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Fall 9-1-2000

DRAM 514.01: Studio Training for the Actor

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Course Syllabus for DR 514 - 1: STUDIO TRAINING FOR THE ACTOR - *Mindfulness, Improvisation, Personalization and Text structure,*

Instructor: Bill Watson

Semester: Fall 2000

MTWTH 3:10 - 5:00

Room: SG REH

Office Hours: MW - 10:00am - 11:00

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this course are to begin the development in the actor of a strong personal process of acting; a process that begins to develop a theoretical framework for the actor's work as well as provide strong technique, analytical ability, and practical application

The course will develop five primary areas of acting process work, culminating in the analysis and performance of a cutting from a performance text.

Mindfulness - Processes will be developed to help aid in a surrender to and acceptance of the happenings of the moment, a gentle, sustained focus of attention inward, a heightened sensitivity and the ability to observe and name the contents of consciousness.

Improvisation - Actor improvisations structured to bring actors to high stakes moments of choice where the use of spontaneous "strategies" and behavioral structures will emerge for discussion and analysis.

Giving and Receiving Energy - Exercises designed to strengthen and deepen the process of giving and receiving energy with a partner.

Analysis of Structures of Action- Analyze, understand and play from a strong sense of the action of scene and play and develop structure in the work

Personalization - To develop and release in the actor a deeply connected use of self in the playing of character.

When the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail
- Abraham Maslow

Scene development and performance - In a culminating project, students will develop and perform a two or three character scene from a theatrical text.

METHOD:

We will accomplish these course objectives through the following methods:

IMPROVISATION:

Utilizing improvisation to -

- Clarify and make more tangible, aspects of given circumstances: environment, relationships, inner monologue, etc.
- Isolate, clarify, strengthen and layer elements of the deep Action of the play: action, objective, pre-occupation, beat structure
- Strengthen cooperative elements of the actors work: spontaneity, honest talking and listening.

MINDFULNESS:

Utilizing work in mindfulness -

- Strengthen the ability to observe one's own inner workings in moment to moment experience
- Strengthen the ability to observe the inner workings of others in moment to moment experience
- To become more "present" in all aspects of the work

TEXT WORK:

- Analysis of given circumstances and action of a scenario and a text

• A realized performance of a written text that successfully matches the actor's sense of self to the parameters of character and action as understood through the actor's analysis

• In addition, other analytical models will be applied to performance throughout the semester.

PERFORMANCE

There will be an in class performance of partnered scenes, shaping the work developed during the semester into performative communication between actor and audience.

REQUIREMENTS

- At least one and perhaps three in-class performances of partnered scene work
- Preparation of assigned exercises and scenes - with outside rehearsal, & timely learning of lines
- Attendance and active participation in all group exercise work.

SPECIAL POLICIES

More than three absences will drop your grade an entire letter. Missing a scheduled in-class work day is a serious disruption to an overly tight schedule and infringes on all of your classmates' time - **the course grade will be dropped a letter for a missed scheduled in-class work session.** A second missed session will be cause for **failure.** Missed scene rehearsals with scene partners will affect your grade. **Repeated missed rehearsals will drop your grade a full letter. Missing the showing will result in failure of the class** Growth and development both as a participant and as an observer are central to this as to any acting course. Your daily work and the involvement and development it shows as well as the results of your performances are used in evaluating you.

GRADING

your work will be evaluated in these more or less equal areas:

- The quality of your in class exercises.
- The development of your process - which entails your preparation, discipline, attitude, and commitment to extending personal barriers, give and take with partner, responsiveness to coaching, the depth and creativity of your choices, and the development you show over the course of the semester.
- The quality of the in-class showings, including the process, rehearsal, development and performance of the work.

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

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