

THFM-1001-004 (6 credit hours)

## INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE: PERFORMANCE

2013/14  
Tu/Th 11:30 am-12:45 pm  
Room OT10

Blake Taylor  
Office: 4T04  
Phone: 204-786-9953  
Email: [b.taylor@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:b.taylor@uwinnipeg.ca)  
Office Hours: Tu/Th 1:30-2:15 by appointment

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed as an introduction to the basic concepts of theatre with an emphasis on the art and craft of the performer.

The course begins with basic acting exercises, including improvisation and movement work. These are designed to help the student develop the skills which are the foundation of contemporary acting technique. In the second half of the course, the student applies these skills to scripted scenes. S/he must rehearse and perform two scenes drawn from the modern and/or contemporary theatre. Students will be required to keep a continuing rehearsal journal for the duration of the course which will form the basis of an essay on acting. The journal should chart the students' discoveries and experiences with acting and (although not graded) will be submitted to the instructor once each term for review and feedback.

A central goal of the course is to enable students to create the look, sound, and feeling of real life under fictional circumstances. "Acting is real human behavior under fictional circumstances" ... "The foundation of acting is the reality of doing." – Sanford Meisner

The student will also be introduced to various forms of modern drama and script interpretation through viewing play productions and through an examination of three plays representing a range of modern and contemporary work: *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill, *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* by Ann-Marie MacDonald, and *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov. The student's knowledge of these plays will be evaluated through written tests.

### TEXTS

#### Required

Bruder, *et al.* *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*  
Chekhov, Anton *The Seagull* (David French translation)  
Churchill, Caryl, *Top Girls*  
MacDonald, Ann-Marie, *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)*  
*RMTC Warehouse season subscription*

#### Reference Text

Meisner and Longwell, *Sanford Meisner On Acting*

### MARK BREAKDOWN

Performance Skills Evaluation .....	10%
Test One: <i>Top Girls</i> and <i>Goodnight Desdemona</i> (Oct. 24, 2013).....	10%
Scene One .....	15%
Test #2: <i>Practical Handbook</i> (Jan. 23, 2014).....	10%
Test #3: <i>The Seagull</i> (Feb 13, 2014).....	10%
Acting Essay (due Apr 10, 2014).....	20%
Scene Two .....	20%
Class Participation.....	5%
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>100%</b>

All work submitted for evaluation must be either typed or text processed.

## **CONVERSION SCALE**

For the calculation of the final grade the following conversion table will be used:

A+	90 – 100%	GPA	4.5	C+	65 – 69.9%	GPA	2.5
A	85 – 89.9%	GPA	4.25	C	60 – 64.9%	GPA	2.0
A-	80 – 84.9%	GPA	4.0	D	50 – 59.9%	GPA	1.0
B+	75 – 79.9%	GPA	3.5	F	below 50%	GPA	0
B	70 – 74.9%	GPA	3.0				

Work not submitted will be graded as 0%.

## **DEFINITIONS OF GRADING DESCRIPTIONS**

**A+ Exceptional.** Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques and exceptional skill **AND** great originality in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

**A Superior.** Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques and exceptional skill **OR** great originality in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

**A- Excellent.** Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with a high degree of skill and/or some elements of originality in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

**B+ Very Good.** Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with a fairly high degree of skill in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

**B Good.** Good level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with considerable skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

**C+ Competent.** Acceptable level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with considerable skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

**C Fairly Competent.** Acceptable level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with some skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

**D Barely Passing.** Minimum knowledge of concepts and/or techniques needed to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

**F Failing.**

## **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Papers will **NOT** be accepted after the due date. Extensions may be negotiated at the professor's discretion but only **BEFORE** the due date. Technically you have until midnight of the due date to hand in your papers. Papers are accepted at the Department Office (3T03; 8:30 am-4:30 pm weekdays) with a "received stamp" only. Again, I am reasonable if you see me in advance of the due date, but otherwise **LATE PAPERS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.**

Script analyses will be accepted at the start of the class on the due date only, unless you have a signed doctor's note.

## **REHEARSALS**

During the Winter Term all students will be required to take part in ongoing scene rehearsals outside of scheduled class time. This requirement will involve a minimum of two to four hours per week. Students unable or unwilling to comply with this requirement are asked to withdraw from the course immediately.

