

Alexander Technique and the Actor
TPP 4291
Spring 2019

Instructor: Mariel Brewster
Office Hours: Will send weekly sign-up sheet for private lessons
617.797.9142
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Required Text: Excerpts of multiple texts provided as needed

Course Description: This course is an undergraduate study in the application of the Alexander Technique to acting. The Alexander Technique is a mind-body awareness technique that helps us to recognize, inhibit, and redirect the physical and mental habits that interfere with the body's natural coordination and to consciously restore ourselves to a better functioning of the body as a whole. This knowledge of the "use of the self" will be an invaluable tool as you hone your craft as actors, both on the stage in performance and when you meet yourself in the practice room. The emphasis of this course, as much as it is possible, will be hands-on work with the teacher, in individual, small group, and workshop setting, providing you the tools for an individualized understanding of your body and your particular habits. These experiences will be further supported by in-class activities that reinforce the principles of the technique while applying them to specific situations that actors frequently encounter. We will be covering the following thematic units this semester: spatial awareness; imitation; allowing art and expression; speaking and the voice; intention and bodily direction; breaking habits; self-observation; AT tools for the trade; character study and physicalization; blocking monologues; vision; and expansion and centrifugal force.

Course Objectives:

- To understand the fundamental principles of the Alexander Technique in both theory and practice
- To apply the principles of awareness, inhibition, and direction to activate your Primary Control through the use of constructive thinking as defined by F.M. Alexander
- To apply the Technique to everyday life activities, as well as to your craft as actors and during both practice and performance
- To learn to apply the concepts of kinesthetic awareness, opposition of forces, and allowing art to "be in the present moment" as a means to creating an Alexander Technique actor's toolbox

Private Lessons: I will have office hours scheduled for students to come for additional free 30 minute individual lessons with the teacher. These are reserved on a first-come, first served basis. I will send an email at the beginning of each week where you can sign up for slots, as well as the location. If you need to cancel, please email me at least 30 minutes before

your scheduled lesson. If you miss 2 lessons, you will no longer be able to avail yourself of this free resource.

Course Evaluation and Grading Percentages:

Assignment Category	Percent of Grade	Total Points
Monologue/Scene Assignments	25%	250
Reading Assignments	25%	250
Participation	25%	250
Written Assignments/ Paper	20%	200
Total	100%	1000

Grading Policy:

Grade	Percent	Grade Points
A	92.6-100	4.00
A-	89.6-92.5	3.67
B+	86.6-89.5	3.33
B	82.6-86.5	3.00
B-	79.6-82.5	2.67
C+	76.6-79.5	2.33
C	72.6-76.5	2.00
C-	69.6-72.5	1.67
D+	66.6-69.5	1.33
D	62.6-66.5	1.00
D-	59.6-62.5	0.67
E	0-59.5	0.00

More information on grades and grading policies is here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Late/Make-Up Work: Assignments are due on the date specified on the class schedule unless otherwise discussed. Assignments that are late will have 5 percentage points deducted per day late. Assignments over a week late will receive zero credit.

Attendance Policy: Attendance to this class is mandatory. This class requires that you have hands-on work with the teacher and explore concepts and experiences with your peers. This will only be possible if you are in class. You have 3 absences for this class during the semester, to be used with the utmost judiciousness, if at all. (Note: all absences with the exception of jury duty and military service are considered unexcused.) If there are emergencies or unexpected problems, please contact me ahead of time (cell 617.797.9142) or see me before or after class. If you have a medical absence due to sickness, please follow the University policy regarding documentation.

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

*** After 3 absences I will deduct 5pts from your final grade per absence whether it is excused or unexcused.

Work Clothes: If wearing a dress or skirt, please make sure that it is long or that you are wearing leggings underneath. Be prepared to take your shoes off. If this means you would prefer to wear socks, then please bring socks.

Class Demeanor: Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones. There is no eating in the classrooms. This is a space where we will need to step out of our comfort zone and try new things. It is very important that we are supportive of each other. Trust is a two way street. In order to be successful in this technique, you have to break yourself open and not be afraid to look at reality. This can be physically, emotionally, and psychologically difficult work. We need to have a protective spirit for each other. Please remember this every day we are in class together. We will celebrate each other's triumphs and pick each other up when we fall.

Students Requiring

Accommodation: Students with disabilities requiring accommodations should first register with Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Materials and Supplies

Fees: There are no additional fees for this course.

University Honesty Policy: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conducthonor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Counseling and Wellness: Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Course Outline

This is a basic outline of the course that is subject to change as the course progresses. If there are any changes, they will be communicated both in class and by email in a timely manner.

