

University of Florida  
School of Theatre and Dance  
TPP 6536, sect. 14DO, MFA Stage Combat  
Spring2015, MWF periods 4 & 5 (10:40-12:35pm), O-Dome Rm: 2450

Instructor: Tiza Garland

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Office Hours: MW 12:45-1:45pm & appt.

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Prerequisites: Acting II or

permission of instructor

**Course Catalogue Description:** An introduction to stage combat that teaches unarmed and various weapon techniques. Emphasis is on safety and control.

**Specific Course Description:** Instruction in standard stage combat techniques of Unarmed and Rapier & Dagger. Safety is emphasized in the creation of the illusion of unarmed and armed violence.

**Course Objectives:**

- Understand and apply basic stage combat techniques in a safe and effective manner
- Develop a better sense of awareness, balance, control, and coordination.
- Learn partnering skills that include clear communication and trust.
- Learn and use a specific vocabulary for unarmed and armed stage combat techniques.
- Integration of acting exercises, exploring the balance between technique and emotional involvement.

**Course Requirements:**

Dress: Jazz sneakers are required. Thin Leather gloves with fingers are required. Knee pads and elbow pads are recommended.

Dress appropriately for the situation at hand. Wear comfortable, casual, non-binding clothes in which you can move (no skirts, tight pants, or fragile clothing). No bare mid-drifts, no t-shirts with cut off sleeves (tank tops ARE acceptable). Cover underwear and chests. **NO HATS.** No pajamas nor clothing that is excessively baggy. No jewelry. **Take out facial piercings, naval piercings.** Bring a change of clothes if necessary. A clean professional look in movement clothes is preferred; solid colored shirts and appropriate athletic pants/shorts.

**Be ready to work at 10:40, not ready to change clothes.**

**\*\*A student not dressed appropriately will be permitted to watch class and accept an absence for the day. See Attendance Policy. This is an experiential class, you learn by participating. You must dress appropriately in order to participate.**

**\*\*A student who arrives to class "on time" but then has to leave to change will accept a tardy. ("I'm here but I'm going to the bathroom", means you are NOT here. You will be marked tardy). See Attendance Policy.**

Participation in class exercises

Rehearsal: **Students are expected to prepare and rehearse scenes outside of class**

for in-class evaluation. All out of class rehearsals for class assignments are to be noted in your **Rehearsal Log** which is a separate section of your Critical Thinking Log.

Performance: Various scenes will be evaluated for a grade. **Scenes not prepared for presentation dates will receive a zero for that assignment.**

Critical Thinking Logs: Included will be specific vocabulary, key phrases, concepts, exercise descriptions, personal notes and personal observations. Must be ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED, see course calendar for due dates. Label each section and submit it in the basic outline form provided below. **CTLs that do not follow the required outline format will not be read and will receive a grade of zero (0) for the entry.**

The following 4 sections are REQUIRED for a COMPLETE log entry.

1. Observation (WHAT): A **list** of warm-ups/exercises and activities and techniques learned each day. This is a bulleted list.
2. Description (HOW): For each item on the bulleted list, provide a clear description of exercises and activities listed under "Observation". DESCRIBE warm-ups, exercises and techniques. For said techniques note the safety measures of the technique, and the staging used for the technique. For presentations note who did what in class. Note the skills and techniques, not necessarily the drills.  
DO NOT CUT AND PASTE FROM PREVIOUS CTL ENTRIES.
3. Critical Thinking/Lesson of the Day (WHY): This is a CONCEPT, do NOT list a technique. What is the lesson or lessons gained **and/or principles** that can be applied to the process of acting? Note: A "lesson of the day" is NOT "I learned how to parry today". Do NOT list techniques, rather **note concepts**.
4. Application (WHAT IF): Be SPECIFIC. What is the relationship of the Lesson to the Acting Process? Personalize it; What if you apply these lessons to your personal acting approach or rehearsal process? Do NOT list how you will apply it to class work, this is for making relationships between concepts learned in class and the craft of performing. This statement is bigger than class, it is about transferring knowledge to your process. "What if you expand the concept?"

