

THE 4905 (19A5) ACTING PERIOD STYLES -17th Century to Post Modernism SPRING 2015

Professor: Dr. Judith Williams

Office: McGuire Pavilion Room 210

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Credits: 3

Prereq: TPP 4140 & consent of instructor

Phone: 273-0511

Time: Tuesdays/Thursdays, Period 7 & 8, 1:55 – 3:50pm

Place: McGuire Pavilion Room G13

Office Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays 12:50 – 1:40pm,
and by appointment

Catalogue Description: Experimentation and experience with dramatic literature, analysis and performance. Coursework includes stylistic work in 18th Century Middle Class Drama, 19th Century Melodrama and Romanticism, late 19th Realism/Naturalism, 20th Century Non-Realistic Styles and late 20th Century and present day Post Modernism.

Objectives and Competencies:

1. To provide the student with experience in the major stylistic performance techniques from the 18th Century Middle Class Drama to Post-Modernism, excluding the body of realistic plays from Eugene O'Neill to the present.
2. To develop an understanding of the theatrical conventions and the performance directives (vocal, physical, and emotional) inherent in the script.
3. To develop a working knowledge and sensitivity to the vocal and physical requirements inherent in a particular style of play.
4. To apply the principles of analysis, rehearsal and performance within the conventions of the style script, making informed and appropriate stylistic choices.
5. To apply principles of period research, analysis, and the scoring of a role in the development of a character.

Requirements and Policies:

1. No grades are assigned for individual performance projects. After completion of all such exercises, the instructor will assign grades based on subjective evaluation of each student's work in relation to his/her classmates as well as individual effort and improvement. The quality of analysis, experience and experimentation frequently will assume greater importance than the demonstration of performance skills. In other words, the classroom is the place to trust, to take risks, to make mistakes, and to focus on the process of learning. The performance product is secondary, but still important.
2. Proper Attire:
Footwear: Men – hard soled shoes with a heel, boots, and ballet slippers also recommended.
Women – ballet shoes and character shoes.
Clothing: Snugly fitting vests for men and women.
Men – sweat pants, bathrobe, white shirt, and sports jacket.
Women – floor length skirt, bathrobe, and white blouse.
3. Since this course sequence presupposes keen interest in acting as a potential career, subjective evaluation of intangibles such as effort, experimentation, giving and taking constructive criticism, participation, supporting every member of the class, and personal discipline, etc...is a strong consideration in grading. There is only one excused absence. This is a performance course where others depend on you, so lateness and absences will strongly affect your final grade. Each

late arrival will constitute one half of an absence. Each unexcused absence lowers the final grade two points.

4. The six scenes will be performed in one round or two (rehearsal and performance). Both rounds are to be performed on the scheduled days. Before the rehearsal scene may be performed in class, the character analysis and score must be given to the instructor. The minimum requirements for round one are:
 - a. Thoroughly memorized lines!!!
 - b. Simple, logical blocking.
 - c. Intelligent, action oriented objectives for each beat.
 - d. Clear emotional and physical choices.
 - e. All choices should evolve out of your research and understanding of the period.

The expectations for round two are:

- a. Scene must have a sense of rhythm and movement.
- b. Blocking must reflect emotion and style of the play.
- c. Heightened and clarified objectives
- d. Refined emotional and physical choices.
- e. Evidence that suggestions from round one have been carefully incorporated.

This is an advanced class for undergraduate students who are serious about acting and pursuing a career in academic and/or commercial theatre. There is a wealth of material to be covered. It is imperative that you keep up with the reading and carefully plan your out-of-class rehearsals. Round one requires at least four hours of rehearsal. Round two requires four-six additional hours (at least).

5. Since production is the laboratory for all theatre courses, attendance at all mainstage School of Theatre and Dance productions is required. **EACH MEMBER OF THIS CLASS IS REQUIRED TO SEE AND WRITE A 2 PAGE PAPER ON THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE PERFORMANCES:**

ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED FOR THE FOLLOWING PRODUCTIONS.

METAMORPHOSES

By Mary Zimmerman
Constans Theatre
January 23 – 29

GATOR TALES

Original Devised Play by Kevin Marshall, in conjunction with the UF Proctor Oral History Project
Nadine McGuire Black Box Theatre
February 13 – 22

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

By William Shakespeare
Constans Theatre
April 3-4, 7-12

Weekday & Saturday performances are at 7:30 pm. Sunday performances are matinees at 2 pm.

