

TH120 Acting & Performance 1
Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM EST
FALL 2022

This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Instructor:

Shamus (he/him/his)

E-mail: shamusm@bu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment; must be arranged via email and in advance.

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the fundamental elements of the craft of acting. Using the Stanislavski method of objective based acting, students will develop a tool kit to approach the delivery of theatrical and non-theatrical material as they move forward into their lives and careers. Students will learn about theatre and performance terminology as well as its practical application in the developing of a performance. Through application we will learn the value of nuanced and respectful peer to peer feedback in collaboration as well as introduce core concepts around improvisation, storytelling through images and movement.

Course Objectives:

Students will be introduced to exercises and projects designed to:

- Create an awareness of the body and voice in space
- Provide different approaches to improvising and creating characters.
- Help interpret and understand literature in preparation for performances using monologues and scenes.

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- 1.) Live truthfully on stage and define a truthful performance.
- 2.) To develop an initial understanding of the range of theories and practices surrounding acting and performance.
- 3.) Identify the major steps of their individual actor process - identifying what is most crucial to their craft.
- 4.) Demonstrate greater personal confidence and understanding of what they bring to a character as unique individuals.
- 5.) Discover and begin to develop an awareness of the vocal and physical instrument.
- 6.) Track the objectives of the beats of a monologue and scene and continuously execute them.
- 7.) Understand the intellectual steps that lead to understanding a character and how to connect those steps with techniques to embody a character.
- 8.) Achieve relaxation and confidence in front of a group.
- 9.) Offer meaningful, constructive critiques on the work of others.

Required Course Texts:

Reading will be uploaded onto blackboard (Blackboard Site: learn.bu.edu)

Overview of Assignments:

Attendance & Participation – Theatre is a team sport! You are expected to attend all classes and participate fully in the exercises. In addition you are expected to attend outside rehearsal times with your scene partner(s).

Journal-All students are required to complete a journal entry between class meetings. Journals will be collected before spring break and at the end of the semester. Entries can combine notes from class with reflections or other musings related to material. Each entry should be at least a paragraph.

Quiz-There will be one quiz this semester just before the mid-semester recess. The content focus on terminology in acting and theatre learned throughout the semester.

Response Paper- You will be required to attend one Boston University School of Theater production this semester and write a 1.5 to 2-page response paper. Papers should be typed and double-spaced, 12-pt font. Use what you've learned in class as well as your own gut reactions. Papers are due one week after the final performance of the selected play, or by the last day of class if that particular play is still running.

Speech-This course will have three major acting assignments. The first is a one-minute speech selected and performed by students. This speech can be from any source, a play, movie, book, but must be approved by the instructor according to the schedule below. Final speeches will be workshopped in class and presented in process and in a final showing. The performance will be evaluated for growth, memorization, and application of tools learned in class.

Monologue-The second major performance assignment will be a 2 minute monologue from an established play. Students will work with the instructor to find material. Monologues will be evaluated based on scoring of tactics/objectives, commitment to those choices and memorization.

Scene-The final major performance assignment will be a 5-7 minute scene from an established play found in collaboration with the instructor. Scenes will be evaluated like the above with the additional consideration of use of staging and collaboration.

Class Policy and Procedures:

A note about attendance, participation and due dates. We are living in an unprecedented time where we must value community safety. Absences are going to happen. You are expected to complete all assignments on time whether or not you are physically able to be with us.

Plan accordingly and record rehearsal. If you are unable to attend class on the day a scene or sharing is due it is expected that you send a video of your most recent rehearsal. Failure to do so will result in a lowering of the grade on the assignment by one letter grade.

1) Attendance:

Attendance is expected and required. You may not miss more than **2** classes. Additionally absences will lower your grade one full letter grade. **Students are responsible for any class announcements and lecture material given on days they are absent.**

Tardiness: Lateness up to 15 minutes will count as one-half of an absence. Lateness of more than 15 minutes will count as an unexcused absence.

2) Tolerance and Participation:

In order for this class to be successful and for your time to be worthwhile, you must help to create an environment where people are comfortable to take risks and try new, challenging tasks. In a performance-driven course such as this, students will often learn as much -or more- from watching others work as they will learn from working themselves. You should come to every class with a notebook that you can use to write down your thoughts so that you can remember them when the time comes for peer feedback, and so that you can journal insights that you receive while watching your peers. Your goal should be to give feedback to another peer at least once during every class session.

