

University of West Georgia
Fall 2019 Syllabus
Developing A Character

Instructor: Christine Fuchs
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Course-Section # THEA 2291-02
Prerequisites: THEA 1100 and THEA 2100
Course Meets: Tues/Thurs 9:30am-10:45am; Old Auditorium

Required Texts: *Audition* by Michael Shurtleff
Respect for Acting by Uta Hagen

Required Materials: Clothing allowing adequate movement (no logos or writing)
A notebook/journal, pen/pencil (ELECTRONIC FORMS OF TAKING NOTES IS **NOT** ALLOWED)
Water in a non-spillable container

Required Performances:

Townsend Center for the Performing Arts. For ticket information, please call (678) 839-4722.

The Gospel At Colonus @ Townsend Center Mainstage Theater

October 9 -12 @ 7:30pm

October 13 @ 2:30pm

Abigail/1702 @ Townsend Center Dangle Theater

November 13-16 @ 7:30pm

November 17 @ 2:30pm

November 19-22 @ 7:30pm

Course Description

This course examines the process toward becoming an actor. Through improvisation, monologue work, and scene study, the student will begin to develop her/his own process toward developing a character.

Degree Learning Outcomes

- Students will express through performance, writing, speaking and other modes of communication the results of research and critical judgment, indicated by a demonstrable ability to reach an audience effectively through at least one of the components of theatrical art.
- Students will illustrate awareness of the complex human condition acquired through aesthetic and intellectual perceptions as evidenced in various modes of theatrical productions.
- Students will express through performance, writing, speaking and other modes of communication the results of research and critical judgment, indicated by a demonstrable

ability to reach an audience effectively through at least one of the components of theatrical art.

- Students will apply skills learned in courses to a variety of work and social environments.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Students will explain their process for creating a character.
- Students will identify the responsibilities of an actor.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to collaborate with others to create a scene.
- Students will break down a script in order to analyze it from their character's point of view.

University Policies

Honor Code, Disability Services, Official E-mail, and other policies can be found at <https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php>

All policies discussed or referred to in this document are considered to be in force for this course. Students are required to review this document.

Accessibility and Learning Challenges

Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact Accessibility Services.

Center for Academic Success: The Center for Academic Success provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or cas@westga.edu

University Writing Center: The University Writing Center assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: (678) 839-6513 or writing@westga.edu

Class Expectations, Attendance & Class Participation

- Each acting class is an unrepeatable experience. The majority of work we do happens inside the classroom. Therefore, you are required to attend each scheduled class meeting as indicated on the class calendar. Students are allowed ONE unexcused/excused absence (not on presentation days). Absences beyond the one, whether excused or unexcused, will result in a 12.5 point deduction (of the total points) for any absence. However, you may NOT miss a class in which your monologue/scene is scheduled for in-class rehearsal, critique or performance. In the case of illness, a second absence will be permitted IF the student provides written documentation from appropriate medical personnel (A parent does NOT constitute medical personnel). Any student not present at the top of class will be marked LATE. Two (2) lates will be considered equivalent to one (1) absence.

- Be here. Be on time. A final warning: I am very strict with this attendance policy. Attendance issues can easily lower your letter grade. It is not possible to receive an “Incomplete” grade for this class.
- Please wear clothing that facilitates movement and is soivable. Theatre and rehearsal room floors are notoriously dirty, so be prepared. Constrictive, revealing or formal clothing will make it nearly impossible to participate in the physical warm-ups that this class requires. This includes shoes – no platforms, no flip flops, no work boots. Also, no hats!
- Being here in body is only half the battle, your creative energy is required as well. Due to the active nature of this class, it will be very hard to catch up on sleep while you are here, so be prepared to participate. If you sleep, I’ll ask you to leave, and it will count as an absence. Plus, it’s just rude. During class exercises, it will be necessary at times for volunteers. However, I reserve the right to choose who goes when. A refusal to contribute, even if it means going first, will be noted as non-participation. The success of this class requires bodies and minds in motion. Please do not let yourself or your fellow classmates down. I take daily notes, so I do notice you!
- YOU are responsible for finding material. I am not a walking resource of monologues, scenes or plays for your type and age range. All monologues and scenes, unless directly handed out by me, must be contemporary – starting from 2000 to present. I will post script resources on Course Den. Do not wait until the last minute to find pieces you LIKE and are your “type.” Further guidelines will be discussed in class and posted on Course Den. Also, you are required to read the entire play for any and all assignments.
- Outside rehearsals: In addition to the work done in class, students are required to devote adequate time outside the scheduled class period to prepare scenes for presentation. Students will be responsible for scheduling and participating in rehearsals. Rehearsals are a crucial component to both the learning process and the cooperative working environment. Students should respect those with whom they are working and support them in the process of making artistic choices. Failure to meet outside of class will be noted. If you find you are having a difficult time rehearsing with a scene partner, it is your responsibility to meet with me privately to discuss the issue before the final performance of your scene.
- A basic set of rehearsal furniture will be kept in/near the classroom. Students will be responsible for obtaining any costumes, props and additional furniture necessitated by their scenes. Make sure you have an available backpack or tote bag adequate to haul costumes and props. Toward the end of the semester, large props may be stored in my office. Your props and clothes never have to be authentic or elaborate, but they should be appropriate.

