

# TPP3124: Beginning Improvisation

## Fall 2021

Instructor: Alina Sunoo (she/her/hers)  
Office Hours: By appointment, via Zoom  
Email: [asunoo@ufl.edu](mailto:asunoo@ufl.edu)  
Class: Tuesday & Thursday 4:05pm-6:00pm  
Room location: CONG012

### Diversity Statement

At UF Performing Arts we are fostering a culture and presenting performances that reflect and celebrate the diversity of our audiences. Our organization is committed to including voices of those of varying abilities, ages, ethnicities, gender identities, races, religions, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

### Land Acknowledgement

A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories. In particular, the University of Florida resides on land of the Timucua people and the Seminole Tribe of Florida. It is important to understand the long-standing history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. It is also worth noting that acknowledging the land is Indigenous protocol. For more information, visit <http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland>

### COVID-19

- **You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class** and within buildings even if you are vaccinated. Please continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing. Following these practices is our responsibility as Gators.
- For additional information about UF's COVID-19 guidelines, visit <https://coronavirus.ufl.edu>

### Description

The purpose of this course is to learn basic improvisational skills and vocabulary. By participating in a variety of short-form improv games and warm-ups, students will learn how to make quick decisions, support their scene partners, and build a story. This class will also give opportunities to watch experienced improvisational actors and analyze how their techniques compare with what we have been learning in class.

### Course Objectives

- To understand and perform the fundamental elements of improvisation
- To develop careful listening and observation skills
- To build trust and demonstrate teamwork with your classmates

- To learn how to apply the elements of improvisation in other facets of your life beyond this classroom

### **Class Conduct**

This classroom will be a safe space. It is difficult to succeed at improv if you are anxious about your physical safety or worried about being verbally harassed or teased. For this reason:

- Everyone is required to wear a mask over their nose and mouth.
- Tearing people down onstage or off will not be allowed. We will never laugh *at* each other.
- If we follow these guidelines, however, we are likely to laugh *with* each other – a lot!

### **Attendance, Class Participation & Performance (60% of Grade)**

Attendance will be taken daily. Due to the nature of this course, both on-time attendance and full participation are essential.

**Tardiness & Absence:** If you are tardy, points will be deducted from your participation grade. If more than two absences occur, 5 points will be deducted from your participation grade for each additional absence. More than five absences will result in a failing grade.\*

**Excused absences include:** Illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements, military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, participation in official university activities, and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). Failure to provide the appropriate documentation at least one week before an excused absence may result in an unexcused absence.

**IF YOU FEEL SICK, PLEASE STAY HOME.**

**Class Participation & Performance:** As this is an ensemble-based acting class, full participation is required. Full participation means saying yes to invitations to join in and trying your best as you play the games. You are not required to be experienced at improv, to feel comfortable onstage, or even to be funny. The point of Beginning Improv is to get outside of our comfort zones, try something new, and support each other onstage and off, encouraging our classmates along the way.

**Dress Code:** Improv can be physically demanding. Please wear comfortable clothes that allow you to move easily.

### **Performance Attendance & Response (30% of Grade)**

You are required to attend three improv shows during the course of the semester and to write about what you see. At least two of these must be live improv shows. You may go anywhere for the live shows, but the simplest option would be to attend a Theatre Strike Force show on campus: <https://www.theatrestrikeforce.com/>.

For each show, you will write a 2-page paper summarizing the performance and connecting it in at least three ways to what we have learned in class. For example, if you offer details about how the performers in the show utilized (or failed to utilize) the principle of ‘Yes, And’ that would be one such connection.

Assignments may be submitted via Canvas or emailed directly to me. MLA format.

### **Final Performance (10% of grade)**

The culmination of your work will be a final Short-Form Improvised performance with your classmates. Dates and details to be announced as the semester progresses.

### **\*Extra Credit**

Because this class is largely participation-based, you are unlikely to need extra credit if you attend regularly. You are, however, allowed to complete up to five extra credit assignments rather than losing points for days you are absent.

Extra Credit Assignment: Watch 30+ minutes of improv (online or in-person) and write a 1-2 page paper describing the techniques you noticed, identifying elements of CROW (Character, Relationship, Objective, Where), and explaining whether you thought they “failed fantastically.” Include the date, time, title, and name of improv group/performer. Note that you will have to submit 1 extra credit assignment per absence if you wish to make up all your points.

### **Canvas**

Grades, additional readings, and paper/project guidelines will be posted on the class website Canvas. Log on to <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/> (no “www”), click the button that reads “LOG IN TO ELEARNING,” and then enter your Gatorlink username and password. This course should appear if you are officially registered. If you require assistance, start with the UF Computing Help Desk at <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>.

### **Honor Code**

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-conduct-honor-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 the academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

### **Disabilities**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (352-392-8565), 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.

### **University Counseling Services**

3190 Radio Rd.

P.O. Box 112662  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL 32611-2662  
352-392-1575  
[www.counsel.ufl.edu](http://www.counsel.ufl.edu)

### **Grading Scale**

A 93-100  
A- 90-92  
B+ 87-89  
B 83-86  
B- 80-82  
C+ 77-79  
C 73-76  
C- 70-72  
D+ 67-69  
D 63-66  
D- 60-63  
E 59-

### **Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by participating in the evaluation system called GatorEvals. The new evaluation system is designed to be more informative to instructors so that teaching effectiveness is enhanced and to be more seamlessly linked to UF's CANVAS learning management system. Students can complete their evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>.

*Your ongoing enrollment is confirmation that you understand and will comply with the requirements of this course. I reserve the right to alter this syllabus if necessary.*

### Tentative Schedule

Week 1: 8/24-8/26	Syllabus, Jumping in; Ensemble building
Week 2: 8/31-9/02	More Ensemble; Yes, And
Week 3: 9/07-9/09	CROW (Character, Relationship, Objective, Where)
Week 4: 9/14-9/16	More CROW
Week 5: 9/21-9/23	Story structure
Week 6: 9/28-9/30	Establishing conflict
Week 7: 10/05-10/07	Pantomime ( <i>1<sup>st</sup> performance response due: 10/07</i> )
Week 8: 10/12-10/14	Guessing games
Week 9: 10/19-10/21	Gimmick games
Week 10: 10/26-10/28	Scene games
Week 11: 11/02-11/04	Storytelling ( <i>2<sup>nd</sup> performance response due: 11/02</i> )
Week 12: 11/09	Ensemble games & pun games
Week 13: 11/16-11/18	Long-form

Week 14: 11/23

Week 15: 11/30-12/02

Week 16: 12/07

FINAL PERFORMANCE DATE

Favorite short-form games

Review (*3<sup>rd</sup> performance response due: 12/02*)

Prep for final performance!

TBD