Constans Theatre curtain times are 7:30pm evenings, Sunday at 2pm. General Admission is \$17; faculty, students, and senior citizens \$13. **BE SURE TO PICK UP YOUR TICKETS AT THE EARLIEST DATE** (tickets go on sale two weeks prior to the opening night.) – **NO EXCUSES IF THE CLOSING NIGHT IS SOLD OUT.**

6. **TEXT:** Harrop, John and Epstein, Sabin R. *Acting With Style*, 3rd edition, Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2000.

SELECTED PLAY SCRIPTS

18th Century Middle Class Drama (sentimental)

She Stoops to Conquer, Oliver Goldsmith
The Rivals, Richard B. Sheridan
The School for Scandal, Richard B. Sheridan
George Barnwell: The London Merchant, George Lillo
The Beggar's Opera, John Gay

Late 18th and 19th Century Romanticism and Melodrama

Faustus, Johan von Goethe
Mary Queen of Scots, Friedrich Schiller
William Tell, Friedrich Schiller
The Robbers, Friedrich Schiller
Camille, Alexander Dumas (fils)
Cyrano de Bergerac, Edmond Rostand
The Drunkard, W. H. Smith

Late 19th Century Realism

The Wild Duck, Henrik Ibsen
A Doll's House
Ghosts
Hidda Gobler

Late 19th and early 20th century - Naturalism

The Seagull, Anton Chekhov
Uncle Vanya, Anton Chekhov
The Three Sisters, Anton Chekhov
The Cherry Orchard, Anton Chekhov
Miss Julie, August Strindberg
The Father, August Strindberg

20th Century Non-Realistic Styles: Symbolism, Expressionism, and Biomechanics
(in class exercise)

Epic Style – didacticism and politics

The Three Penny Opera, Bertolt Brecht
Mother Courage, Bertolt Brecht
Galileo, Bertolt Brecht
The Good Person of Setzuan, Bertolt Brecht

Theatre of the Absurd – existential and philosophical questioning

Waiting For Godot, Samuel Beckett
Endgame, Samuel Beckett
Krapp's Last Tape, Samuel Beckett
The Caretaker, Harold Pinter
The Homecoming, Harold Pinter
Old Times, Harold Pinter
Betrayal, Harold Pinter
American Buffalo, David Mamet (not used for scene work because his plays are covered in several other classes.)
Glengarry Glen Ross
Oleanna
The Cryptogram

Experimental – Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski – a theatre of physical metaphor and a working definition of Post Modernism.* (in class exercise with *Marat/Sade*)

The coursework will consist of six scenes analyzed, scored, and performed in rehearsal and performance rounds at least a week apart, *two major in class exercises, lecture – discussions, and critiques.

8. **Caveat:** It is understood that there may have to be modifications in the course schedule and/or procedures in the event of extenuating circumstances.

9. **Additional Reading List:**

Maria Aitken, *Style: Acting in High Comedy*, Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 1996.

Robert Barton, *Playing Shakespeare*, Knopf, 8/2001. (ISBN: 0385720858)

Robert Barton, *Style for Actors*, Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998.

Edward Burns, *Character: Acting and Being on the Pre-modern Stage*, St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1990.

Michael Chekov, *Lessons for the Professional Actor*, PAJ Publications, 1990.

Jerry L. Crawford, Catherine Hurst, and Michael Lugering, Acting: In Person and in Style, Brown & Benchmark, 1994.

Barry Grantham, Playing Commedia—A Training Guide to Commedia Techniques, Heineman, 6/2001.

Alison Hodge, editor, Twentieth Century—Actor Training, Routledge, 1999.

Rob Kozlowski, The Actor's Guide to the Internet with CDROM, Heinemann, 1999.

Malcolm Morrison, Classical Acting, Heinemann, 1996.

Lyn Oxenford, Playing Period Plays, Samuel French (\$12.95) or Dramatic Pub. Co (\$18.95); 1984. (ISBN: 0853435499)

Michael Redgrave, The Actor's Ways and Means, Routledge, 1995.

Wesley Van Tassel, Clues to Acting Shakespeare, Allworth Press, 2000.

10. For your information: This section will reflect the current offering of the only Equity Theatre in Gainesville. Students are expected to attend and be able to discuss these productions, particularly as they relate to period styles of acting.

