

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Voyage: Spring 2014

Discipline: Drama

DRAM 2020: Acting I: A Universal Vocabulary

Lower Division

Faculty Name: Drew Kahn

Pre-requisites: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Students will learn the fundamental demands of the acting process and how these elements pertain to their communication techniques both on and beyond the stage. Student actors will engage in focus and concentration development, understanding and developing the actor's instrument (body, voice, soul, mind), improvisation, partner work, ensemble work, scene analysis and performance. Special focus will be given to the identification, development and expression of each student's personal through the acting process. An additional emphasis will be placed on the theory that *acting is the world's universally shared language*, thus students will be asked to apply their unique international perspectives acquired on this voyage. Students will be expected to attend live performances in several of these countries and will have a variety class assignments based on these experiences.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To introduce students to the foundational elements of truthful acting.
2. To provide students with the necessary skills to further their training in acting and their development as young artists.
3. To provide students with a variety of tools that will enhance their communicative/social skills at all public levels.
4. To develop student's cognizance of the universality of the acting vocabulary by examining the specific storytelling traditions of the countries we will be visiting.

This class will consist primarily of acting (active) exercises and will also include regular performances, brief lectures, discussions and in-class performance responses. There are no books to read, no movies to watch or conversations students can partake in that will teach them how to act, **THEY MUST DO IT**. There will be physical class activities every meeting and regular performance projects dealing with the acting issue(s) we are focusing on at that time. These are mandatory projects and cannot be made-up or substituted for in any way.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

AUTHOR: Edward Albee

TITLE: *The Zoo Story*

PUBLISHER: Dramatists Play Service

ISBN #: 978-0-8222-2317-7

DATE/EDITION: Acting Edition

COST: \$7.50

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

* Due to the unique personal and kinesthetic nature of the acting discipline, it is impossible to predict precisely what will happen in each class meeting. One student actor may require one specific exercise to help them develop their work and another may need something completely different. The most successful acting classes involve listening to the specific needs of each student actor and the class as a whole to dictate the best route to take to teach each lesson. Following is a general sense of our work together that should serve as a summary of our focus each meeting:

A1- January 12:

Welcome to Acting: Course expectations, Assignments, Process of Acting Training. *What is acting? Why act? Do we act in everyday life?* (lecture, discussion)

Assignment: Simple Task/In the Moment Exercise

A2- January 14:

Laying the Groundwork: Actor Super-Focus. *What is acting focus? How is this different than everyday focus? What does "In the Moment" mean? How does the Hawaiian culture tell stories?* (lecture, discussion, focus exercises)

Assignment: Hilo In the moment experiment; Social Acting Journal

A3- January 16:

Laying the Groundwork: Actor Super-Focus. *What is Multi-tasking vs. single-tasking? How does it feel to be in the moment? What inhibits being in the moment?* (lecture, discussion, focus exercises)

Assignment: Single-task experiment with Objective.

January 17: Hilo

A4- January 19:

Laying the Groundwork: The Actor's Instrument-Body, Voice, Mind, Soul. *What makes up the actor's instrument? How do we prepare the instrument to act?* (lecture, discussion, physical exercises)

Assignment: Repeat daily warm-up in/out of class

A5- January 22:

Laying the Groundwork: The Actor's Instrument-Body, Voice, Mind, Soul. *How do actor's warm up? What is our warm up routine? How does the instrument connect to actor focus? What is an Objective?* (lecture, discussion, physical exercises)

Assignment: Create/rehearse Scene 1 (Single task/Objective)

January 24: Study Day

A6- January 25:

Laying the Groundwork: Focus + Instrument + Objective. *Warm-up, Perform single-task scenes, class-response, How does the Japanese culture tell stories? Can we borrow in-the-moment*

techniques from Japan? (lecture, discussion, performance)

Assignment: Rehearse scenes, add Actions and Obstacle, Social Acting Journals

A7- January 27:

