

TPP 2110 - Acting 1: Instrument & Discipline  
8:30 a.m. – 10:25 p.m. M,W,F\*  
Fall 2020

---

**Instructor:** Nina Dramer

**Office Hours:** 11:00am-12:00pm Mon./Wed./Fri. @ Yon Hall, “Room” 124 (By appointment, really)  
The door to the office—it looks like just a mirrored wall, but there is a door there, I promise—is located directly on the concrete walkway around the Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, between Student Gates 14 and 15.

**Phone:** 916-812-9895

**Email:** ndramer@ufl.edu

**Course Description:**

Acting One is an introduction to the craft of acting and the foundation for all performance majors and students seeking entrance into the program. The course consists of group exercises to develop physical awareness, concentration, imagination and trust. Basic physical, vocal and analytical concepts; methods; vocabulary; and discipline required of the beginning actor will also be explored. Students will develop their own creative process through monologues, scene work, and exercises in observation and awareness.

**Course Objective:**

- A) To establish a common vocabulary that serves as a foundation for the acting process.
- B) To increase observational skills and develop self-awareness through exercise and improvisation.
- C) To develop in the student an understanding of the discipline of the art and to refine concentration skills necessary within that discipline.
- D) To introduce the student to the basic methods of relaxation as well as physical and vocal freedom and control.
- E) To develop in the student a sense of the ensemble nature of the discipline through exercise in trust and communication.

**Required Text:**

Respect for Acting. Hagen, Uta. (Wiley, 1973, ISBN: 0-02-547390-5)

Published plays and reference materials, both of which may be obtained from the campus libraries, will be utilized by the student in class. Handouts may be distributed as well.

**Course Content:**

Through the use of exercises, both structured and unstructured, the student will explore the basic skills of acting, which include: a repertoire of relaxation and warm-up exercises from which to build upon for use in the study of acting, and the development of self-awareness, imagination, the mechanics of staging, character-process, and foundational work in script analysis.

Students will memorize the general vocabulary of acting through the use of the addendum to the syllabus and in-class exercises and explorations. A comprehensive, written exam will be given at the end of the semester.

Execution of the basic acting skills will be demonstrated by the student in the form of in-class performances of monologues and in scene work with partners. Students are expected to be fully memorized for these performances, and will be expected to submit written analysis for each performance, the content of which will vary according to the student's development of skills.

#### Expectations of Monologue Work

- Thorough written analysis/prep-work
- Clear through-line of thought
- Clarity of objective(s)
- Clarity of tactics
- Vocal exploration
- Physicality
- Presentations are fully memorized at the time of first performance

#### Expectations of Scene Work

- Thorough written analysis/prep-work
- Both characters "live" in the same world
- Clear through-line of thought
- Clarity in objective(s)
- Clarity in tactics
- Vocal explorations
- Physicality

Students will maintain a weekly journal detailing their observations regarding class work and the development of their skills. (See handout for due dates and specific journal requirements.)

The course concludes in a final performance utilizing the skills and techniques acquired throughout the semester.

#### **Attendance at UF/Hippodrome State Theatre Productions:**

Students are required to see all UF main stage shows and be prepared to discuss them in class. For 2 productions, you will submit a 2-page (double-spaced, 1 inch margin, name & section number in page header) commentary to class (see timetable for due dates). The critique *should not be* a synopsis of the play. Rather, attention should be paid to the use of creative imagination, physical awareness, proper vocal technique, and the overall creative development. Discuss individual performers, for example. The idea is to report your observations. Draw parallels between what you observe and your work in class.

\*Oct. 30 – Nov. 1

*Sweat* by Lynn Nottage  
@ Zoom

\*Nov. 13 – Nov. 15

*Now. Here. This.* Book by Hunter Bell + Susan Blackwell, Music +  
Lyrics by Jeff Bowen  
@ Zoom

Dec. 4 – Dec. 6

*Agbedidi* Directed by Trent Williams Jr. + Augusto Soledade  
@ Zoom

\*Reaction Paper Required

### **Hybrid Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to stay home and seek medical help for COVID-19 symptoms or exposure (persistent cough, fever 100.4+, new loss of taste or smell, muscle pain/headaches, shortness of breath, sore throat, chills, diarrhea, or feeling generally ill). The culture of hiding illness or the “show must go on” mentality must be avoided. Students who are medically required to quarantine will have documentation from a medical provider. Students who self-quarantine must communicate with the instructor and “attend” courses remotely synchronously, when available, or asynchronously if approved by the instructor.

