

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO'S PERFORMING ARTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE MAJOR
THTR 110 05 ACTING FOUNDATIONS
T/R 12:45pm – 2:30pm Remote Learning
Fall 2020 | CRN: 41813

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Office: Zoom or by phone
Office Hours: T/R 11:30am – 12:30pm

Introduction

“When life hands us lemons, we make lemonade.” This semester at USF is unusual with the pandemic affecting many parts of our lives. However, we are fortunate to still have the opportunity to further our growth as individuals and as artists. While remote learning is not the format we may have originally hoped for, we will take advantage of the technologies available to us and continue to learn about the human condition through the craft of acting.

Course Description

This is a first-year acting course, designed to introduce you to the ideas and practices of the role of the actor. During the first eight weeks, each student will be asked to participate in various acting exercises and games as well as being assigned a scene from a classic American play. Serving as a midterm, neutral scenes will be presented for the class half way through the semester receiving critique from the instructor. During the second eight weeks, each student will receive a “two-person scene” and a partner to continue their work. **Students are expected to spend a minimum of 1 – 3 hours per week outside of class rehearsing and preparing their scenes.** The final presentation of the scenes will take place on **Tues. Dec. 8, 2020**. The class begins with simple exercises designed to help you understand the complicated interactions of the human condition. Students will learn to develop their craft through concentrated and collaborative work with other students as well as with the instructor. Most importantly, students will begin to understand the craft of acting.

Course Goals

This course meets Performing Arts Department Learning Goal 1 and 2 (please see the Department's Mission and Learning Goals on last page of this syllabus.)

- To instill an appreciation for acting in socially relevant performing arts including theater, t.v. and film.
- To empower students with a variety of approaches to acting.
- To express themes and ideas relevant to various character development theories by writing in depth character biographies.
- To re-experience a “child-like desire of make believe.”

Course Learning Outcomes*

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a critical and working vocabulary including truthful communication, relaxation, concentration, imagination, trust, empathic listening, ensemble building, and personalization.
- Explore the basic elements of dramatic action and human relationships.
- Research and write a character biography and scene analysis.
- Generate the social, political, and economic, and religious aspects of character development.
- Make bold characters using physical action and animal imagery.
- Show the truthful pursuit of playing an objective under imaginary circumstances.
- Defend their acting choices throughout the course and beyond.

**Assessed through classroom participation activities, written work, and midterm/final scenes.*

Core F Learning Outcomes

This course also fulfills the Core F Visual and Performing Arts Learning Outcomes. At the completion of this course, students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the broad historical and theoretical foundations of the Performing Arts through an examination of specific cultural, social, economic and political contexts. *Assessed through play quizzes, critical reading responses, and midterm and final exam.*
- Demonstrate orally, in writing, or through production, an understanding of critical approaches to evaluating key works in the respective area and the specific movements and periods associated with it. *Assessed through classroom participation activities, play quizzes, critical reading responses, live performance critiques, midterm and final exam.*
- Develop technical and conceptual skills related to the area by engaging in individual and/or collaborative classroom activities. *Assessed through classroom participation activities, critical reading responses, live performance critiques, and final exam.*
- Demonstrate a broader, critical understanding of specific communities of makers and users by attending presentations related to the subject art (lectures, performances, and museum or other exhibits.) *Assessed through live performance critiques.*

Course Materials and Requirements

Assignments

Each of these assignments is designed to explore your ability to immerse yourself in imaginary circumstances while communicating truthfully. You will learn different acting techniques to help you better understand the human condition through both comedy and drama.

1. Truth and Lie stories (individual)
2. Neutral Scenes Midterm (partner)
3. Attend the Performing Arts Department Main Stage Theater production
4. Final Scene (partner)

Students are expected to spend a minimum of 1 - 3 hours per week with their partner outside of class rehearsing and preparing their scenes.

Papers

1. You will write a two-page paper on your Truth and Lie stories. **Due on Tues. 8/25**
2. You will write a short Character Biography for your Neutral Scene (midterm), including relationship, archetype, given circumstances, and 3 pictures (relationship, environment, character). **Due on Thurs. 10/8**
3. You will write a two-page Reaction Paper to a live theater performance: PASJ Main Stage Theater Production *The War of the Worlds: a Radio Play*. **Thurs. 11/12, 7:30 PM**, Zoom & Vimeo, with talkback to follow. The focus of this paper will be on the acting you've observed. **Due on Tues. 11/17**
4. You will write a two-page Character Biography for your final scene including research, text analysis, rehearsal process, acting choices, touching points, author biography, social context, etc. **Due on Thurs. 12/3.** (*Last day of classes.*)

All papers must be typewritten, double-spaced, using a 12-point font and one-inch margins top, side, and bottom. All papers must be stapled. Papers that are not properly formatted will be marked down by one grade point (A to A– etc.) Late papers are marked down by a grade point grade for each late calendar day (not class meet.)