Laying the Groundwork: Focus + Instrument + Objective + Obstacle. *Warm-up, Rehearse scenes in pairs with Actions and Obstacle, How do Actions/Obstacles impact acting? Real life correlations? How do we “Map” a scene? Does good acting depend on luck? How does the Chinese culture tell stories? What can we bring back?*

Assignment: Create Scene Maps for Scene 1-final performances, Social Acting Journals

January 29-February 3: Yokohama, Kobe

A8- February 4:

Laying the Groundwork: Putting it all Together—Final Performance Scene 1. *Warm-up, Discuss/hand-in Scene Maps, Final Performances Scene 1, Class Response.*

Assignment: Write observation paper(s), make Social-Acting Journal entries, stay in the moment.

February 6-11: Shanghai, Hong Kong

A9- February 12:

Objectives/Actions/Obstacles: Improvisation. *Warm-up. What is improvisation? Always say “Yes,” How does the Vietnamese culture tell stories?* (lecture, discussion, improvisation exercises)

Assignment: Write observation papers, Social Acting Journals, Stay in the moment.

February 14-19: Ho Chi Minh City

A10- February 20:

Objectives/Actions/Obstacles: World of Scene. *Warm-up. Define/Develop World of Scene. How do these new details impact the acting? World of Scene and Mapping, How does the Singapore culture tell stories?* (discussion, improvisation exercises).

Assignment: Write observations paper(s), make Social-Acting Journal entries, stay in the moment.

February 22-23: Singapore

A11- February 24:

World of Scene: Scene 2. *Warm-up. Assign scene partners for scene 2, hand out scripts, add world of scene, rehearse in class, How does the Burmese culture tell stories?* (lecture, discussion, exercises)

Assignment: Write observations paper(s), make Social-Acting Journal entries, stay in the moment.

February 25: Study Day

February 27-March 4: Rangoon

A12- March 5:

World of Scene: Specificity. *Warm-up. How do details of scene’s world impact acting? First*

performance of Scene 2, class response. (discussion, exercises)

Assignment: Write observation paper(s), review Social-Acting Journal entries this far.

A13- March 7:

Playing Actions: Listening/Responding. *Warm-up, Making acting all about scene partner, Listening and Responding to what was given. How does the Indian culture tell stories?* (Discussion, exercises)

Assignment: Get off-book, Scene Map Scene 2—final performance scene 2 Class 14, Social Acting Journal. Warm up routine.

March 9-14: Cochin

A14- March 15:

Playing Actions: Listening/Responding. *Warm-up, Apply Listening/Responding to Scene 2 work, rehearse, final performance scene 2.* (Discussion, exercises, rehearse, perform).

Assignment: Rehearse scenes, continue daily warm-ups—does your instrument feel different?

March 17: Study Day

A15- March 18:

Raising the Stakes: Intensifying Actions. *Warm-up, What is “Raising the Stakes”?* Assign partners/scripts for Scene 3. *What “Raising the Stakes” correlations can you make from the countries visited thus far?* (Discussion, exercises, rehearsal).

Assignment: Get off-book Scene 3, Social Acting Journal, Warm-up routine.

A16- March 20:

Raising the Stakes: Taking Personal Responsibility. *Warm-up, Emotional investment, “What if this were me?” How do high stakes impact acting?* (Discussion, exercises, rehearsal)

Assignment: Build personal connections to work in Scene 3.

March 21: Port Louis

A17- March 23:

Raising the Stakes: Taking Personal Responsibility. *Warm-up, Emotional investment vs. playing emotion, perform scene 3, class response.* (Discussion, exercise, performance).

Assignment: Non-Traditional research for scene 3.

March 25: Study Day

A18- March 26:

Raising the Stakes: Subtext. *Warm-up, What is “Subtext?” How does subtext impact acting? Rehearse/perform scene 3 with subtext, How does the South African culture tell stories?* (discussion, exercises, rehearsal, performance).

Assignment: Map scene 3, rehearse for final performance Class 19.

March 28-April 2: Cape Town

A19- April 3:

Raising the Stakes: Perform Scene 3. *Warm-up, final performance scene 3, class response.*

Assignment: Read *The Zoo Story* and answer provided questions for Class 20, continue warm up routine.