*Note a specific task* you will attend to in your next NON STAGE COMBAT rehearsal (the idea is to state how a concept and task from class will be applied to your production work or rehearsal process). You can complete the following sentence: "In my next rehearsal for (Comedy of Errors) I will (do what task) in order to immediately apply the lesson of (lesson of the day)."

**\*\*If you are absent it is your responsibility to get notes/assignments from a colleague (State your colleague's name, not doing so is considered plagiarism). You need a CTL for everyday of class whether you were in attendance or not. If any student is guilty of a simple cut and paste of another's CTL, all students involved will receive a grade of zero (0) for the entry.**

--Logs may also include other notes from class in addition to personal observations, self assessment notes, observations, questions, etc.

Rehearsal Log: Out of class rehearsals of in class (Stage Combat) work will be documented in a rehearsal log. Logs will include location, start & end time, date, scene, what was accomplished, with whom, and what discoveries were made. Note what was successful and what was a challenge to be worked on in the next meeting. Rehearsal logs will be a separate section of each actor/student's Critical Thinking Log. Students are expected to record a MINIMUM of two rehearsal logs per week.

Playcards: See course schedule for due dates. All play cards will include title, author name, date written, plot summary – do an act and scene breakdown (2 page max), and a monologue selection with character name that would be appropriate for YOU or

a colleague. Note who SPECIFICALLY might be able to use the selected monologue for an audition piece (be specific, give a NAME). Late playcards will receive a grade of zero.

See full description of playcards further in the syllabus.

\*\*\**Plagiarism is considered an act of Academic Misconduct.* You will be reported to the Dean and receive **a failing grade for the class** if plagiarism on this SIMPLE assignment is discovered.

Critical Thinking Papers: Critical Thinking Papers will reflect on the “Lessons of the Day” gained from class meetings and comparisons and contrasts will be made between Stage Combat training and the acting process. This assignment must be written in third person. This will be written in a 5-paragraph essay format.

3 scenes: Submit 3 scenes from dramatic literature that establish character relationships, a reason to fight, a fight, and a resolution. Be creative, look in new works or lesser done classics.

Grad Student Teaching Day: Each grad students will lead a class period. The focus of the class will be movement, improve, Michael Chekhov tools, or objective/tactic/obstacle work.

Required Viewing: *Metamorphoses, Dance 2015, Comedy of Errors, BFA Dance Showcase*

**Critical Dates:**

A separate course calendar will be provided in class.

### **Course Content/Outline:**

- |                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| I. Actor Preparation              | 1. Cuts                         |
| A. Warm-ups                       | 2. Thrusts                      |
| B. Stretches                      | E. Disarms                      |
| II. Partnering                    | F. Wounds/Kills                 |
| A. Fight Distance                 | IV. Acting the Fight            |
| B. Eye Contact                    | A. Identifying Objectives       |
| C. Physical Listening             | B. Identifying Obstacles        |
| III. Weapon work: Unarmed, Rapier | C. Identifying Tactics          |
| & Dagger                          | D. Moment by Moment Exploration |
| A. Stance                         | E. Scene Work                   |
| B. Footwork                       | V. Written Assignments          |
| C. Parries                        | VI. Reading Assignments         |
| D. Attacks                        |                                 |

### **CLASS POLICIES:**

**Attendance:** This is an experiential class. You are expected to be in class daily and to be on time. You are allowed **three absences with no penalty, each subsequent absence will result in a penalty of a full letter grade from your final grade per absence.** If you must miss a class meeting for any reason you must notify the instructor and your scene partner previous to the missed class, this does not “excuse” your absence this is simple professional courtesy. Three tardies equal 1 absence.

Note: There is no difference between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. Jury duty and military service are the only types of “excused” absences.

**Make-Up Work:** Late written work will not be accepted. Performance assignments must be performed for the sake of your partner. You will NOT be able to receive a “make-up” grade except under extenuating circumstances at the judgment of the instructor. Because the course depends on the co-operation of partners in scene work, it is imperative that work be presented ON TIME. In the event that an absence is known in advance, you must make arrangements to present the work early.