Students who elect to enroll in a hybrid course are expected to participate in in-person instruction. If a student is uncomfortable attending in-person, the student should elect courses that are delivered online only and plan to take the hybrid or face-to-face course in a future semester. In the case that the student does not have the option to take the class at a later time (i.e. a graduating senior), the student must make arrangements with the instructor to “attend” all class meetings synchronously, when available, or asynchronously if approved by the instructor.

Barring the above circumstances, students are expected to be in attendance (either remotely or in-person, as assigned) daily and to be on time. Students are allowed 3 unconditional absences that do not require documentation and do not conform to the UF “acceptable reasons for absence.” Any further absences (4 or more) will result in a penalty of a full letter grade (10%) from the final grade per “unexcused” absence.

-e.g. If you technically have a 90% for your grade but have missed 4 classes during the semester, your final grade, as a percentage, would be 80%.

To help organize accommodations, students should inform the instructor by the end of the second week of classes of religious observances of their faith that will conflict with class attendance this semester.

Any student that acquires 3 absences (either excused or unexcused) will be required to meet with this course’s instructor and/or area faculty to discuss the student’s continued participation in the course.

For Majors: Failure to attend this meeting will result in Artistic Probation.

Due to the participatory nature of the course that includes in-class collaboration along with partner and ensemble work, if a student acquires more than 2 absences, the student may be prohibited from participation in partner/group exercises which will affect the student’s final grade.

### **Late Assignment Policy:**

1. If your written assignments are late (i.e., after the due date) don’t bother turning it in. You will receive **zero** credit. Keep track of due dates that are outlined on the timetable which accompanies this syllabus.
2. **\*\* THERE ARE NO MAKE UP DAYS FOR WORKSHOPS OR PERFORMANCE DAYS\*\*** If you miss your *assigned* workshop or performance day, you forfeit the points for that day. Only in extreme cases will scenes be rescheduled.

\*NOTE: Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: [catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/](http://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/)

**Grading:**

Students may have varying degrees of “talent” and experience in acting. Therefore, students will not be graded solely on the basis of the skills and talents they bring to the class. Consideration will be given to the student’s improvement and effort that are demonstrated.

Participation is a key factor in grading. Criteria for this grade include attentiveness, participation in and/or leadership of exercises, willingness to participate in class discussions, etc... in general, the TIME, EFFORT, and COMMITMENT the student displays toward this class.

Obviously, assignments must be *complete* in order to receive *complete* points. Each assignment will be awarded a specific point value. Points will be tallied at the end of the semester to determine the student’s final grade.

300-270	A	225-239	C+	180-194	D
255-269	B+	210-224	C	193 and below	E
240-254	B	195-209	D+		

“Acting/Self Analysis” Paper	15pts
Journals	5 pts ea. (60 pts total)
Reaction Paper	15 pts ea. (30 pts total)
Monologue	25 pts
Scene	25 pts
Vocabulary/Terminology Exam	25 pts
Final Scene	50 pts
Participation	70 pts
	TOTAL POINTS = 300

For information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points, please visit: [catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-gradingpolicies/](http://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-gradingpolicies/).

**Physical Contact Policy:**

Unlike most classes, acting can require a certain amount of physical contact between students or between instructor and student. This contact may be used to aid in releasing tension, promote deeper breathing, or to fuel a deeper emotional connection. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with any physical contact suggested in class, you have the right to refuse it with no repercussion towards any sort of grade.\*\*

\*\*In light of the ongoing pandemic, physical contact will not occur between participants of this class.

**Academic Honesty Policy:**

UF students have the responsibility to conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner while pursuing their studies. They are expected to abide by the UF Academic Honesty Policy, which defines an academic honesty offense as “the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage.” In the context of this course, this includes conducting original research and properly citing sources for any materials (both printed and online) used in the writing reaction papers,

journals, and self-analysis paper. Submitting work that has been plagiarized will result in a failing grade. For more information on the UF Academic Honor Code visit:  
<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://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.

### **Course Evaluations:**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/).

### **Campus Resources/Health & Wellness:**

1. *U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [umatter.ufl.edu/](http://umatter.ufl.edu/) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
2. *Counseling and Wellness Center:* Visit [counseling.ufl.edu/](http://counseling.ufl.edu/) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
3. *Student Health Care Center:* Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit [shcc.ufl.edu/](http://shcc.ufl.edu/).
4. *University Police Department:* Visit [police.ufl.edu/](http://police.ufl.edu/) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
5. *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:* For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center](http://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center).