Any student who repeatedly misses rehearsals, comes late, or fails to rehearse adequately with their partner will be asked to withdraw from the course. This includes all classes and out of class rehearsals. This provision has been established to protect the educational interests of scene partners and other classmates. **Unexcused absences will be penalized 1% of the final grade.**

Scenes and rehearsal schedules must be approved by the instructor prior to the start of the allotted rehearsal period. **When choosing a scene partner establish a regular rehearsal schedule at the outset. If a schedule cannot be established, find another partner.**

## JOURNALS

The student is expected to keep a journal of the knowledge and experience that s/he acquires in class and that knowledge, gained outside of class, that has bearing on creative work. Although no marks are formally assigned to this writing, the journal will be an invaluable tool when writing the acting essay, worth 20% of the final course mark and due near the end of the Winter Term. It is required that the journal be submitted to the professor at least once during the first term for feedback. Students must also meet with the professor in the second term to discuss the progress of the acting essay.

## SCENE GRADING CRITERIA

1. Are you playing action, i.e. is your character doing something to the other character(s)? (Specificity)
2. Is your character interacting impulsively with the other character(s) moment to moment (i.e. is the scene a "pinch/ouch" ping pong game?)?
3. Is your character reacting with a point of view and an attitude? (Vulnerability)
4. Does the character have a logical "through line" where required?
5. Are you meeting particular demands of the script? For example:
  - special language requirements (rhythm, timing, diction, lyricism, poetic imagery, etc.)
  - special style requirements (depth of character for realism and naturalism, stepping in and out of character for didacticism, massive variety and the surprise use of pauses for absurdism, ease in breaking the fourth wall for feminism, etc.)
6. Is there sufficient **commitment** to the action and circumstances to make the scene believable and emotional as opposed to merely intellectual? (Impulse)
7. Are the numerous shifts in action occurring clearly?
8. Are you taking advantage of the ironies available in the scene?
9. Is there progression in the scene, i.e. does something change?
10. Is the tension (leading to conflict) strong and clear?
11. Can we hear you comfortably?
12. Are the stakes sufficiently high to make the scene exciting?
13. Is the physical world in which the scene takes place used to strengthen the action?
14. Are the actor's voice, body, and inner impulse in harmony? (Unity)
15. Is the actor using her/his body effectively to carry the action of the scene? (Physical character, blocking and physicalization of action)

16. **Is the actor willing and able to make effective use of direction?**

**NOTE:** The list above is a summary of the key considerations which regularly arise when qualified adjudicators evaluate scene work. At various stages of training, some of these considerations may be weighted above others. However, it is difficult, at any point, to ignore any of the above criteria, particularly when some of the performers are achieving mastery in an area where others are not.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

**NOTE Students will be required to attend two lectures during the free period, Dates TBA.**

**Fall Term**

Sept. 6 Course Introduction / Skills Workshop  
10-12 *Top Girls*: Discussion / Skills Workshop

**Note:** There will be a screening of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* on Thursday, September 19 at 7:00 pm. Please either read the play or attend the screening as preparation for *Goodnight Desdemona*.

17-19 *Top Girls* / Workshop / Skills Workshop

**Note:** There will be a screening of Shakespeare's *Othello* on Thursday, September 26 at 7:00 pm. Please either read the play or come to the screening as preparation for *Goodnight Desdemona*.

24-26 Skills Workshop / Read *A Practical Handbook* to P. 13

Oct. 1-3 Workshop / Skills Workshop / Read *A Practical Handbook* to P. 19  
8-10 *The Cherry Orchard*: Quiz & Discussion / Skills Workshop / Read *A Practical Handbook* to P. 40  
15-17 *The Cherry Orchard* Workshop / Skills Workshop / Read *A Practical Handbook* to P.48  
22-24 Skills workshop (22nd) / **TEST #1 on *Top Girls* and *Goodnight Desdemona* (Oct. 24)**  
29-31 Skills Workshop / Read *A Practical Handbook* to P. 55

Nov. 5-7 Skills Evaluation / Read *A Practical Handbook* to P. 59  
12-14 **PRACTICE SKILLS EVALUATION** / TBA  
19-21 Skills Evaluation / Read *A Practical Handbook* to P. 65  
25 *A Practical Handbook* to p. 76 / finalize scenes and partners  
28 Class cancelled due to evening screenings.