**Written Work:** All papers and assignments must be typed and handed in on time. Late assignments and papers will not be accepted. **Students will accept a zero (0) for incomplete assignments and assignments that are not turned-in on the assigned date.** Papers will be written in 10 or 12 point Times, Arial (Regular), or Calibri font using 1 ½ or double spacing. The instructor will not read papers that are late.

**Disabilities:** To request disability accommodations, please contact and register with the Dean of Students Office. After initial arrangements are made with this office, contact this course’s instructor and provide the appropriate documentation provided by the Dean of Students Office.

## **University Counseling Services**

Contact information:

### **Counseling Center**

Address:

3190 Radio Rd.

P.O. Box 112662, University of Florida

Gainesville, FL 32611-2662

Phone: 352-392-1575

Web: [www.counsel.ufl.edu](http://www.counsel.ufl.edu)

**Academic Honesty:** All students in attendance at the University of Florida are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. Academic misconduct includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter.

\*Plagiarism is an act of Academic Misconduct.

\*\*You will be reported to the Dean's office for plagiarism on summary of playcards (monologue selection is exempt from this).

\*\*\*Copying and pasting the work of your peers for your CTLs is considered plagiarism.

Be sure you understand the University's Academic Guidelines and policies regarding Academic Honesty and Ethical Conduct. Regarding work submitted for credit, the following pledge is required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

Unauthorized Recordings-- A student shall not without express authorization from the faculty member and, if required by law, from other participants, make or receive any recording, including but not limited to audio and video recordings, of any class, co-curricular meeting, organizational meeting, or meeting with a faculty member. Do not take photos or videos of class.

### **Other Classroom Expectations**

Decorum: Your work in class is a major part of your grade. This includes your classroom and out of class rehearsal decorum because it strongly impacts the quality of instruction for you and your partners. You are expected to show respect for yourself, your partners, and the art and craft of theatre. You are also expected to respect the spaces in which we work by preparing the space for work and clearing it after you are finished working. Part of learning the acting process is also learning how to act professionally. Unprofessional conduct will not be tolerated.

Food and drinks (except water) are not permitted in class. Eat before or after class, not in class. No gum.

Cell phones/electronic devices: Turn off all cell phones. Do NOT leave them on vibrate. If your cell phone rings in class be prepared to accept a mark of "tardy" for the day. Three tardies equal 1 absence.

**Grading/Evaluation:**

Your grades will reflect your attendance (see attendance policy for this course), participation and attitude in class, execution of exercises and assignments, commitment to the work, and over-all development in class.

- 10% Critical Thinking Log/Rehearsal Log
- 10% Tech Quizzes, written work, daily assignments
- 10% Playcards
- 10% Critical Assessment Papers (2)
- 30% Choreography/Scene Presentations
- 10% Tech. Presentation of Final Chor
- 10% Final Presentation of Chor/Scene- UA/R&D
- 10% Professionalism, Participation, Potential, 3 scenes

**Grade Scale:**

90.0-100 = A	85.1-87.9 = B+	75.1-77.9 = C+	65.1-67.9 = D+	0-57.9=E
88.0-89.9= A-	80.0-85.0 = B	70.0-75.0 = C	60.0-65.0 = D	
78.0-79.9= B-	68.0-69.9= C-	58.0-59.9= D-		

Grading will be based on participation, quality of work, approach, enthusiasm, development, completion of fully memorized choreography and scenes, and the student's ability to express written and oral knowledge concerning the course topics.

Since this course presupposes keen interest in acting as a potential career, subjective evaluations of intangibles such as effort, experimentation, criticism, participation, discipline, etc. is a consideration in grading.

\*Note all majors MUST pass with a C (70%) or better. Failure to achieve said grade will result in retaking the course in the future.

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**-- All assignments are to be typed

**Playcards:**

12 pt. font (Times or Calibri), double-spaced

Include: 1) title, 2) author name, 3) date written, 4) plot summary—do an act and scene breakdown (3 page max), and 5) a monologue selection – include character name.