Class Structure and Assignments

In-class exercises/class participation/readings (100 points)

Every class you will participate in either partner or group activities, games or exercises designed to give you an experiential understanding of acting techniques and processes. You will be graded on your commitment, your focus and your willingness to engage in each activity. When not engaged in a class activity or presenting your own work, active listening and focus on your peers work is expected. Cell phone usage, doing work for other classes or engaging in side conversations disrupts the energy of the class and is disrespectful to the instructor and your peers. If you frequently engage in this behavior, it will be reflected in your participation grade. In short, show others the same respect you would like to be shown to you.

You are expected to complete all readings by the assigned date on the Class Schedule. We will discuss the readings as a class and you will be graded on your participation in those discussions.

Personal Warm-up (40 points)

You will learn several techniques, exercises, stretches and positions that will guide you with: basic vocal hygiene, the proper breath and vocal support necessary for the stage, the ability to identify and release habitual tension, and cultivating permission for freedom of expression. In the first half of the semester, at the start of every class, I will teach you and guide you through these exercises. By the date designated in the Class Syllabus, you will be expected to have composed your own **personal warm-up** utilizing the exercises and techniques you have learned **in class**. I will observe your warm up and you will be graded on your proficiency in the exercises and the effectiveness of the warm up you create. I will observe how your warm up takes you from your starting place to a place of readiness. You will then present either monologue you have worked on in class.

15 Journal Entries (30 points)

BEFORE class every Tuesday, you will upload a journal reflection to Course Den under Assignments from the previous week. Each journal entry is to have a minimum of 300 words. It must be typed and uploaded as a Word document. NO pdf's or pages. In these journals you may process: *How are the readings, exercises and activities landing on you? What are you taking away from them? How are outside rehearsals going? What are you learning from them? What questions do you have for me?* These journals will serve as a way for you, through reflection, to track your learning process. You will be graded on the depth of your self- analysis and articulation of process.

Monologues (Monologue #1 – 25 points; Monologue #2 - 30 points)

Over the course of the semester you will perform two monologues. The first will be assigned to you and the second you will select yourself. The second monologue should be selected and prepared with the intention that it could be used as an audition monologue. You will be graded on your creativity, your artistic risk, and how well you apply the techniques already introduced to you in the semester.

Scene Work (40 pts 1st scene, 50 pts 2nd scene) & Analysis (25 pts 1st scene, 30 pts 2nd scene)

You will be assigned two scenes to work on over the course of the semester that will require you to rehearse outside of class with your assigned scene partner. You will receive feedback and be coached on these scenes in class. On the day of your final presentation of each scene, you will

turn in your analysis (written or typed) for the scene AT THE TOP OF CLASS. An assignment sheet on what is expected in the analysis will be handed out to you later in the semester. The second scene will serve as your final examination in the course, and should be fully produced including: staging, set dressing, props, costumes, consideration to audience placement and lighting. For both scenes you will be graded on preparation, artistic risk, and the application of the techniques learned in the course.

Production Critique (35 points)

You are required to attend both of the fall productions at UWG, and write one (1) critique of a specific performance within that production. You will be given information detailing what is expected in your critique prior to the first production.

Research Project (50 points)

Dependent on Class Size*** Either in groups of 2 (10-15 minutes) or 3 (15-20 minutes), you will be given an influential acting or performance theorist to research. You will then put together a presentation of that research that will include a participatory activity for the class. For the allotted time, you and your partner(s) will teach the class on your findings. The creative use of space, the use of music, media or any other creative element(s) are REQUIRED.

Self-Reflection Papers (20 points each)

You will be asked to write two self-reflection papers: one at the beginning of the semester and one at the end of the semester. The first will offer me some background about your relationship with acting before taking this course, as well as your expectations for the course and what you hope to learn. The second paper will be a reflection of your semester journey. Minimum 600 words each paper. Upload to Course Den, Word Document, NO pdf's or pages.