THE HIPPODROME SPRING 2015 SEASON

VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE

by Christopher Durang

January 9 - February 1

MR. BURNS, A POST-ELECTRIC PLAY

by Anne Washburn

February 20 - March 15

THE TWO MUSKETEERS

By Jon Jory

April 10 - May 3

Hippodrome State Theatre **season website address** is: www.thehipp.org

Grading:

Mainstage Attendance and Papers	10
Attendance and Participation	8
Hippodrome Attendance and 2 Critical Papers	12
18 th Century- Middle Class	10
Late 18 th Century Romanticism and Melodrama	10
Late 19 th Century Realism	10
Late 19 th Century and Early 20 th Century – Naturalism	10
20 th Century Non-Realistic Style report and exercise	5
Epic Style	10
Theatre of the Absurd	10
<u>Experimental-Post Modern group project</u>	<u>5</u>
	100

SCRIPT ANALYSIS

1. PLAY ANALYSIS

1-Theme, 2-Central Conflict, 3-List key events in Rising Action, 4-Climax, 5- Denouement

2. **SCENE ANALYSIS** is a written discussion of the following points, all of which should be clearly labeled and covered adequately:

- A. Given Circumstances (Who, What, Where, When)—A clear description of what has happened to the character you are playing in the scene just before your scene begins. This description should include the emotional-mental state, and the physical condition of the character just before the scene begins. Evidence from the script should be offered where support is needed.
- B. Intention or Objective—A description of the character's overall motivation, what he/she wants throughout the scene)—the character's super-objective in the scene.
- C. Obstacle—A clear description of what is blocking the character from achieving his objective.
- D. The Score—On a photocopy of your scene, use [brackets] to mark beats, objectives, and tactics. A beat is a motivational unit that contains a short term objective. A transition is a change in objective that takes the actor from one beat to the next. Your objective is what you want to do to the other character. Your tactics are the physical actions you will use to accomplish each objective.
- E. Result—A brief statement of the outcome or resolution of the scene.

3. **CHARACTER ANALYSIS** is a written assignment that should be submitted along with presentations. It consists of the following aspects, each of which must be covered adequately. The more detailed the description or choices, the more vivid the character will become to you:

- A. Physical Description—A full description of the character, justifying characteristics where necessary with text references. This description includes information on the character's age, what he/she looks like, what he/she must wear in the scene. It also includes more active dimensions like how the character walks, moves, sits, gestures, talks.
- B. Emotional Profile—A full emotional profile of the character including habitual disposition and specific moods in the scene.
- C. Relationships—What is his/her relationship to the other characters in the scene and to the central conflict in the scene.
- D. Past History—A brief statement of the most important influential details about the character's past history.
- E. Secret- 1)Shared, 2) Private or “Uber”

GUIDELINES FOR CRITIQUE PAPERS

1. The paper should meet all requirements of mature, college-level writing: clarity, sophistication in thought process, originality of approach, organization, careful transitions, and syntax.
2. “The superior play report, like other works of art or research, is chiefly a transformation of personal experience into verbal form, and should retain a personal and unique style. In its simplest terms, the paper is a personal reaction to the production: what you like, relate to, are affected by and the valid reasons why you feel or think as you do. Support with specific examples.” (Yeaton) Assume the reader will disagree with you.
3. Your paper should contain an introduction, body, and conclusion. Because it is only 1 ½-2 pages long, you must select, be specific, focused and careful. Let the reader know where you are going, what you have chosen to pursue.
4. Choose one (or two if they fit logically together) aspect of the play or production to deal with. Work in depth not in breadth. If you choose an aspect of the play to discuss, be certain your paper is not pure literary analysis but reflects your response to the production. (The written text of a play is only one-half the experience.) In reading papers, it must be obvious that you saw and comprehended the production. If you choose to relate the production to your own life, experiences and beliefs, be sure the center of the focus remains the production and not your life. If you choose to relate the production to comments made by director, actors, or designers, make sure the center of focus is what you saw in the production and not what you heard in class.
5. Look inside yourself for the unique. Be original. Think, probe, explore. Remember that the paper is your response, your personal in-depth insight into the performance, substantiated by specific illustrations.
6. Be clear. Use no general statements. Always illustrate your ideas with interesting vivid, carefully chosen examples. That does not mean beginning a sentence, “An example of this would be...”
7. Remember that careless wording, structure or pedestrian content can only result in a mediocre paper. Think. Analyze. Dig. Choose your vocabulary to say exactly what you mean. Use colorful images and language. Write richly, passionately or analytically. Don’t be dull.
8. Remember what you really feel. What you think or care about deeply will make an interesting paper. Choose any subject that you can probe meaningfully.
9. Type, if possible. If not, please double space and write or print with great clarity. Present your paper in the best possible way. Play titles are underlined. Note spelling of playwright.
10. Write up your paper as carefully as you possibly can. Use a dictionary or spell check, if you can’t spell. Proofread. This should be a mature, intelligent, thoughtful literate paper.