrity Policy may be found at <http://www.towson.edu/studentaffairs/policies>.

Weapons

Weapons are prohibited. This prohibition includes authentic-looking fakes. Students are not allowed to use replica firearms or swords, knives, nunchucks, etc. in the classroom.

See Weapons Prohibited Policy (# 06-01.11) <http://www.towson.edu/studentaffairs/policies>.

Disability Statement

Students with disabilities are given every opportunity to participate in theatre classes even if such participation requires adjustment to the means by which the course requirements are met. If you may need an accommodation due to a disability, please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. A memo from Disability Support Services (DSS) authorizing your accommodations will be needed. Any student who is documented through the University's Disabilities Support Services should notify the instructor during the first week of classes.

Diversity Statement

Towson University values diversity and fosters a climate that is grounded in respect and inclusion, enriches the educational experience of students, supports positive workplace environments, promotes excellence and cultivates the intellectual and personal growth of the entire university community.

COFAC Civility Code

COFAC places a priority on learning. We value the inherent worth and dignity of every person, thereby fostering a community of mutual respect. Students have the right to a learning environment free of disruptive behaviors and offensive comments. Faculty have the right to define appropriate behavioral expectations in the classroom and expect students to abide by them. Faculty have the responsibility to manage and address classroom disruption. Staff have the right and responsibility to define appropriate behaviors necessary to conduct any university activity free of disruption or obstruction.

We believe that in order to achieve these ideals, all COFAC students, staff, and faculty are expected to exhibit and practice civil behaviors that exemplify: (1) respecting faculty, staff, fellow students, guests, and all university property, policies, rules and regulations; (2) taking responsibility for one's choices, actions and comments; (3) delivering correspondence – whether verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic – with respectful language using professional writing standards and etiquette; and (4) accepting consequences of one's choices and actions.

The use of offensive, threatening or abusive language, writing, or behavior will not be tolerated and can lead to academic dismissal. Further information about civility can be found in Appendix F of the university catalog.

Civility

The learning environment in this class is based upon an atmosphere of mutual respect in which the worth and dignity of every person is valued. All members of the class are expected to practice civil behaviors that exemplify: (1) respecting faculty, staff, fellow students, guests, and all university property, policies, rules and regulations; (2) taking responsibility for one's choices, actions and comments; (3) delivering correspondence – whether verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic – with respectful language using professional writing standards and etiquette; and (4) accepting consequences of one's choices and actions. The use of threatening or abusive language, writing, or behavior will not be tolerated and can lead to academic dismissal. Further information about civility can be found in Appendix F of the university catalog. The full College of Fine Arts and Communication Studies Civility Code can be found at <http://www.towson.edu/emf/docs/civility.pdf>.

Repeating a Course

A student may not repeat a course more than once without specific, prior permission. Before registering for the course, the student must complete a Petition for a Third Attempt Form (<http://www.towson.edu/registrar/forms/>) and submit it to the Registrar's Customer Service Center, Enrollment 223. (Grades of W are administrative and are not considered as part of the repeated course procedure.)

Emergency Statement

In the event of a university-wide emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading schemes are subject to change that may include: alternative delivery

methods; alternative methods of interaction with the instructor, class materials, and/or classmates; a revised attendance policy; and a revised semester calendar and/or grading scheme. In the case of a university-wide emergency, please refer to the following about changes in this course:

- instructor's e-mail: ***rlane@towson.edu***
- Theatre Office phone: **410.704.2792**

Information about emergency situations on campus may be found through the following sources:

- www.towson.edu
- 410-704-2000
- TU's Text Alert System: This is a service designed to alert the Towson University community via text messages to cell phones when situations arise on campus that affect the ability of the campus to function normally. Sign up at: <http://www.towson.edu/adminfinance/facilities/police/campusemergency>

Sources of Assistance:

Follow this link for information provided to students by the Office of Student Affairs: Student Code of Conduct; Hazing Policy; etc. <http://www.towson.edu/studentaffairs/policies/>

Help Labs/Learning Centers and Tutors

- Academic Achievement Center: <http://towson.edu/aac/>
- Academic Advising Center: <http://towson.edu/academicadvising/index.asp>
- University Counseling Center: <http://www.towson.edu/counseling/>
- Disability Support Services: <http://www.towson.edu/dss/>

***This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Any changes will be announced in class and sent via email.**

***If you have any questions or issues you want to discuss, I am available before or after class or you may email me to set up an appointment time.**

SCHEDULE: Spring 2016/ ACTING ONE/ THEA101.023

WEEK	DATES	OBJETIVES/NOTES
1	Jan 26/28	Introductions. Syllabus. Basic concepts.
2	Feb 2/4	Ensemble Building. Body/Mind Connection. <i>*February 2nd is the last day to drop classes.</i>
3	Feb 9/11	Ensemble Exercises.
4	Feb 16/18	Objects and Stories.
5	Feb 23/25	Introduction to Actor as Storyteller. Receive first Performance Assignment sheet.
6	March 1/3	Prepare and rehearse for Performance 1.
7	March 8/10	Performance 1
	March 15/17	Spring Break
8	March 22/24	Introduction to Actor as Interpreter. Exploring a story and exploring a script/ script analysis. Second Performance Assignment scenes distributed.
9	March 29/31	Scenes memorized. Private rehearsals.
10	April 5/7	Performance 2. <i>*April 4th is the last day to withdraw with a 'W.'</i>
11	April 12/14	Personal Response Paper Due (April 12) Introduction to Actor as Creator. Exploring the art of collaboration. Compositional explorations.
12	April 19/21	Continuing compositional explorations. Receive Third Performance Assignment Sheet.
13	April 26/28	Rehearsals.
14	May 3/5	See first minute of compositions. Rehearsals.
15	May 10	Rehearsals. Last day of class May 10.
FINAL EXAM	May 16 10:15am - 12:15am	Presentation of final project (Performance 3). Self-reflection due.

***This schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Any changes will be announced in class and sent via Blackboard.**

***If you have any questions or issues you want to discuss, I am available before or after class or you may email me to set up an appointment time.**