Week 1

8 January 2019 **AT Introduction, Syllabus Review; Activity: Telling A Story; Activity: Making Mistakes on Purpose; Hands-On AT work**
HW due TH 1.10: Self- Observation - Looking at Old Pictures of Yourself

10 January 2019 **Review HW; Activity: Multiple Characters/Hands-On Work**
HW due 1.15: Self-Observation - Your Body As Totality

Week 2

15 January 2019 **Review HW; Activity: Hollow Flute; Activity: Poetry - Shakespeare; Hands-On**
HW due 1.17 Reading Assignment TBD

17 January 2019 **Review HW; Activity: The Magic Carpet; Activity: Using Different Body Centers**
HW due 1.22 Reading Assignment TBD

Week 3

22 January 2019 **Review HW; Tidal Breathing, Blowing Out the Candle, The Whispered-AH**

24 January 2019 **Simple Vocal Warm-Ups Monologue Performance & Journal 1**

HW due 1.29 The Psychological Gesture

Select a new monologue to be performed 2.14 that has to be about love

Week 4

29 January 2019 **Discuss Psychological Gesture; Activity: Imitating Your Colleagues/Hands-On**

HW due 1.31 Imitating Animals

31 January 2019 **Floor Breathing Exercises/Perform Imitating Animals/Hands-On Work**

HW due 2.5 Imitating Other People

Week 5

5 February 2019 **Perform Imitations; Activity Tempo-Rhythms; Hands-On**

HW due 2.7 Silent Dance

7 February 2019 **Present Silent Dance; Hands-On Work/Psychological Gestures Discussion**

HW Due 2.12 Psychological Gesture

Week 6

12 February 2019 **Discussion Psychological gesture; Activity Dancing A Monologue; Hands-On**

14 February 2019 **Perform Love Monologues & Journal 2; Discussion: Physical elements of Theatre**

HW due Week 8 - 2.18 Physicalizing Genres

Select a monologue from your assigned genre

Students study the physical elements of this genre and perform a monologue

HW due 2.19 Antiperfectionism

Week 7

19 February 2019 **Discuss Antiperfectionism; Activity: Gender Swaps**

HW due 2.21 Reading Assignment TBD

21 February 2019 **Activity Falling & Fainting; Hands-On Work**

HW due 2.26 The Critical Moment

Week 8

26 February 2019 **Discuss Critical Moment; Activity: Mechanics of Kissing; Hands-On**

28 February 2019 **TH: Genre Monologue Performance & Journal 3**

HW Pick a new scene for partners or a trio

HW due 3.12 Observing Yourself in the Mirror

HW due 3.12 Self- Observation

Week 9

5 March 2019 **SPRING BREAK**

7 March 2019 **SPRING BREAK**

Week 10

12 March 2019 **Discuss HW; Activity: Spatial Awareness Exercises 1, 2, & 3**

HW due 3.14 Reading Assignment TBD

HW Make sure you have selected the scene due 3.28

14 March 2019 **Activity: Endowment Exercise; Discussion/Brainstorm The Stage - How the Actor Adapts to Playing Space**

HW due 3.19 Reading Assignment TBD

Week 11

19 March 2019 **Activity: The Cosmic X; Activity: Centrifugal Force & Opposition Exercises**

HW due 3.21 Mixing Your Influences

21 March 2019 **Mixing Your Influences Review; Warm-Up: Tossing A Yawn; Activity: The Marionette**

HW due 3.26 Reading Assignment TBD

Week 12

26 March 2019 **Activity: Lying and Subtext-Irony; Hands-On Work**

28 March 2019 **Performance of Partner Scenes/Trios & Journal 4**

HW due 4.23: Monologue Characters with Defining Physical Attributes

HW due 4.2 Self-Observation

Week 13

2 April 2019 **Discuss HW; Activity: Poetry - Emily Dickinson; Hands-On Work**

HW due 4.4 Reading Assignment TBD

4 April 2019 **Activity: Tableau Exercise; Hands-On Work**

HW due 4.9 The World's Simplest Sense Memory

Week 14

9 April 2019

Simple Vocal Warm-Ups; Activity Tossing a Yawn; Discussion: Blocking A Monologue

HW due 4.11 Come up with the blocking for your final monologue

11 April 2019

Discussion: Monologue Blocking; Activity: Drunkenness; Hands-On Work

HW due 4.16 Reading Assignment TBD

Week 15

16 April 2019

Activity: Soft Eyes; Activity: Mask Work; Hands-On

HW due 4.18 Reading Assignment TBD

18 April 2019

Activity: Resonance; Activity: Speaking Across the Room

Week 16

23 April 2019

Final Monologue Performance - 5 page summative paper due (details to come)