

***The Art of Acting***  
**THEA 2311-006-1088**  
**SEMESTER Jan Term 2019**

**Instructor:** Blake Hackler  
**Schedule:** Daily 9am-12pm, 1pm-4pm  
**Location:** SMU – Dallas, Owen Fine Arts Center B450  
**Office Hour:** By Appointment  
**E-mail:** [jhackler@smu.edu](mailto:jhackler@smu.edu)

**Course Overview/ Learning Outcomes:**

**Pillars- Creativity and Aesthetics- (Level 1)**

1. Students will be able to identify methods, techniques, or languages of a particular art form, creative endeavor or craft(s) and explain how those inform the creation, performance or analysis of creative work. (Level 1)
2. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of concepts fundamental to the creative impulse through analysis, performance, or creation. (Level 1)

**Proficiencies and Experiences- Oral Communication**

1. Students will be able to select and use appropriate forms of evidence in a public presentation.
2. Students will be able to design verbal messages to suit particular audiences and purposes.
3. Students will be able to use visual cues (such as presentation software, staging, props, costumes, makeup, and gesture) to enhance a public presentation.

**Disability Accommodations:**

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call [214-768-1470](tel:214-768-1470) or visit <http://www.smu.edu/ALEC/DASS> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.

**Attendance:**

There is **no late admittance**. Be ready to play at 8:00 A.M.

**3 tardies** will result in an unexcused absence.

You are allowed **3** unexcused absences for the semester. Any additional absence will result in the drop of one letter grade to your final grade of the semester. (A to A-, A- to B+, B+ to B, etc)

**Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:** Students involved with any University based competitions, performances or sporting team events that conflict with class time must submit all dates they will be absent by       (insert date)       in written format. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to make up for any missed class time or assignments. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)

**Religious Observance:** Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

**Dress Code:**

Students are required to wear clothing that allows for unrestricted movement to each class. The main focus of our work takes place on our feet, so students must feel comfortable and able to move without restrictions. Try to avoid: skirts, dresses, high heels, and tight fitting clothing. Examples of appropriate clothing include, but are not limited to: workout clothing, dance attire, sweatpants, jeans, t-shirts, and sneakers.

### **Required Material & Text:**

- Elinor Fuchs – *Visit to a Small Planet* – provided – **please read prior to class**
- Play Script: We will read one full-length play during the course of the term (title tbd) to be supplied by the instructor. **This will be assigned before the class begins, in response to the make-up of the specific class. Please read prior to the start of the session and bring to class every time we meet.**
- *Letters to a Young Artist: Straight-up Advice on Making a Life in the Arts - For Actors, Performers, Writers, and Artists of Every Kind*, by Anna Deavere Smith – **please read the book BEFORE classes begin**

Folder

Writing Utensil

Loose-leaf paper/small notebook

### **Assignments:**

Students will complete assignments in and out of class. Minimum application by the student to the assignments will result in an average grade of C. Maximum application by the student to the projects can result in an A. Please see the attached rubric for how work in this course will be considered and graded.

**In Class Participation:** One can only learn acting by **DOING**. Therefore, it is imperative to your success in the class that you are present, on time, and ready to work. You will be graded on your willingness to participate, both in discussion and in exercises, on your working relationship with your partners in etude and scene work, and on your willingness to work as part of a larger ensemble.

**Etude/Playscript Assessment:** Please see attached documents – these assessments will be scored for their ability to fulfill CA Pillar 1 – please be thoughtful and use language introduced in class to analyze your work in the Etude/Scene.

**Reflection Journal:** You are required to write daily reflections on the learning in class, between ½ to a page. These will be collected in a journal and handed in at the end of the first week and the end of the course.

### **Étude and Scene-work Rehearsal Report and Given Circumstances:**

The **Rehearsal Report** is a written response to in-class rehearsals. The student should describe both the experience of rehearsing in front of the group as well as watching his classmates.