3) Clothing/Attire:

Acting is an embodied process and is experiential in nature. Wear clothing that you feel comfortable in and allows for freedom of movement. Wear clothing that allows you to move freely in space without restricted limitations. No excessive exposure of skin, prints or labels.

- Pants: flexible cotton pants, sweatpants or shorts. No skirts, jeans or other pants that limit your ability for free range of motion.
- Shirts: t-shirts, short-sleeved or long-sleeved. No writings or logos on your shirts.
- Footwear: No sandals, socks preferred, shoes allowed.
- Long hair should be back and out of your face. No hats. No expensive jewelry or watches.
- We will discuss “Character Clothing and appearance” when we move into scene work.

4) Cell Phone & Electronic Policy:

The use of phones, computers, and other electronic devices is prohibited in the studio unless specified by the instructor. Please equip yourself with a notebook and pen or pencil so that you can take notes manually. When we begin working with scripts, please print all materials in advance and bring copies to class.

5) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access Statement:

At Boston University, “We strive to create environments for learning, working, and living that are enriched by racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. We seek to cultivate an atmosphere of respect for individual differences in life experience, sexual orientation, and religious belief, and we aspire to be free of intellectual parochialism, barriers to access, and ethnocentrism.”
bu.edu/about/diversity

The CFA School of Theatre commits to inclusivity, dialogue, and collaboration. We vow to continue to translate these beliefs into action. We recognize our Student Body as future colleagues and artists working with us to make a better world and an art form that will predict the future rather than reflect the past. We embrace a notion of an artistic and intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, socioeconomic class, age, religion, and disability.

As your instructor, it is my intent to foster an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized, respected, and seen as a source of strength. I am committed to presenting materials and activities that are respectful of our diversity of experiences, identities, and world views. Integrating a diverse set of experiences is important for a more comprehensive understanding of Dramatic Literature 3. Please contact me via email if you have thoughts or questions.

Antiracism Statement

As a school, we commit to actively practice antiracism in our classes and in our School of Theatre community. This course will delve into conversations about antiracist theatre practices. We will embrace the following classroom meeting agreements when entering into these discussions:

- We acknowledge that everyone is at a different stage in their learning process. It's okay not to know. Keep in mind that we are all still learning and are bound to make mistakes. Be open to changing your mind and make space for others to do so as well.
- We agree to listen respectfully to each other without interruptions.
- We will assume positive intent. Everyone has come to the table to learn, grow, and share.
- We will use “I” statements, speaking from our own perspective and lived experience.
- We will practice WAIT: Why am I talking? Why aren't I talking?
- We will approach each conversation with self-awareness of our own biases and fragility.
- We agree that no one should be required or expected to speak for their whole race, gender, or for any of the many identities that each of us hold.
- We will respect the inclusive environment of open dialogue that we have created within this classroom. What's said here stays here, what's learned here leaves here.

6) Title IX: BU's Responsibilities Under Title IX requires universities to respond promptly and effectively to complaints of all kinds of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. Universities must take immediate action to eliminate the offending conduct, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects. BU is committed to promptly investigating the circumstances of a complaint to determine what occurred, ensure complainant safety, and provide remedies. Regardless of whether a complainant files a criminal action, BU will undertake its own investigation of the circumstances of the complaint.

<http://www.bu.edu/safety/sexual-misconduct/title-ix-bu-policies/>

7) Boston University Academic Conduct Statement & Scholastic Dishonesty:

Students who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties; you will fail this course. Please read the following website site for information:

<https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>. The College demands a high level of artistic integrity and academic honesty on the part of students. No form of academic dishonesty (for example, cheating and plagiarism) will be tolerated. Disciplinary actions may include warning, probation, suspension, and expulsion.

8) Mental Health and Wellness Statement:

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that result in diminished mental health and wellness that can interfere with academic experiences and negatively impact your daily life, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, problems with eating and/or sleeping, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. We all experience stressful and difficult events as a normal part of life. The CFA School of Theatre faculty and staff are not qualified to serve as a counselor, but there are many helpful resources available on campus. If you experience mental health challenges while at Boston University, please contact BU Student Health Services – Behavioral Medicine. Clinicians are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 617-353-3569 (this number is also on the back of your BUID). For more information visit: <http://www.bu.edu/shs/behavioral-medicine>. A list of additional resources is available under “Quick Links” on butheatrebridge.com. If you need a safe, quiet place to make a phone call or do research visit Brian Dudley's office (CFA 452), Brendan Hoey's office or Ruthie Jean's office in the CFA Dean's Office on the second floor (CFA 201). Remember that getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do – for yourself, for those you care about, and for those who care about you.