A20- April 5:

Putting it all Together: The Zoo Story. *Warm-up, discuss The Zoo Story, assign scene partners and final scenes from The Zoo Story, How does the Ghanaian culture tell stories?* (discussion, rehearsal)

Assignment: Get off-book for *The Zoo Story*, *Social Acting Journals*, *Warm up routine*.

April 7: Study Day

A21- April 8:

Putting it all Together: The Zoo Story. *Warm-up, rehearse Zoo Story scenes.* (discussion, rehearsal)

Assignment: Rehearse final scenes-*The Zoo Story*, create scene maps, select costumes, etc.

April 10-14: Accra, Takoradi

April 14: [Drumming and Dance Workshop](#) (Takoradi)

A22- April 15:

Putting it all Together: The Zoo Story. *Warm-up, Dress-Rehearsal Zoo Story scenes, class response.* (discussion, performance).

Assignment: Rehearsal The Zoo Story, complete scene maps and all paper work not yet turned-in.

A23- April 17:

Putting it all Together: The Zoo Story: *Perform Zoo Story scenes, class response.* Assignment: Rehearse final scenes, incorporate notes.

April 19: Study Day

A24-April 20:

Final Dress Rehearsal The Zoo Story: Receive notes/expectations to apply to final scene performance.

April 22: Global Lens Finals, Study Day

April 23-27: Casablanca

A25-April 28: A Day Finals

Final performances of Zoo Story. Class will perform entire play as a company.

May 2: Southampton

FIELD WORK

FIELD LAB (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.)

Students must attend the field lab listed below.

Title: [Drumming and Dance Workshop](#) (Takoradi: April 14)

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

1. Students will write papers examining their experiences in the visited ports. Rather than summaries of their experiences, these papers will include in-depth critical analysis of the performance of the storytelling event using vocabulary and content from class and the student's artistic experience. Developing and defining a personal artistic vocabulary for the storytelling event is central to the assignment.
2. Students will be required to make entries in their "Social Acting" field journals in each city visited on our voyage. These entries can be narrative, symbolic, photographic, painted or anything that can be applied to the paper of the journal. Students will share their journal entries in class with their collaborative groups upon returning from each country. Each journal entry must:
 - a. Reflect on a non-traditional storytelling event (to be defined in class) observed while in the field.
 - b. Connect elements and vocabulary from the field event to topics discussed in class.
 - c. Reflect on the personal nature of the student's response to the event—how has the event impacted your acting process?
3. Evaluation of Field Labs and Assignments below.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

METHODS OF EVALUATION

- 20% Attendance/Class Participation/Collaboration:** Being present and active participation are essential elements to the most important word in theater: Collaboration. Students will be expected to immediately and consistently participate actively in this course every class meeting. Students will also become responsible for the positive collaboration necessary to create, develop and define their acting with their scene partners from class.
- 20% Social Acting Journals:** There must be entries for every day off-ship in the countries visited (details of content will be provided in class)
- 20% Observation Papers/Field Work:** Details of length/content will be shared in class. These will NOT be summaries of the performances attended but rather in-depth, critical analysis of the theater event using vocabulary and content from class and the student's personal experience.
- 40% Scene Work:** Rehearsal process, Scene-Mapping, Performance

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

AUTHOR: Nick O'Brien
TITLE: Stanislavsky in Practice: Exercises for Students
PUBLISHER: Routledge
ISBN #: 978-0-415-56843-2
DATE/EDITION: September 2010
COST: \$26.99

AUTHOR: Ian Watson
TITLE: Performer Training: Developments Across Cultures
PUBLISHER: Routledge
ISBN #: 9789057551512
DATE/EDITION: 2001
COST: \$43.99

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

Backstage
<http://www.backstage.com>

Actor's Equity Association
<http://www.actorsequity.org>

Screen Actor's Guild
<http://www.sag.org>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

I will provide DVD's to share on ship's television system.

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."