

The University of Utah / Department of Theatre

Intro to Acting (Non Majors)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is a beginning level three-credit course; it has no prerequisite. It is designed for non- majors without any prior experience. Students will learn basic acting skills through class participation in the following:

- Text work
- Scene work
- Improvisations and exercises
- Observation and discussion

Students will be expected to actively participate in games, exercises, and scripted work as assigned. Particular emphasis will be given to expanding the imagination, developing a sense of play, and collaborating effectively. The course fulfills a Fine Arts Foundation Credit as defined by the University of Utah.

Course Objectives:

- 1 : Identify and discuss the theoretical and practical elements of acting
- 2 : Define acting terminology and use it appropriately in class
- 3 : Participate in theatre games with confidence and expressiveness
- 4 : Do improvisational scene work based on the principles of conflict, tension, and playable action towards a goal.
- 5 : Develop an appreciation of theatre both as an actor and an audience
- 6 : Experience the process of rehearsal to performance through monologue and scene work

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance/Participation: Show up on time! Be an active, contributing member of our class. Excused absences will be determined if you contact me in advance. There will be no excused absences allowed during our scene presentation week(s). Dress appropriately, meaning if you can't move around, wear something else. Participating means engaging yourself fully in the activities we do.

Theatre Production Show Notes Requirement: Students are required to attend at least **TWO** theatre productions this semester. At least **ONE** of these productions should be professional or semi-professional. Professional shows can be seen at PIONEER THEATRE Company [on campus], at SALT LAKE ACTING COMPANY, PLAN B THEATRE, or THE GRAND

THEATRE [off campus]. You'll need to hand in a program with a ticket stub attached, or other literature from the theatre if programs are not available. You will be required to turn in notes on your observations of the shows you see.

Please use the guidelines below to write a concise, thoughtful, articulate, and organized evaluation (1-2 pages in length and doubled spaced). Please proof read your papers for correct spelling and proper use of grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary. Include name of play (underlined or italicized), playwright, director, where it was performed, and ticket stub.

This paper should reflect your overall viewing experience and your noted observations about the ACTING and how it communicated CHARACTER and STORY. It's an opportunity to express your observations and opinions. If you loved it, then take the time to explain in detail why. Same goes for if you didn't like it. Below is a list of suggested example questions that you can use to help in writing the paper: *Did you believe the actors? What made them believable? What might not have worked for you? Did all of the actors use a similar style? Did one stand out? What were your favorite moments and why? What was new or exciting? Could you relate to the play? To a specific character? What was the play's message? What was your overall feeling towards the production itself, such as staging, 2 timing, and atmosphere?*

SHOWS:

University-Produced Shows:

- *Xanadu* February 14th- 23rd
- *You on the Moors Now* April 4th-13th

Local Professional:

Pioneer Theater

- *Dial M for Murder* January 10th- 25th
- *Beautiful* February 14th- March 1st
- *A Case for the Existence of God* March 28th- April 12th

Salt Lake Acting Company

- *The Robertassey* February 5th- March 2nd
- *Batboy the Musical* April 9th- Mary 4th

Local Semi-Professional:

The Grand Theatre

- *Jesus Christ Superstar* February 26th- March 22nd

Parker Theatre

- *Persuasion* February 1st- March 8th
- *The Sting* March 29th- May 3rd

West Valley Arts

- *The Play That Goes Wrong* February 7th- March 1st
- *A Chorus Line* April 11th- May 3rd

Other theatres in the valley: Westminster University Theatre, Salt Lake Community College Theatre, Plan B Theatre Company, Pygmalion Theatre Company, Hale Center Theatre, Sandy Arts.

First show response due by March 16th! [10 points]

Second show response due by end of semester! [10 points]

SLC is rich with Theatre productions. You can find information on the shows that are playing, a description, dates, times etc., on the company's websites and social media pages. If you would like to see a show that is not on the list above you need to clear it with the instructor first. It is YOUR CHOICE as to what you see, so there is no need to see something you may find offensive, but the assignment will not be waived because you have left it to the last minute and there is nothing playing that meets your standards. No late papers accepted (in case of emergencies, exceptions may be allowed with the consent of the instructor).