Describe the rehearsal process, any exercises or discoveries you found interesting/challenging/helpful/illuminating/etc, how the work grew and changed through rehearsal, and what you learned from it.

**Given Circumstances** is a first-person account of the character's answers to Who Am I, Where Am I, Who is Around Me, What Do I Lack, What Does It Look Like, Why Don't I Have It, What Do I Do To Get It, and any other "actor" questions useful to the scene.

These assignments should each be one page\* at minimum and are due the class day following the completion of étude 2 and at the last class "session," during which the final in-class performances of scene work will occur.

**Etude/Scene Work:** Evaluation of your work in class on études and scenes will be based on:

- Level of preparation (set/props/costumes)
- Level of memorization
- Clarity and implementation of given circumstances
- Ability to engage in and explore techniques discussed in class

**Written responses:** There will be four written responses to *Letters to a Young Artist: Straight-up Advice on Making a Life in the Arts - For Actors, Performers, Writers, and Artists of Every Kind*, by Anna Deavere Smith.

**Grading:**

Reflection Journal (2): **15 pts**

Etudes - 2: **20pts**

\*Rehearsal Report/Given Circumstances/Script Work/Class Showing – 2pts/4pts/2pts/4pts

\*Assessment – 8pts

*Proof* Assessment: **32pts**

\*Rehearsal Report/Given Circumstances/Script Work/Class Showing – 3pts/6pts/5pts/6pts

\*Assessment – 12pts

Response papers: **10pts**

In Class Participation: **23pts**

|    |        |    |       |
|----|--------|----|-------|
| A  | 100-96 | C+ | 75-71 |
| A- | 95-91  | C  | 70-66 |
| B+ | 90-86  | C- | 65-61 |
| B  | 85-81  | F  | 60-0  |
| B- | 80-76  |    |       |

## **SCHEDULE:**

\*\*\*Please note - this schedule is fluid. Both it and the syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor without prior notice to the student

\*\**LtaYA* = *Letters to a Young Artist*

### **Class 1 (Monday, January 7)**

#### *Morning*

Due: Both études must be memorized by the first day of class.  
*LtaYA* - preface, introduction, basics, relationships, work  
Quiz and Discussion  
Hand out play to be read  
Traditional Games and Improvisation exercises

#### *Afternoon*

Continue Improv games and exercises

### **Class 2 (Tuesday, January 8)**

#### *Morning*

Due: *LtaYA* - matters of the mind  
Quiz and Discussion  
Continue Improv games and exercises

#### *Afternoon*

Begin étude 1

### **Class 3 (Wednesday, January 9)**

#### *Morning*

Due: *LtaYA* Matters of the heart  
Etude #1 work

#### *Afternoon*

Viewing assignment

#### *Homework:*

1. With assigned partner, create the world of étude 2 for tomorrow's class using the terminology discussed today
2. 1-page response to *Constellations*

### **Class 4 (Thursday, January 10)**

#### *Morning*

Due: *LtaYA* - keeping the faith  
1-page response to *Constellations*

Discussion  
Begin in-class work on étude 2

#### *Afternoon*

Complete in-class work on étude 2  
Assign scenes and partners for Final Presentation

#### *Homework:*

Begin memorizing Final Presentation scene  
Complete Rehearsal Report, Given Circumstances, and Self-Assessment for étude 2

### **Class 5 (Friday, January 11)**

Morning

In class rehearsal for scene  
Afternoon  
In class rehearsal for scenes  
Due: Given Circumstances, Rehearsal Report, and Self-Assessment for  
étude 2

**Class 6 (Monday, January 14)**

*Morning*

Due: *Play* should be read at least twice and students ready to discuss  
Final scene should be memorized  
1-page response to field trip

Discuss play  
Begin in-class rehearsals for Final Presentation

*Afternoon*

Continue in-class rehearsals for Final Presentation

**Class 7 (Tuesday, January 15)**

*Morning*

Due: *LtaYA - art and society*  
Quiz and Discussion  
Continue in-class rehearsals

