

University of South Dakota  
Theatre 131-25, Introduction to Acting

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Tuesday/Thursday

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11-12:20pm

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**Theatre Department's Statement of Mission**

The Department of Theatre prepares the student for a career in the theatre and encourages personal and creative growth. We do this by providing a comprehensive, liberal arts education, supplemented by intensive craft training, in which classroom study and practical experience are of equal and complementary value. The Department promotes excellence in education, research, and service; fosters student engagement and leadership; develops creative and pragmatic problem-solving skills; explores new questions, techniques, and practices in the theatre; and inspires students to become life-long learners who contribute to their respective discipline and profession while enhancing the cultural lives of the University and their community.

**Catalog Course Description**

Designed for the non-major interested in exploring acting as a means of improving communication skills and self-expression. Includes a specific process for role development, text analysis, and opportunities to practice the craft and art of acting.

**Additional Course Description and Objectives:**

1. To develop the student actor's powers of concentration, relaxation, and creativity;
2. To explore a specific process of character and text analysis to be used in performance;
3. To provide opportunities for the actor to practice applying theories learned in class to the performance situation;
4. To foster respect and appreciation for the art of acting;

**Instructional Methods:**

Craft based exercises, performance, discussion, and written analysis papers.

**South Dakota Board of Regents General Education Goals**

**Goal #4: Students will understand the diversity and complexity of the human experience through study of the arts and humanities.**

As a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will:

1. *Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of values, beliefs, and ideas embodied in the human experience...*  
by analyzing (via written character biography) and *embodying* the behavior of diverse characters in plays, by studying and experiencing many different plays by authors of different genders, nationalities, races, and sexual orientations, by exploring a variety of characters and representing these varied viewpoints via a graded acting scene, and by evaluating self and classmates' performances through class discussion.
2. *Identify and explain basic concepts of the selected disciplines within the arts and humanities...*  
as a result of specific craft based training in releasing tension, developing concentration, promoting creativity and self expression, and by learning a specific process of character and scene analysis assessed by written papers and performance.
3. *Demonstrate creative and aesthetic understanding...*  
through participation and observation of craft based exercise work, class performance, and attendance at a theatre production. Aesthetic understanding of theatre will be made concrete through a written review of a theatre production and through in-class discussion of the performance experience.

**Goal #5: Students will have a greater understanding of the fine arts as an expression of human imagination and creativity, and will understand the contribution of the arts to self-understanding and a more enriched life experience.**

As a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will:

1. *Demonstrate creative and aesthetic understanding...*

through participation and observation of craft based exercise work, class performance, and attendance at a theatre production. Aesthetic understanding of theatre will be made concrete through a written review of a theatre production and through in-class discussion of the performance experience.

2. *Students will be able to explain and interpret elements of the arts as a result of specific craft/instrument based*

*training and by learning a specific process of character and scene analysis assessed by written papers and performance.*

**Required Text:**

Exerts from Cohen, Robert. Acting One. Mountain View CA: McGraw-Hill, Fifth Edition (2008)

Acting Scenes from plays will be provided by the instructor

**Attire and Physical Requirements:**

Please wear loose, comfortable clothing (with no caps or hats) which will allow for complete freedom of movement (no heels, mini-skirts, or clothes that restrict movement). Also, if you have any special needs (e.g. dyslexia) or a physical condition (w/heart, back, epilepsy, asthma, etc.) that would impede your ability to learn the material or could be aggravated by aerobic or stretching activities, or deep relaxation, please let me know.

**Disability Services:**

Any students who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access to accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register w/Disabilities Services during the first week of class. Disability Services is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students currently registered w/Disability Services must obtain a new accommodation memo each semester. (For information contact: Ernetta L. Fox, Director Disability Services, Rm 119, Service Ctr, 605.677.6389, [www.usd.edu/ds](http://www.usd.edu/ds); [dservices@usd.edu](mailto:dservices@usd.edu).)

**Cheating and Plagiarism Policy:**

Plagiarism is defined as the act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of writings, of the ideas or language of the same, passing them off as the product of one's own mind (***Black's Law Dictionary***). By extension this has traditionally been applied to the appropriation of artistic product including music compositions, designs, paintings, sculpture, etc. Credibility and integrity are essential traits in a professional who is guaranteed the exclusive ownership of his or her own creations and must respect the same right of others. No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. At the discretion of the instructor, a student caught engaging in any form of academic dishonesty may be: given a zero for that assignment, allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit, assigned a reduced grade for the course, dropped from the course, or fail the course.