9) Disability Services: “Boston University takes great pride in the academic and personal achievements of its many students and alumni with disabilities. The University is committed to providing equal and integrated access for individuals with disabilities to all the academic, social, cultural, and recreational programs it offers. This commitment is consistent with legal requirements, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with

Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAAA) of 2008, and embodies the University's historic determination to ensure the inclusion of all members of its committees. Our goal, at Disability Services, is to provide services and support to ensure that students are able to access and participate in the opportunities available at Boston University. In keeping with this objective, students are expected and encouraged to utilize the resources of Disability Services to the degree they determine necessary. Although a significant degree of independence is expected of students, Disability Services is available to assist, should the need arise." If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at access@bu.edu or <https://www.bu.edu/disability/> to coordinate any reasonable accommodation requests.

10) General Safety: More information can be found at: <https://www.bu.edu/safety/>.

11) COVID Statement of Community: The School of Theatre Students, Faculty, Staff, and Administration pledge together that health and safety in this era of COVID-19 requires both a communal, and a personal, effort and commitment. We share the responsibility for each other in staying healthy mentally and physically. No preparation of environment or establishment of procedures can hope to succeed without each and every person's adherence to governmental and institutional expectations. We function in a fast-moving, energetic, enthusiastic community which must take the time and make the commitment to each other by following basic protocols of wearing masks at all times other than when impossible for theatre-making, washing hands regularly, and maintaining a minimum of 6' distance between humans while on campus. In addition, strict attention to personal health monitoring will be essential, and external, non-scholastic activities should include consideration of yourself and others. For the most up-to-date information and protocols, visit: <https://www.bu.edu/back2bu/>.

Evaluation:

Attendance & Participation – 20%

Journal-15%

Response Paper-10%

Quiz-10%

Speech-10%

Monologue-15%

Scene-20%

= 100%

Please see grading %'s above.

Grade Scale

95% and Above = A

90% to 94% = A –

87% to 89% = B+

84% to 86% = B

80% to 83% = B –

77% to 79% = C +

74% to 75% = C

70% to 73% = C –

61% to 69% = D range

60% or below = F

Final Grades are not rounded up.

Course Calendar

Calendar subject to change at instructor's discretion

Week 1

T 9/6 Class Introduction

R 9/8 Review syllabus, introduce JOURNAL & SPEECH assignments

Week 2

T 9/13 Acting & Theatre Terminology, Objectives, SPEECH selection due

R 9/15 No in person meeting, SPEECH rehearsal time

Week 3

T 9/20 Work on SPEECH assignment in class (students must be off book)

R 9/22 Work on SPEECH assignment in class (students must be off book)

Week 4

T 9/27 Work on SPEECH assignment in class (students must be off book)

R 9/29 Work on SPEECH assignment in class (students must be off book)

Week 5

T 10/4 Final SPEECH sharings, **Introduce MONOLOGUE assignment**

R 10/6 Quiz Review, Introduce Open Scenes

Week 6

T 10/11 NO CLASS BU MONDAY

R 10/13 **QUIZ**, Finish Open Scenes

Week 7

T 10/18 Character Analysis, **Monologue Selections due**

R 10/20 Work MONOLOGUES (students must be off book)

Week 8

T 10/25 Work MONOLOGUES (students must be off book)

R 10/27 Work MONOLOGUES (students must be off book)

Week 9

T 11/1 Work MONOLOGUES (students must be off book)

R 11/3 Work MONOLOGUES (**Students must be off book**)

Week 10

T 11/8 Work MONOLOGUES (**Students must be off book**)

R 11/10 Work MONOLOGUES (**Students must be off book**)

Week 11

T 11/15 MONOLOGUES Final Shares, Introduce SCENES/Script Analysis

R 11/17 Pair Scene Work in Class

Week 12

T 11/22 No In Person Meeting, Scene Rehearsal Time

R 11/24 NO CLASS Fall Break

Week 13

T 11/29 Scene Rehearsal In Class (**Students must be off book**)

R 12/1 Scene Rehearsal In Class (**Students must be off book**)

Week 14

T 12/6 Final Scene Sharings

R 12/8 Final Scene Sharings