**Winter Term:**

Jan. 7-9 Scene Work / Read *A Practical Handbook* to p. 84  
14-16 Scene Work / Read *A Practical Handbook* to .p 90  
21-23 Scene Work (off book by Jan 21) **Test #2 on A Practical Handbook (Jan 23)**  
**21 Final date to withdraw without academic penalty**

Thurs. 23 *The Seagull* opens at RMTC Warehouse, until Feb 28th  
28-30 Scene Work / Discuss *The Seagull* (Feb 30)

Feb. 4-6 **SCENE 1 PRESENTATIONS** / Finalize New Scenes and Partners  
11-13 Discuss *The Seagull* (11th) and other theatre issues/ **Test #3 The Seagull (Feb. 13)**  
**18-20 Reading Week – No Classes**  
25-27 Scene Work

March 4-6 Scene Work  
11-14 Scene Work  
18-20 Scene Work  
25-27 Dress Rehearsal

**April 1-3 FINAL PRESENTATIONS 0T10**

**N.B. FINAL ACTING PAPER DUE THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2014**

**ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS (for first-year Performance classes)**

Given that this is a practical studio course, extensive participation and professionalism are required. As a result, punctuality and attendance at class and in out-of-class rehearsals are of the utmost importance. Unexcused absences from lecture, lab, or out-of-class rehearsal will be penalized at a rate of 1% per instance. Unexcused lateness for lecture, lab, or out-of-class rehearsal will be penalized at a rate of .5% per instance. Attendance and punctuality will be recorded at the beginning of every class. After a **THIRD** late or absence, the instructor will schedule a meeting with the student to discuss withdrawal from the course. After a **FIFTH** unexcused absence the student will be required to meet with the Chair of the department to discuss withdrawal from the course.

Excused absences or lates require a medical note or prior arrangement with the instructor. It is at the instructor's discretion whether or not to excuse a non-medical absence. After **FIVE** excused absences the student will be required to meet with the Instructor to discuss whether it is realistic for him/her to continue in the course.

Given the rigorous, practical nature of studio courses, and the demands these courses make in terms of attendance and punctuality, students with chronic medical conditions that will require extensive absence should meet with the instructor at the beginning of the term to discuss whether the course is appropriate for them.

**"THE REAL THING" LECTURE SERIES**

The Department of Theatre and Film is presenting a series of six lectures which will be held on Wednesdays during the free period (12:30-13:20) in Theatre 1T15. Please note the dates in your diary **NOW**: Sept 18, Oct 23, Nov 13, Jan 15, Feb 12, Mar 12. This series will feature speakers from a range of areas in the performing arts: technical, performance, design, management, film, directing, playwriting, etc. These speakers will specifically address issues related to "the business of the business."

Attendance for potential Theatre Honours/majors and for Film majors is optional but highly recommended.

**NOTES FOR PERFORMANCE COURSES**

Rehearsals for final presentations and public exercises are scheduled well in advance; students must arrange their university and work schedules so as not to conflict with them. Students must attend **ALL** scheduled rehearsals.

Any student who repeatedly misses rehearsals, comes late, or fails to rehearse adequately will be asked to withdraw from the course.

As many of our classes are physical in nature, students are asked to wear comfortable clothing.

Outdoor footwear **must be removed** before entering **ANY** of the Studios: **0T09** (Concourse Studio), **0T19** (Mime Lab), **1T15** (Theatre), **2T05** (2nd Floor Studio), **2T15** (Movement Studio). We suggest you bring suitable dance shoes or slippers to wear in class. Your professors will monitor and enforce this regulation in order to preserve the integrity of the special flooring in these rooms. Please respect this rule.

Student actors, like professionals, are expected to provide their own basic makeup supplies where required for public exercises. Due to the potential for the transmission of skin diseases it is not recommended that students share makeup.

Senior acting students scheduled to perform in a departmental public exercise are asked not to modify their hair colour or style without first checking with the instructor/director.

Students who bring props, costumes, or furnishings to support scene presentations please note:

- the University will **NOT** be responsible for the loss of any such materials;
- students are responsible for the **IMMEDIATE** removal of such materials after **EACH** use – the department does not provide storage;
- materials not claimed **WILL BE DISPOSED OF** at the student's expense. Grades may be withheld until such costs are recovered;
- **students MUST NOT move existing furnishings from their current locations.**

### **ORIENTATION ASSEMBLY**

Each year in September we hold an *Orientation Assembly* to introduce our new students to faculty and other students; to provide information about the department, its various activities and those of its professors; and to provide news about what's coming up. This year our *Orientation Assembly* will be held on **Wednesday, September 11, 2013, 12:30-13:20 in Theatre, 1T15. ATTENDANCE IS COMPULSORY** for all Majors and Honours students. Those considering Honours are strongly recommended to attend. All others are welcome and encouraged to attend.

### **SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with documented disabilities, temporary or chronic medical conditions, requiring academic accommodations for tests/exams (e.g., private space) or during lectures/laboratories (e.g., access to volunteer note-takers) are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (AS) at 786-9771 or email [accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca) to discuss appropriate options. Specific information about AS is available on-line at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility>. All information about a student's disability or medical condition remains confidential.

