

TPP 2260 - Acting for the Camera
10:40 a.m. – 12:35 p.m. T,R
Fall 2024

Instructor: Ryan Hope Travis

Office Hours: 1:00pm-3:00pm Thurs. & By Appt. @ SoTD, Room 226

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Course Description:

“Principles and techniques of various performance methods in acting for television and motion pictures.”
UF Undergraduate Catalog

Although we will review the fundamentals of on-camera performance, the intent of this course is to move toward mastery of 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. In other words, this course serves as a foundation (and more) for digital performance.

The course consists of on camera performance, scene creation and script analysis. On camera physical and vocal approaches are also explored. Students will develop their own creative process, using preparation methods introduced in class as a springboard. 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 Objective:

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

Suggested Reading:

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

Recommended Reading:

The Actor’s Life: A Survival Guide. Fischer, Jenna. (BenBella Books, 2017, ISBN: 1944648224)

A Life in Parts. Cranston, Bryan. (Scribner, 2017, ISBN: 1476793875)

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

Course Commitment:

When asked how on-camera acting differs from on-stage acting, the response we offer here is: “Acting for the camera is smaller,” or some variation. 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 and television set. I will encourage you to *belly flop* into (fully commit to) 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 from 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. We will treat each other with kindness and professionalism, and I expect the same among your peers. Let's get it!

Grading:

This course embraces the philosophy of *un-grading*. Simply, complete assignments receive complete points. Because this is an artform, students may have varying degrees of experience and “talent” in acting. Therefore, doing good scene or performance work is not enough. *Time, effort, and commitment* are the crux of your grade.

Full participation is crucial in grading – i.e., full commitment to exercises, willingness to participate in class discussions, full prep work outside of class, etc.

1. *Full commitment to exercises:* This means consistently completing all assigned exercises, whether they are scene work, in-class exercises, or working on set with your peers. It is about putting in the effort to understand and apply the material.
2. *Willingness to participate in class discussions:* Active participation in class discussions shows that you are engaged and interested in the subject. It involves asking questions, sharing your thoughts, and contributing to group conversations.
3. *Full prep work outside of class:* This includes all the preparation you do outside of class, such as reading assigned materials, reviewing notes, and meeting with scene and writing partners. It is about being prepared for each class session and staying on top of the coursework.

Overall, full participation means being proactive and dedicated to all aspects of the learning process, which is crucial for both understanding the material and achieving a good grade. Each assignment will be awarded a specific point value. Points will be tallied at the end of the semester to determine.

Grading Scheme:

Points are used to demonstrate the weight of each assignment. In general, we will utilize a "complete" or "incomplete" grading scheme. Feel free to reach out if this is unclear.

The following grading standard will be used to determine your final grade in this class:

Grade	Range
A	100pts to 93pts
A-	< 93pts to 90pts
B+	< 90pts to 87pts
B	< 87pts to 83pts
B-	< 83pts to 80pts
C+	< 80pts to 77pts
C	< 77pts to 73pts
C-	< 73pts to 70pts
D+	< 70pts to 67pts
D	< 67pts to 63pts
D-	< 63pts to 60pts
F	< 60pts to 0pts

Assignments:

1. Due dates will be set with respect to student needs and outside performance activities -- where appropriate.
2. To lighten our impact on the planet, all documents will be submitted via Canvas.

Meet-and-Greet (Digital Worlds)	5pts
Exercise #1	5pts
Exercise #2	5pts
Exercise #3	5pts
Performance #1	10pts
Performance #2 (ex: Digital Worlds)	10pts
Performance #3 (Scene)	10pts
Self-Tape Audition	10pts
Short Film (Digital Worlds)	10pts
Participation	30pts
Total	100pts

For information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points, please visit:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Attendance Policy:

This is a performance class, therefore, attendance is required. You must be present to perform. We learn from each other. Your presence, whether a performance is involved that day, is important to the collective learning process. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class.

2 tardies = 1 unexcused absence

Per 2 Unexcused absences = 10 points from your final grade

You are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office to receive a letter of excusal for anticipated or unanticipated absences. For information on current UF attendance policy, please visit:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Participation + Lateness Policy:

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness. Contact the Dean of Students Office for an excusal letter when appropriate.

Attendance at UF SoTD Productions:

You are required to see the SoTD mainstage shows to which you receive a complimentary ticket. You are encouraged to attend other SoTD, Florida Players and theatre-related productions, when possible. Be prepared to discuss SoTD productions in class.

Policy on Responding to Students:

A 24 to 48 hour reply to emails/Canvas message is typical. Submitted documents are typically returned within 2 weeks after the due date.

Late Assignment Policy:

Written assignments submitted 48hrs beyond the due date will receive a half letter grade deduction every day it is late. Keep track of due dates. Keep the lines of communication open. If you are having a challenge, let me know. Extensions will be permitted if you email me 24hrs *before* the deadline.

There are no make-ups for workshops, exercises, or performances. Professional actors who show up late get fired (eventually). For graded in-class work, the make-up assignment will be a 1-page (500 word minimum) reflection essay, applying on-camera acting techniques to an assigned SoTD mainstage production.

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/

Academic Honesty Policy:

UF students are responsible for honest and ethical conduct 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 this course's context, 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 accommodation should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, 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. A meeting with the student, instructor and DRC representative will be scheduled to discuss students' needs. Absences related to accommodation are not retroactive.

Campus Resources:**Health & Wellness**

1. *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575 or visit 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/ 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/.
4. *University Police Department*: Visit 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.

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.
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 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](#).

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/. 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/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

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 so is the function of this class.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

WEEK 1:

Orientation, syllabus

WEEK 2:

Introduction to the camera
Individual Inventory: Body Awareness and Vocal Awareness
Digital Worlds - Meet & Greet

WEEK 3:

Exercises in exploring character and “discovering the text”

WEEK 4:

Exercise #1
Self-tape Auditions

WEEK 5:

Feedback and exploration of self-tapes
Performance #1

WEEK 6:

Exercise #2
Logline for Short Films Due
Preparing a Role/Rehearsing/Choices
Script Development – Brainstorm session for final scenes

WEEK 7:

Exercise #3
Introduction of Scene Study

WEEK 8:

Performance #2
Scene performances

WEEK 9:

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

WEEK 10:

Performance #3
Script analysis and workshop for written scenes

WEEK 11:

Production – Filming Short Film
Scene study w/ Film Scripts, where appropriate

WEEK 12:

Production – Filming Short Film
Scene study w/ Film Scripts, where appropriate

WEEK 13:

Production – Filming Short Film
Scene study w/ Film Scripts

WEEK 14:

Production – Filming Short Film
Scene study w/ Film Scripts

WEEK 15:

Thanksgiving Break

WEEK 16:

Film Screening – 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 time for certain sections based on how the work progresses this semester.