DO NOT tell me what the play is about. Note the specifics of what occurs in each act and scene. What HAPPENS in the beginning, what EVENTS lead to the middle, what HAPPENS at the end, and how the play end as the curtain falls. Be sure to introduce or describe who the characters are as you mention them in your plot summary.

The plot summary should be about 2 pages in length if done well, some classics may take a bit more space (3 page max). Playcards that include summaries that exceed the page limit will not be graded.

Type out, verbatim, the monologue you think would be one you could use in an audition. If there isn't a character that is appropriate for you, SPECIFICALLY note a pal or classmate who might be able to do the selected monologue. Consider age appropriate monologues/audition pieces.

This is an opportunity for you. Do not do a playcard for plays you are reading aloud or have read in another class nor the play you have been cast in. No musicals. No one-acts. Do NOT do a playcard for a production that you were in in the past. However, I do encourage that you be strategic.

Plagiarism is an act of academic misconduct.

**Critical Assessment Papers**

Critical Assessment Papers will reflect on the "Lessons of the Day" gained from class meetings and comparisons and contrasts will be made between Stage Combat training and the acting process.

2 page min.-4 page max., No title page

12 pt. Times or Calibri Font

Double spaced (headings will be single spaced)

All papers are to be well-written. These papers will include an introduction paragraph that will specifically state the thesis and the 3-5 main points to be discussed in the body of the paper. At least one complete paragraph will be used to support and describe each main point citing specific examples from the class, testimony, comparisons, etc. Transition statements from paragraph to paragraph will be used to help the document flow well. The final or concluding paragraph will restate the main points of the paper, rephrase the thesis, and end with a thought provoking statement. You are in a university and you must demonstrate university level writing skills. Expect this to be graded as an English Assignment. Use professional jargon. Avoid conversational, casual phrasing.

Students will write in an academic manner using third person, do NOT use the first person narrative form. Be strong and have conviction in your thoughts and work.

Papers that fail to meet the above requirements will receive a maximum grade of 75% for the assignment.

Take advantage of the university writing center if you need assistance in writing.

<http://www.at.ufl.edu/rwcenter/>



**Basic Notes on Training:**

Do not be late.

Prepare the space before class begins. Clear all props and bags to one side of the room in a NEAT and orderly fashion. All blocks, mats, chairs, etc., must be against the wall, not placed in front of other objects.

When you get to class start your own warm-up.

Turn off cell phones. Do not leave them on vibrate.

Do not wear jewelry or watches. You will be asked to remove them.

Have all material and texts memorized and ready to work on assigned dates.

Do not wear baggy pants to train. No jeans.

The only food or drink allowed in the class/studio space is water. Do NOT bring your coffee to class.

Be respectful of the “boarders” of the classroom and of the presentation space. Only enter when you are ready to do the work.

Check UFL e-mail for class announcements.

Schedule appointments with me as necessary regarding the training and your work in class.

**Content Disclosure:** Content in the arts can sometimes include works, situations, actions, and language that can be offensive to some students on the grounds of sexual explicitness, violence or blasphemy. As the College of the Arts is devoted to the principle of freedom of expression, artistic and otherwise, and it is not the college’s practice to censor these works on any of these grounds, students who might feel unduly distressed or made uncomfortable by such expressions should withdraw at the start of the term and seek another course.

**Complete BOTH the top and bottom portions. Detach and return to instructor:**

This is to acknowledge the receipt of the syllabus and course calendar for Stage Combat, Spring 2015.

I have read and understand the class policies: Attendance, Academic Misconduct, Clothing, Professional Behavior, Food and Drink, Cell phones/Electronic Devices, and Written Work.

I understand my responsibilities as a participant in this class.

I am aware of the various assignments and the due dates of written assignments.

I understand that this is both a physically and mentally rigorous training class in the art, craft, discipline, and history in regard to theatre.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, by signing this "contract" acknowledge receipt and responsibility of the information regarding the syllabus and course content for Stage Combat, Spring 2015.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Instructor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

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date