### **BUILDING SECURITY**

The Asper Centre for Theatre and Film (which houses the Department of Theatre and Film) is open from 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. weekdays. Students are permitted to be in the building between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. seven days per week (except statutory holidays when the University is closed) **BUT PLEASE NOTE:** outside of regular building hours, it is **MANDATORY** that everyone in the building **EITHER** carry an access card **OR** have a booking confirmation form in their possession (hard copy or electronic). **ALL EVENING STUDENTS in the building for classes MUST have an access card.** If a Security Guard checks and you do not have proper accreditation, **you may be evicted.**

These rules are in place to protect our students and our equipment; please respect them.

### **ELECTRONIC COURSE OUTLINE ADDENDA**

Students must check our website at <http://theatre.uwinnipeg.ca/tbooking.htm> and read the menu items called *Access Card/Building Use Policy* **AND** *Room Booking Instructions*. The link to the electronic *Online Room Booking Form* is also found at this location. Please read and note all instructions carefully.

### **GENERAL NOTES**

This course outline should be considered a guideline only. Time constraints and other unforeseen factors may require that some topics be omitted or covered in less detail than indicated.

Archival records such as videotapes, sound recordings, and photographs may be made or taken during class or lab times. The University uses such materials primarily for archival, promotional, and teaching

purposes. Promotional use may include display at open houses or conferences, or use in advertising, publicity, or brochures. In reading and accepting the terms in this course outline, students acknowledge consent for such use by the University. Should a student not wish to convey such consent, s/he should withdraw from this course immediately.

The University of Winnipeg promotes a scent-free environment. Please be respectful of the needs of fellow classmates and the instructor by avoiding the use of scented products while attending lectures. Exposure to perfumes and other scented products (such as lotion) can trigger serious health reactions in persons with asthma, allergies, migraines, or chemical sensitivities.

Cellular phones **MUST** be turned off during classes and examinations; texting is **NOT** permitted in class.

Any student attending a test or final examination may be required to present proof of identity; photo identification is preferred.

It is the student's responsibility to retain a photocopy or computer disk copy of **ALL** assignments submitted for grading; in the event of loss or theft, a duplicate copy is required.

Students are strongly advised to read the section of the *University of Winnipeg Calendar* (found on-line at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/cms-filesystem-action/pdfs/calendar/RegulationsandPolicies.pdf>) for information on Registration, Grading, Academic Misconduct including plagiarism, and Appeals.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2014** is the final date to withdraw without academic penalty from courses which begin in September 2013 and end in April 2014 (2013/14 Fall/Winter Term).

### **STUDENT PARTICIPATION POLICY**

Theatre is a communal art form in which a number of interdependent artists and crafts people co-operate to create a work of art. This fact is necessarily transferred to the learning situation, and is reflected in many of the Department's courses. Consequently, it is the Department's policy that students are required to: complete homework such as reading, line-learning, script analysis, prop lists, design drawings, etc.; attend classes; attend rehearsals both within and outside of class times; and, in short, to exhibit commitment towards the inevitably shared endeavours of our field of study.

Any student failing to fulfil these requirements is harmful to the progress of dedicated students and may, after due warning, be asked to withdraw from any individual Departmental course.

### **COURSE CONTENT NOTE**

#### All Theatre and Film Classes

Dramatic Literature depicts a wide variety of human action, both elevated and base, public and private, physical and psychological, sexual and non-sexual, etc. The Department of Theatre and Film will not undertake to censor the subject matter of dramatic works.

Students who have concerns about dealing with the full range of content and style in drama/film are urged to discuss these concerns with the course instructor.

#### Performance-Related Classes

Much of an actor's work is based upon actual experiences of life which become translated into fictional circumstances. Because of this, the teaching of acting may involve encouraging the student to examine personal and even intimate areas of life to help him or her access life experiences appropriate to the demands of the work.

Dramatic literature depicts a wide range of human actions, both elevated and base, public and private, physical and psychological, sexual and non-sexual, etc. Acting students must learn to simulate life truthfully in interaction with other students in the safety of the acting class and the rehearsal hall through

exercises, discussions, and directions which address rather than avoid truthful, particularized, personalized action.

Performance classes often require strenuous physical activity. Classes may also involve physical interaction between students as part of class exercises or character development and occasional physical contact by instructors for purposes such as the demonstration of a technique or to make a posture correction. Students are responsible for wearing clothing appropriate to these activities.

Students who have concerns about dealing with the full range of actions and subject matter involved in drama are urged to discuss these concerns with their course instructor.