

TPP 4930 - Acting for the Camera  
12:50 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. T,R  
Spring 2021

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**Instructor:** Ryan Hope Travis

**Office Hours:** 1:00pm-3:00pm Mon./Wed. @ McCarty C, Room 306

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**Course Description:**

Acting for the Camera is an introduction to the principles, techniques, and various performance methods used in television and film. We will explore a nuanced approach as well as the full-bodied, full-throttled investment required for a strong, believable on-camera performance. We will learn how to self-tape for professional auditions, and will explore an efficient way to analyze a film script in preparation for an audition. We will devote part of our class to learning how to write, produce, film, and edit original content.

**Course Objectives:**

- A) To establish a common vocabulary that serves as the foundation for on-camera acting
- B) To explore and apply the various acting techniques required for film, commercial and television performance
- C) To develop a working knowledge of performing on a single camera set
- D) To develop the discipline needed to produce consistent, compelling on-camera performances
- E) To deconstruct a grounded on-camera performance and to apply those techniques in practice

**Required Text:**

Acting in Film. Caine, Michael. (Applause, 1990, ISBN: 0-936839-86-4)

**Suggested Reading:**

Save the Cat. Snyder, Blake. (MWP, 2005, ISBN: 1-932907-00-9)

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

**Course Journey:**

When asked how on-camera acting differs from on-stage acting, the response that inevitably emerges is, “Acting for the camera is smaller,” or some variation of the phrase. Our time together will test that theory. We will be deliberate in our process of discovery. We will explore the mechanics of filming and the unspoken rules of being on a film set. I will encourage you to *belly flop* into your choices and actions. In so doing, you will discover the full range of your instrument.

Consider me your *No. 1* Cheerleader – pushing, prodding, encouraging, never settling, and hopefully inspiring the best out of you. Our primary goal is to develop a solid foundation from which you can build your on-camera acting journey. We (you and I) are equal partners in this goal. I will bring my full self to every class. I expect you to come to this space with a willing and open heart, with (or developing) a strong sense of self-awareness, and a vibrant imagination. Let’s get it!!

**Grading:**

Students may have varying degrees of experience and “talent” in acting. Therefore, doing good scene work is not enough. TIME, EFFORT, and COMMITMENT are the crux of your grade. Full *participation* is crucial in grading – i.e., participation in and/or leadership of exercises, willingness to participate in class discussions, full prep work outside of class, etc. Each assignment will be awarded a specific point value. Points will be tallied at the end of the semester to determine your 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+		

Monologue #1	20 pts
Exercise #1	20 pts
Exercise #2	25 pts
Monologue #2	30 pts
Self-tape Audition	25 pts
Scene #1	30 pts
Scene #2	30 pts
Final Scene	50 pts
Participation	70 pts
TOTAL POINTS = 300	

For information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points, please visit the [link to the university grades and grading policies.](#)

**Attendance at UF Productions:**

You are required to see all UF mainstage shows and be prepared to discuss them in class.

Mar. 12 – Mar. 14	<i>John Proctor is the Villain</i> by Emily Bellflower @ Zoom
Mar. 26 – Mar. 28	<i>Dance 2021</i> Directed by Elizabeth Johnson @ Zoom
Apr. 9 – Apr. 11	<i>Three Sisters</i> by Anton Chekhov @ Zoom
Apr. 15 – Apr. 18	<i>BFA Dance Showcase</i> @ Zoom

**Late Assignment Policy:**

Late assignments will not be accepted. I know this is a tough pill to swallow. Professional actors who show up late get fired. Keep track of due dates. Keep the lines of communication open if you are having a challenge.

**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.

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 1 “unexcused” absence that does not require documentation and does not conform to the UF “acceptable reasons for absence.” Any other “unexcused” absence will result in a penalty of a full letter grade (10%) from the final grade per “unexcused” absence. To be considered “excused” an absence must be accompanied by appropriate official documentation. Religious observances do not require documentation.

Any absence from class for the following reasons must be supported by official acceptable documentation to avoid a grade penalty:

- Illness—doctor's note must be on official letterhead with address and phone number, noting the date and time of visit and diagnosis verifying that an absence from class is warranted, doctor name and signature
- Serious family emergencies
- Special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences)
- Military obligation
- Severe weather conditions
- Participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate
- Court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena)

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 unexcused absences, the student may be prohibited from participation in partner/group exercises which will affect the student’s final grade.

\*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/)

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

**COVID Related Practices:**

We will have face-to-face instructional sessions to accomplish the student learning objectives of this course. In response to COVID-19, the following policies and requirements are in place to maintain your learning environment and to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions.

- You are required to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings. Following and enforcing these policies and requirements are all of our responsibility. Failure to do so will lead to a report to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
- This course has been assigned a physical classroom with enough capacity to maintain physical distancing (6 feet between individuals) requirements. Please utilize designated seats and maintain appropriate spacing between students. Please do not move desks or stations.
- Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- Follow your instructor's guidance on how to enter and exit the classroom. Practice physical distancing to the extent possible when entering and exiting the classroom.
- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms ([Click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus](#)), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. [Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms](#).
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. [Find more information in the university attendance policies](#).

**Privacy Statement Related to the Online Component of this Course:**

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

**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. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). 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 here](#).

**Academic 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 specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Honor Code](#). Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel.

## **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).

### Academic Resources

1. *E-learning technical support*: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
2. *Career Connections Center*: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
3. *Library Support*: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
4. *Teaching Center*: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
5. *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
6. *Student Complaints On-Campus*: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information](#).
7. *On-Line Students Complaints*: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).

### **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 how to do the aforementioned is the function of this class.

## TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

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

### **WEEK 1:**

Orientation, syllabus  
Introduction to the mechanics of a camera

### **WEEK 2:**

Individual Inventory: Body Awareness and Vocal Awareness  
Monologue exploration

### **WEEK 3:**

(Ongoing assignment for the semester: Begin *Acting in Film*. 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.)

READ pages 1-20 in the Caine book (Introduction/Movie Acting)  
Exercises in exploring character and “discovering the text”

### **WEEK 4:**

Exercises in exploring character and “discovering the text” Cont'd

### **WEEK 5:**

READ pages 21-34 in the Caine book (Preparation)  
Feedback and exploration of self-tapes

### **WEEK 6:**

READ pages 34-55 in the Caine book (On Location)  
Preparing a Role/Rehearsing/Choices

### **WEEK 7:**

Introduction of Scene Study

### **WEEK 8:**

READ pages 59-68 in the Caine book (The Take)  
Scene #1 Performance

### **WEEK 9:**

Feedback on scenes and continuing explorations  
Raising the stakes: continuing the development of your skills

### **WEEK 10:**

READ 68-84 in the Caine book (The Art of Spontaneity)  
Scene #2 Performance

### **WEEK 11:**

Audition Script Breakdown/ The Business of Acting  
Self-tape Auditions  
Feedback and further exploration

**WEEK 12:**

Script Development – Brainstorm session for final scenes  
Script analysis and workshop for written scenes

**WEEK 13:**

NO CLASS – November 22<sup>nd</sup> – November 29<sup>th</sup> – THANKSGIVING BREAK

**WEEK 14: *Class Conducted Online***

Workshop scripts for final scenes  
Feedback and explorations of material

**WEEK 15: *Class Conducted Online***

Film/Edit final scenes  
Final Scene Presentations – 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.*

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