### **Final Business:**

Acting is *ACTION*. Acting is not about attitude, or being clever. It's not about your ability to conjure up or manufacture a feeling or emotion. Acting is about the *TASK*. To get forgiveness, to get them to love you, etc., etc., etc. Be deliberate. Be direct. Be fearless. Learning to do this is the function of this class.

## TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

*This timetable is subject to change at the instructor's discretion*

### **WEEK 1 (August 31 - September 4):**

Orientation, syllabus  
Theatre games and explorations  
“What is Acting?”  
Start working on journals  
Start finding monologues from published plays.

### **WEEK 2 (September 7 - 11):**

Individual Inventory: Body Awareness and Vocal Awareness

NO CLASS – Monday, September 7<sup>th</sup>: Labor Day

\*DUE Wednesday, Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>: 2-3 page paper – What does Acting mean to me?

Your thoughts regarding what you hope to take away from this class. What are your current perceptions, thoughts/feelings on the term “Acting?” This may include your prior experiences with the craft (if any), or your thoughts in general on the topic. Papers must be submitted via the course Canvas page.

\*DUE Friday Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>: Journal Entry #1

### **WEEK 3 (September 14 - 18):**

(Ongoing assignment for the semester: Begin *Respect for Acting*. I will be checking-in with your progress on this reading as the semester continues, and applying your knowledge from this text to in-class work and exercises.)

Vocabulary: Goals/Obstacles/Discoveries/Tactics

Exercises in exploring character/text and “finding the answers”

READ Chapter 1 in the Hagen book (Concept)

\*DUE Friday Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>: Journal Entry #2

### **WEEK 4 (September 21 - 25):**

The Acting Space—continuing the actor's awareness

Putting it together—Monologue in class workshops and exercises in exploring the monologue to find meaning and depth.

READ Chapter 2 in the Hagen book (Identity)

\*DUE Friday Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>: Journal Entry #3

### **WEEK 5 (September 28 - October 2):**

READ Chapter 3 in the Hagen book (Substitution)

Continuing explorations in “finding the answers”

Putting the Monologue into Action—working with your monologue

\*DUE Friday October 2<sup>nd</sup>: Journal Entry #4

**WEEK 6 (October 5 - 9):**

Monologue Workshops

Preparing a Role/Rehearsing/Choices

READ Chapter 25 in the Hagen book (The Objective)

\*DUE Friday Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>: Journal Entry #5

**WEEK 7 (October 12 - 16):**

Monologue Showings

Raising the stakes: continuing the development of your skills

READ Chapter 26 in Hagen book (The Obstacle)

\*DUE Friday Oct. 16<sup>th</sup>: Journal Entry #6

**WEEK 8 (October 19 - 23):**

Review of skills and vocabulary up to this point—in class explorations using scenes and/or monologues

Introduction of Scene Study/Neutral Scenes

READ Chapter 28 in the Hagen book (The Rehearsal)

\*DUE Friday Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>: Journal Entry #7

**WEEK 9 (October 26 - 30):**

Scene Study: continuing exploration and exercises

Using the text as a tool

\*DUE Friday Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>: Journal Entry #8

**WEEK 10 (November 2 - 6):**

Workshops and feedback on scenes and continuing explorations

\*DUE – Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>: Response paper for *Sweat*

\*DUE Friday Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>: Journal Entry #9

**WEEK 11 (November 9 - 13):**

Showing of scenes and feedback (may go into the next week)

Review and preparation for Vocabulary/Terms Exam

NO CLASS – Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>: Veterans Day

\*DUE Friday Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>: Journal Entry #10

**WEEK 12 (November 16 - 20):**

Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup> – VOCABULARY/TERMINOLOGY EXAM

Individual rehearsal with scene partner/professor (TBD)

\*DUE Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>: Response paper for *Here. Now. This.*

\*DUE Friday Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>: Journal Entry #11

**WEEK 13 (November 23 - 27):**

Audition Workshop/ The Business of Acting

NO CLASS- Wednesday-Friday, November 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>—Thanksgiving Break

**WEEK 14 (November 30 - December 4):**

In class scene Workshops

Feedback and explorations of final scenes

\*DUE Friday Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>: Journal Entry #12 (Final)

**WEEK 15 (December 7 - 9):**

Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>: Final Scene Showings— Last Day of Class

*This syllabus is a good approximation of what this course will be like this semester. The instructor reserves the right to make reasonable additions or subtractions to the syllabus or to allow more or less time for certain sections based on how the work progresses this semester.*

---