U of U ARTS PASS

University of Utah provides students with an Arts Pass which makes it possible for you to use your student ID as a free ticket into the hundreds of arts events on campus each year. This is open to all University of Utah students and includes 3 screenings, performances, concerts, and exhibitions by our students and faculty, and also provides free or discounted access to the professional arts organizations on campus: Utah Presents, Pioneer Theatre Company, and the Utah Museum of Fine Art.

Read more at <http://www.finearts.utah.edu/arts-pass>

Pantomime: Students will work in small groups to create a short story told only through movement, gesture and pace. Story will be built around a single problem to explore the notion of conflict as drama.

Monologues: Each of you will present one memorized monologue to the class, between two to three minutes in length.

Scenes: Each of you will present to the class two memorized scenes with one or more of your fellow classmates, 5-8 minutes in length. I will be assigning scene partners and the text. Your second scene will be your final exam. Along with this will be assigned...

Scene Worksheet: Student will fill out a worksheet based on their work with their scene partner in building their scene.

Grading Scale: You are expected to work to the best of your ability. The grading will depend heavily on your attitude and willingness to participate. This class is about developing an appreciation for an actor's process, and learning what skills are needed and practiced in the profession. It is not a class that measures correct versus incorrect answers. It is more akin to a lab where theories are tested and what works is discovered and what doesn't work is discarded. Performance is subjective. You are not graded on whether you are "good" or "bad" or anything in between. The criteria on which a grade is assigned is the following:

Memorization

Body, Speech and Voice— Does your body tell the same story as your words? Are you engaging all your instruments in the work? Are you doing what is necessary to be heard and understood?

Choices— Have you made clear choices about your character and your performance that convey story?

Directability— Are you flexible in making changes and working with others?

Commitment— Are you giving this assignment your best, or are you simply going through the motions?

Regular attendance, punctuality, participation in class exercises, discussions and activities:

60 points

Attend TWO theatrical productions, turn in reviews: **20 points (10 each)**

Empathy Workshop: **10 points**

Pantomime: **10 points**

Contentless scene: **20 points**

Monologue: **20 points**

Final Scene: **40 points**

Scene Worksheet: **20 points**

TOTAL: 200 points

Late assignments will be dropped one letter grade for each day it is late and missed assignments will be graded as 0 points S

PREMILINARY COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One--- 1/7: Introductions, Syllabus

1/9: Empathy Workshop

Week Two--- 1/14:

1/16: Discussion: Character is Action; Acting Exercise: Social Status

Week Three--- 1/21: Discuss Conflict as Drama; Assign Pantomime

1/23: **Present Pantomime**

Week Four--- 1/28: Reading a Script: Table Work & Listening

1/30: Discuss Objectives, Obstacles & Tactics; Unknown Task

Week Five--- 2/4: Exercise: Tug-of-War Power Dynamics; work Scenes

2/6: Work Contentless Scenes

Week Six--- 2/11: Present Contentless Scenes, discuss Monologues

2/13: First share of monologues

Week Seven--- 2/18: Monologue Work; Monologue Speed Dating

2/20: Monologue Lab

Week Eight--- 2/25: Monologue Lab

2/27: **Present monologues!**

Week Nine--- 3/4: **No Class**

3/6: **No Class**—A great time to see your first show!

Week Ten--- 3/10- 3/16: No Class. Spring Break! **First show response due.**

Week Eleven--- 3/18: Start Scene Work

3/20: Continue Table Work/Blocking

Week Twelve--- 3/25: Rehearse and Work Scenes

3/27: Rehearse and work Scenes

Week Thirteen--- 4/1: Private Scene Coaching

4/3: Private Scene Coaching

Week Fourteen--- 4/8: Private Scene Coaching

4/10: Private Scene Coaching

Week Fifteen--- 4/15: Scene Work

4/17: Scene Work

Week Sixteen--- 4/22: Final Scene Presentations!

4/24: Final Scene Presentations! **Scene Worksheet & Second Show Response Due**