



THEA 1403: Fundamentals of Acting

Fain College of Fine Arts

Spring 2026
T/Th 9:30-10:50

Contact Information

Instructor: Liz Redmill

Office: B107

Office hours: M/W 11:00 AM-1:00 PM, T/Th 2:00-3:00 PM or by appointment

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Course Description

This course uses the principles of Sanford Meisner, Stella Adler, and Michael Chekhov. Actors will continue their studies in living truthfully under heightened and imagined circumstances. Students will be introduced to how to emotionally prepare to enter a scene. These techniques will be applied to monologues and scene work.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

There are no required texts. Handouts and PDFs of reading materials will be provided through D2L.

Recommended texts:

Respect for Acting Uta Hagen

An Actor Prepares Constantin Stanislavski

Course Objectives

This course introduces students to foundational acting principles through paired methodologies of Constantin Stanislavski and Uta Hagen. Emphasis is placed on disciplined observation, self-awareness, imagination, physical and vocal presence, script analysis, and the ability to pursue clear objectives through playable actions. Students are expected to engage in sustained rehearsal outside of class and to articulate their acting choices using professional terminology.

Through this course, students will:

- Demonstrate truthful, specific behavior under imaginary circumstances.
- Apply Stanislavski's core principles (given circumstances, objectives, action, imagination).
- Apply Hagen's Six Steps to scene and role preparation.
- Use observation, substitution, and imagination to support performance.
- Analyze dramatic text to identify objectives, actions, and given circumstances.
- Sustain concentration, listening, and responsiveness in performance.
- Articulate acting choices verbally and in writing using discipline-specific language.

Course Requirements

IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION:

- Turn off or silence cell phones. Cell phones should not be seen or heard during class time.
- Engage in daily activities and class discussions. Short performance assignments connected to the weekly readings will be given throughout the semester. Students are expected to engage in all performance assignments.
- NO gum, food, or drinks are allowed in the studio. A water bottle with a lid is welcome and encouraged. (Please no Stanley cups.)
- Listen and remain attentive during class. Have fun, be engaged, participate fully to develop your skills and imagination, and gain insight into yourself. Participation will be graded on attitude, effort, execution of concepts, improvement, and classroom discipline and conduct.
- Remain respectful and attentive while others are speaking/demonstrating in class.
- Any injuries that prohibit class participation must be reported to the instructor.
- If you cannot participate in class due to an injury you must quietly take notes on the combinations, ideas, and concepts discussed in class. These notes must be turned in to the instructor at the end of the class period.
- If you must leave the classroom before the end of class, please let the instructor know beforehand.

DRESS CODE POLICY:

- Students are expected to wear clothing in which they have unobstructed movement in order to participate in all class activities.

SELF-ASSESSMENTS:

- Students will complete three self-assessments during the semester to reflect on their personal growth around the concepts being taught. Each assessment will focus on their progress, strengths, and areas for improvement.
- Self-assessments will be submitted on D2L.

WEEKLY READINGS/DISCUSSIONS:

- All readings will be posted on D2L. Students are expected to have the readings done before the beginning of class on Tuesday and will be required to participate in online and classroom discussions on the readings.

ACTING JOURNAL:

- Students will be required to keep an acting journal. Specific entries and due dates will be given throughout the semester.

PRODUCTION REVIEW:

- Students are required to attend *Cabaret* and *Revolutionists*. You can receive a free ticket with your valid MSU Student ID.
- Students will write a 2-page, double-spaced paper for the production reflecting on their observation of the performance. Specific details for the paper will be given later in the semester.
- This paper should demonstrate thoughtful observation and connection between class content and live performance.
- Students that are in one of the spring productions will be required to an alternate paper based on connecting their experience in the production with class content.

FINAL EXAM:

- Students will perform a fully realized scene with a partner. Details and expectations for final performance will be given later in the semester. Final performances will take place during Finals Week.

Attendance

This is a studio course and carries the expectation that students should be active participants in their coursework. Participation is the only way to meet the objectives of this course. Attendance is MANDATORY. The content of each class builds on the content covered in the prior class. Students who are absent will be expected to proactively seek out and understand the information covered in class.

Three non-official absences are allowed to accommodate students who must miss class due to illness, family functions, etc. If a student is acting as an official representative of the University they must provide prior written verification from the faculty/staff supervisor of the event. Please communicate with the instructor as soon as possible about illness or scheduled absences.

Tardiness is extremely disruptive and disrespectful to the creative process; please arrive on time, ready to engage in the activities. If a student is more than 25 minutes late for class without contacting the instructor in advance, it will be considered an absence. Students who disappear for more than 10 minutes during class will also be considered absent.

Late work will not be accepted. If a student is absent, homework must be turned in via email, D2L (when applicable), or a classmate the day it is due.

Instructor Class Policies

Please Note: Due to the nature of this course, you will be working closely with other students and the instructor. Some exercises and techniques require physical contact. If you are uncomfortable at any time with the activities, please inform the instructor immediately and all reasonable accommodations will be made.

Different types of music may be played throughout the course. Please let the instructor know if you have any music restrictions due to religion or personal standards.

SAFE ZONE STATEMENT

The instructor considers this classroom (or whatever space in which this class is meeting) to be a place where everyone will be treated with respect as a human being –regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided all can agree to disagree. It is the instructor's expectation that ALL students consider the classroom/meeting location a safe environment.

Behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instruction will result in the instructor removing the disruptive student(s) from the class, either temporarily or permanently (instructor drop), and receive a final lower grade, up to an F. In addition, and depending on the nature of the behavior or conduct, the student(s) may be subject to further disciplinary actions as per MSU policies.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER RECORDING DEVICES

The use of cell phones and other recording or electronic devices is strictly prohibited during class. The instructor may record performances, from time to time, on a cell phone for legitimate class reasons. Student recording of the class is prohibited, unless it is part of a reasonable accommodation under ADA, unless it is

done by the instructor for grading purposes, or can be done by obtaining written consent by the instructor. If you are uncomfortable having your performances recorded, please let the instructor know.

SCHOOL CLOSURES/INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the case of a school closure due to inclement weather or other situations, classes will be moved to Zoom through D2L. Make sure to check D2L announcements for specific instructions.

AI STATEMENT

You may use AI for planning, idea development, and initial research. Your final submission should show how you developed and refined these initial ideas into the final submission.

Grading

Assignments	Percentage
Daily Participation/Activities	30%
Weekly Readings/Acting Journal	15%
Self-Assessments	5%
Production Review	10%
In Class Performances	20%
Final Scene Performance/Presentation	20%
Total Percentage	100%

Grade	Percentage
A	94-100
A-	90-93.99
B+	87-89.99
B	83-86.99
B-	80-82.99
C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99
C-	70-72.99
D+	67-69.99
D	63-66.99
D-	60-62.00
F	Below 60

Course Schedule

Week	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 What is Acting? Responsibility and Discipline	Readings: <i>An Actor Prepares</i> Ch. 2 When Acting is Art <i>Respect for Acting</i> Introduction Observation exercises Self-Assessment #1 DUE	1/22 1/23
Week 2 The Actor's Instrument: Body, Breath, and Sensory Awareness	Readings: <i>An Actor Prepares</i> Ch. 6 Relaxation of the Muscles <i>Respect for Acting</i> Ch. 6 The Five Senses Sensory Awareness exercises	1/27
Week 3 Concentration and Public Solitude	Readings: <i>An Actor Prepares</i> Ch. 5 Concentration of Attention Private Moment exercise Assign Songologues	2/3
Week 4 Imagination and the "Magic If"	Readings: <i>An Actor Prepares</i> Ch.3 Action/Ch. 4 Imagination <i>Respect for Acting</i> Ch. 3 Substitution Perform Songologues	2/10 2/12
Week 5 Given Circumstances	Readings: <i>An Actor Prepares</i> Ch. 13 The Unbroken Line <i>Respect for Acting</i> Ch. 23 Circumstances Assign Open Scenes	2/17
Week 6 Objectives, Needs, and Super-Objectives	Readings: <i>An Actor Prepares</i> Ch. 7 Units & Objectives/Ch. 15 Super Objective <i>Respect for Acting</i> Ch. 25 The Objective CLASS ONLINE: ACTF Partner Conflict work	2/24 2/24

Week	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 7 Action, Tactics, and Beats	Readings: <i>An Actor Prepares</i> Ch. 11 Adaptation <i>Respect for Acting</i> Ch. 26 The Obstacle/Ch.27 The Action Perform Open Scenes Self-Assessment #2 DUE	3/3 3/5 3/6
SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	3/9-3/13
Week 8 Emotional Truth and Substitution	Readings: <i>An Actor Prepares</i> Ch. 9 Emotion Memory <i>Respect for Acting</i> Ch. 4 Emotion Memory/Ch. 5 Sense Memory Assign Open Scene #2	3/17
Week 9	TBD <i>Cabaret</i> -you are required to see at least one performance	3/26-3/29
Week 10 Listening, Communion, and Relationship	Readings: <i>An Actor Prepares</i> Ch. 10 Communion <i>Respect for Acting</i> Ch. 24 Relationship Holiday Break-No Class	3/31 4/2-4/3
Week 11 Physical Behavior and Psychological Gesture	<i>Cabaret</i> Production Review DUE Readings: None Perform Open Scene #2	4/5 4/7 4/9
Week 12 Text Analysis & the Role	Readings: <i>Respect for Acting</i> Ch. 28 The Rehearsal Assign Final Scenes Assign Hagen Six-Step Analysis	4/14
Week 13 Character, Specificity, and Transformation	Readings: <i>Respect for Acting</i> Ch. 7 Thinking/Ch. 8 Walking & Talking Assign Character Analysis	4/21

Week	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 14	Readings: None <i>Revolutionists</i> - you are required to see at least one performance	4/28 4/30-5/3
Week 15	TBD <i>Revolutionists</i> Production Review DUE Self-Assessment #3 DUE	 5/8 5/8
Finals Week		TBA

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Student Privacy Statement

Federal law prohibits the instructor from releasing information about students to parties outside the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases the instructor will not discuss a student's academic progress or other matters with his/her parents without the proper release from students.

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in Student Wellness Center (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Participation in laboratory classes (acting, voice, movement) often requires students to wear yoga, movement, or period style clothes/costumes. These types of garments may be thin or form fitting which may make concealed carry of a firearm difficult if not impossible. In addition, students are often required to make physical contact with other students while learning exercises, choreography and/or physical positioning within special technique work. This required physical contact may also make concealment of a firearm difficult. While concealed carry is not prohibited in laboratory style class, students are reminded that intentional display of a firearm may result in criminal and/or civil penalties and unintentional display of a firearm is a violation of university policies and may result in disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion from the program and university. Students should factor the above in their decision as to whether or not to conceal carry in any theatre laboratory class.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC.

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled "Run. Hide. Fight." which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.