Grading System

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| Class participation | 100 pts |
| Monologue 1 | 25 pts |
| (Mock) Audition Monologue | 30 pts |
| Scene 1 presentation | 40 pts |
| Scene 1 analysis | 25 pts |
| Personal Warm up | 40 pts |
| Research Project | 50 pts |
| Journals | 30 pts |
| Production Critique | 40 pts |
| Final Scene Analysis | 30 pts |
| Final Scene Presentation | 50 pts |
| Self-Reflection Paper #1 | 20 pts |
| Self-Reflection Paper #2 | <u>20 pts</u> |
| Total | 500 pts |

Class Schedule

Syllabus is subject to revision by the Instructor at any point during the semester

| Date | Class | Homework |
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| Thurs Aug 15 | Discussion: Course description and syllabus Handout: E.E. Cummings Poem | Self-Reflection paper, due Tuesday 8/20 Memorize poem Begin looking for a monologue** Answer the question: How do I find a monologue? |
| Tues Aug 20 | Due: Self- reflection paper Discussion: How do I find a monologue? | Read Shurtleff pgs. 187-192 Read Hagen Chapter 16 <i>Talking to Yourself</i> Continue looking for monologues** |
| TH 08/22 | Due: Off-book for E.E. Cummings Poem Discussion of readings | Read Hagen Chapter 3 <i>Substitution</i> Continue looking for monologues** |
| T 08/27 | Discussion of readings | Read Shurtleff pgs. 33-41 <i>Relationship</i> Continue looking for monologues** |
| TH 08/29 | Presentation of poem | Finalize monologue choice(s)** Type your monologue double spaced, 16 font Due 09/05 |
| T 09/03 | No class | Re-read Shurtleff's <i>Relationship</i> |
| TH 09/05 | Discussion of experience Present monologues (NOT performance) DUE: Typed monologue, double spaced, 16 font | Read Shurtleff pgs. 42-44 <i>Conflict &</i> pgs. 67-69 <i>The moment before</i> |
| T 09/10 | Discussion of readings In class monologue work | Read entire play of monologue Read Hagen pgs. 81-85, answer the questions (pertaining to your monologue) in your journal entry due 9/10 |
| TH 09/12 | Off-book for monologues, In class monologue work Research Presentation – Groups assigned | Read Hagen Chapter 4 and 5 <i>Emotional Memory, Sense Memory</i> |
| T 09/17 | Discussion of readings; Introduce Action | Read Hagen Chapter 27 <i>The Action</i> Hand out action sheets |
| TH 09/19 | Action continued In class monologue work | |
| T 09/24 | Mock Auditions Discussion of experience Assign scene partners | Find a scene no longer than 10 minutes |
| TH 09/26 | TBD | Read Hagen pgs. 145-157 (Intro, Chapters 21 & 22) <i>Intro & 1st contact with the play & The Character</i> |
| T 10/01 | Discussion of reading Discuss Performance Critique Criteria | Read Hagen Chapter 23 <i>Circumstances</i> |
| TH 10/03 | No Class – Fall Break | |
| T 10/08 <i>Gospel at Colonus</i> opens 10/9 | Discussion of reading | Read Hagen Chapter 24 <i>Relationship</i> |
| TH 10/10 | Discussion of reading | Read Hagen Chapter 25 <i>The Objective</i> |
| T 10/15 | Discussion of reading DUE: Performance critique of <i>The Gospel at Colonus</i> Research Presentations – Groups 1 & 2 | |

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| TH 10/17 | Research Presentations – Groups 3 & 4 & 5 | |
| T 10/22 | Research Presentations – Groups 6 & 7 | |
| TH 10/24 | Discussion of Research Project | |
| T 10/29 | DUE: Hagen’s questions & Beats Scene Presentations | |
| TH 10/31 | DUE: Hagen’s questions & Beats Scene Presentations | New scene partners assigned Find a scene no longer than 15 minutes Read entire play Hand in a hard copy of scene by 11/14 |
| T 11/05 | Discussion of experience Where do we go from here? | Hagen Chapter 6 <i>The Five Senses</i> |
| TH 11/07 | Discussion of reading | Hagen Chapter 7 <i>Thinking</i> |
| T 11/12 <i>Abigail/1702</i> opens 11/13 | Discussion of reading | Hagen Chapter 8 <i>Walking and Talking</i> |
| TH 11/14 | DUE: Hard copy of scene Discussion of reading | Hagen Chapters 9 & 10 <i>Improvisation & Reality</i> Work on your personal warm-up for 11/21; refresh either monologue you have worked on in class. |
| T 11/19 | Discussion of reading | Hagen Chapter 12 <i>Three Entrances</i> Work on your personal warm-up for next class; refresh either monologue you have worked on in class. |
| TH 11/21 | Personal Warm-up Composition + monologue Discussion of reading | Hagen Chapter 13 <i>Immediacy</i> |
| Week of 11/25-11/29 | Thanksgiving Break | |
| T 12/03 | DUE: Performance Critique of <i>Abigail/1702</i> DUE: Hagen’s questions, beats & actions Final scene presentations | |
| TH 12/05 | DUE: Hagen’s questions, beats & actions Final scene presentations | |
| Finals Week TH 12/12 @ 8am- 10am | TBD | |