*Afternoon*

Continue in-class rehearsals

**Class 8 (Wednesday, January 16)**

*Morning*

Due: *LtaYA - the death of cool*  
Quiz and Discussion  
Final In-Class rehearsals

*Afternoon*

Final In-Class Presentations

| CATEGORY  | Exemplary<br>96-100   | Accomplished<br>86-95   | Developing<br>76-85  | Beginning<br>66-75   | Absent below<br>65  |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| Cultivate an Understanding of the Vocabulary of Acting and its Techniques (Includes the Assessment of Personal Work and that of Others) | Student shows a full understanding of the vocabulary of acting and is able to fully evaluate his/her own process and that of others using in-class language.  | Student shows a moderate to full understanding of vocabulary of acting and is able to fully evaluate his/her own process. In addition, he/she shows some ability to assess others' work using in-class language.                                    | Student shows a moderate understanding of vocabulary of acting and is able to partially evaluate his/her own process. In addition, he/she attempts to assess others' work using in-class language.   | Student shows a minimal understanding of vocabulary of acting and is able to partially evaluate his/her own process.   | Student shows little to no understanding of vocabulary of acting, is unable to evaluate his/her own process.  |
| Explore and Implement Acting Techniques in Practical Performance and Creative Situations  | Student displays full implementation and approaches mastery of skills introduced during the semester. In addition, he/she is always willing and able to explore, play, take direction, and make changes when asked.   | Student displays high degree of implementation and proficiency in skills introduced during the semester. In addition, he/she is consistently willing and often able to explore, play, take direction, and make changes when asked.                  | Student displays some implementation and approaches proficiency in skills introduced during the semester. In addition, he/she is consistently willing to explore, play, take direction, and attempt make changes when asked.   | Student displays minimal attempts at implementation of and proficiency in skills introduced during the semester, though rarely willing and/or able to play, explore, take direction, and make changes when asked.  | Student makes little to no attempt to implement and displays minimal to no proficiency in skills introduced during the semester. He/she is unable and/or unwilling to play, explore, take direction, or make changes when asked.                        |
| Actively Engage with and Participate in Reading Assignments, Discussions, Exercises, Games, and Warm-ups                                | Student actively participates in and fully commits to all in-class activities and completes all reading assignments.  | Student participates in all in-class activities though with less-than-full commitment and completes all reading assignments.  | Student participates in most in-class activities and does so with less-than-full commitment and completes most reading assignments.  | Student participates minimally during in-class activities and completes at least 1 reading assignment.   | Student participates minimally or not at all during in-class activities and completes none of the reading assignments.  |
| Exhibit an Understanding of and a Willingness to Implement the Degree of Preparation Needed for an Actor to Be Successful               | <u>Fully Prepared</u> (memorized by due date, if not before; extensive work on given circumstances/ objectives/ actions/obstacles out of class and reflected in class; always brings necessary prop/ costume/set pieces; always present for rehearsals/in-class work) | <u>Very Prepared</u> (memorized by due date, mild shakiness after; fully considered given circumstances/ objectives/ actions/obstacles out of class; always brings necessary prop/ costume/set pieces; always present for rehearsals/in-class work) | <u>Moderately Prepared</u> (memorized, though still noticeably shaky after due date; acceptable work on given circumstances/ objectives/ actions/ obstacles out of class; brings necessary prop/ costume/set pieces most of the time; consistently present for rehearsals/in-class work) | <u>Minimally Prepared</u> (some, but not full memorization by due date; little work on given circumstances/ objectives/ actions/ obstacles out of class; brings some prop/ costume/set pieces some of the time; consistently present for rehearsals and in-class work) | <u>Not Prepared</u> (not memorized; little to no work on given circumstances/ objectives/ actions/ obstacles in or out of class; consistently does not bring necessary prop/ costume/set pieces; consistently not present for rehearsals/in-class work) |