**Freedom of Learning:**

Students are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled. Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance shall be evaluated solely on an academic basis and students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study. Students who believe that an academic evaluation is unrelated to academic standards but is related instead to judgment of their personal opinion or conduct should contact the dean of the college which offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

**Attendance Policy:**

This course requires active participation from everyone on a daily basis. The material that is taught is sequential and others in the class will depend upon your presence. Thus, your timely attendance is vital. To facilitate your growth as an actor, attendance is mandatory. If you should miss more than two class periods, your final grade in the course will be lowered. Additionally, after four absences, the instructor reserves the right to withdraw you from class. Exceptions to this policy may occur due to family emergency or **serious** illness.

**Make-Up Policy:**

In the event of a family emergency or serious illness the student should, if able, contact the instructor **prior** to the performance so that the student’s scene partner can be informed. The student will be expected to make up the performance during the next scheduled class period.

**Assignments and Evaluations:**

Classwork		15 pts.
Includes: positive commitment, attitude, concentration, participation in discussion, & growth in exercise work.		
Speech of Enthusiasm		5 pts.
Theatre Review of a USD Theatre Production		5 pts.
Performance – Open Scene		25 pts
	GOTE Sheet Analysis*	10 pts.
	Acting	15 pts.
Performance – Scene		50 pts.
	Prep	5 pts.
	Character Biography*	15 pts.
	GOTE Sheet Analysis*	10 pts.
	Acting	20 pts.
Audition Monologue (Final Exam)		25 pts.

\*Late papers (gotesheet, bio analysis) have diminished usefulness to the actor and will be penalized one point for every class period that they are late.

Extra Credit: For acting: Knutson Theatre Performance (7pts), Arena/Workshop (5pts), Directing Scene Performance (1pt), and Perfect attendance (1pt for a max of 10pts)

**Evaluations**

117-130	A	Excellent work; complete, detailed, consistently dynamic and inventive
104-116	B	Very good work; fairly complete w/numerous details, but not consistently dynamic
91-104	C	Good to average; meets minimum requirements but lacks details and credibility
78-90	D	Below average work; sloppy, incomplete, shows lack of care/respect for assignment
77 and Lower	F	Fails to meet minimum requirements

**Course Outline (subject to change):**

- August 25: Review syllabus, discuss release of tension and trust  
August 27: Discuss Lessons 1 & 2, learn Strasberg Relaxation technique  
**Due: Lessons 1 & 2**
- Sept.1: Trust and ensemble building exercises  
Sept.3: Discuss Lessons 3-5, heartbeat ensemble exercise, working with other  
**Due: Lessons 3-5**
- Sept.8: Viewpoints warm-up, discuss goal, obstacle;  
*Wear comfortable/moveable clothes*
- Sept.10: Work on tactics  
Sept.15: Discuss Lessons 6-8, work on positive goals;  
**Due: Lessons 6-8**
- Sept.17: Speeches of enthusiasm are due (ex. 7-2)  
Sept. 22: Doing on stage  
**Due: Bring an activity (not reading) to do on stage**
- Sept. 24: Introduce the GOTE sheet analysis, work on simple contentless scenes  
Sept. 29: Begin work on scene #1\*, review ground rules for working on acting scenes, discuss floorplan, costume list, prop list, given circumstances;
- Oct. 1: In class rehearsal with instructor,  
Oct. 6: In class rehearsal with instructor;  
Oct. 8: Graded performance of Scene #1;  
Oct. 13: Discuss Character Biography, distribute Scene #2\*;  
Oct. 15: Work on floorplan, costume list, prop list, simple activities, moment before, work on concept of climax/build for Scene 2
- Oct. 20-22: In class rehearsal of Scene #2  
Oct. 27-29: Dress Rehearsal for Scene #2  
Nov. 3-5: Performances for Scene #2  
Nov. 10: **NO CLASS**  
Nov. 12: Discuss performance, introduce the monologue audition;  
Nov. 17: Discuss the challenges of the monologue audition, work on introduction and presentation  
Nov. 19: Breaking down the monologue  
Nov. 24- Dec. 7: In class rehearsal of monologue audition

\*Detailed rehearsal schedules with assigned scene, scene partner, preview, performance, and analysis due dates will be distributed at this time.