Exams

Midterm:	Thurs. 10/8	Presentation of Neutral Scenes
Final Exam:	Tues. 12/8*	Presentation of Final Scenes (*Final Exam Week)

Course Texts and/or Materials (suggested)

- An Actor Prepares* (Stanislavski)
- Respect for Acting and Challenges for the Actor* (Uta Hagen)
- The First Six Lessons in Acting* (Boleslavsky)
- A Sense of Direction* (William Ball)
- Theory of Movement* (Laban)
- How to Audition* (Michael Shurtleff)
- Anatomy of a Choice* (M. Vaughn)
- A Practical Handbook for the Actor* (Bruder, Cohn, Olnek, Pollack, Previto, and Zigler)

Handouts (provided by instructor)

- Acting Class Biography
- Truth/Lie Assignment
- Neutral Scenes
- Text Analysis Sample
- Reading a Play
- Final Scene, Play script
- Research Assignment
- Character Biography Assignment

Grading

Grades are based on class participation, fulfillment of physical and written assignments, responsibility to your partners and to the rehearsal process, commitment to growth, and overall disposition (attitude) in class. This is interdisciplinary, process-driven work; writing and physical work are equally important.

1st Half of the Semester

Participation, Attitude, Attendance	12
Truth/Lie	5
N. Scene Bio	5
<u>N. Scene Midterm</u>	<u>10</u>
Possible Points:	32

2nd Half of the Semester

Attendance, Participation, Attitude	12
Text Analysis	5
Touching Points	4
Research Presentation	6
Reaction Paper	5
Rehearsals	6
Character Biography	10
<u>Final Scene</u>	<u>20</u>
Possible Points:	68

Total Points: **100**

Grading Scale

97-100	Excellent	A	73-76	Average	C
93-96		A-	70-72		C-
89-92		B+	67-69		D+
85-88	Very Good	B	63-66		D
81-84	Good	B-	60-62		D-
77-80	Above Average	C+	0-59	Failing	F

If you do not know where you stand at any point in the semester, please schedule an appointment with your instructor.

Weekly Assignment Schedule *(Subject to change)*

Week One: Aug. 18* – 20
Introductions, Syllabus, Definitions, Interview,
Line-up, Assign: Truth / Lie
(*Classes begin Tues. 8/18.)

Week Two: Aug. 25 – 27
Warm-Up, Present Truth / Lie stories. Paper due.
(Auditions PASJ Spring Main Stage: [Audition Submission Form](#) due Tuesday, 8/25
Self-Taped Auditions due Sunday, 8/30.)
(M – 8/24: Last day to add a class)

Week Three: Sept. 1 – 3
Intro to Neutral Scenes. Sensorial - SFX

Week Four: Sept. 8 – 10
Archetypes, Status. Creating a Virtual
Environment.
(M – 8/7: Labor Day Holiday, no classes)

Week Five: Sept. 15 – 17
Personalization, Character choices. Gift in a Box.

Week Six: Sept. 22 – 24
Scene work. Character clothing. Inner
Monologue, Physical Action.

Week Seven: Sept. 29 – Oct. 1
Neutral Scene Biography Assignment.
Dress Rehearsal Neutral Scenes

Week Eight: Oct. 6 – 8
Neutral Scene Biography Due: Thurs. 10/8.
Presentation of Neutral Scenes (Midterm 10/8.)
Critique. Hand out New Scenes. Partners
assigned.

Week Nine: Oct. 13 – 15
“Reading a Play” Handout. Discuss New
Scenes. Assign: Research topics.
Fall break cancelled, classes meet 10/12, 10/13

Week Ten: Oct. 20 – 22
Text Analysis presentation. Scoring a script.
Discuss.

Week Eleven: Oct. 27 – 29
Rehearsing a scene, Rehearsal Clothes.
Research presentations.
(F – 10/30: Last day to drop courses or withdraw)

Week Twelve: Nov. 3 – 5
Scene work. Extreme Character conditions,
Invisible Envelope.

Week Thirteen: Nov. 10 – 12
Scene work. Touching Points. 3 Objects. Scene
work - 1st round Critique, Morning Routine,
Playing Objectives, Actions. Lines Memorized.
Attend PASJ Main Stage Theater Production
The War of the Worlds: a Radio Play. Thurs.
11/12, 7:30 PM, Zoom & Vimeo, with talkback to
follow

Week Fourteen: Nov. 17 – 19
Reaction Paper Due: Tues. 11/17.
Scene work. Points of concentration,
Psychological Gesture. Character Secret.

Week Fifteen: Nov. 23 – 27
(Thanksgiving Recess – no classes.)

Week Sixteen: Dec. 1 – 3*
Dress Rehearsal. Character Biography due:
Thurs. 12/3. (*Thurs. 12/3 — Last day of
classes.)

Final Exam: Final Scenes Tues. 12/8 from
12:30pm-3:30pm

Performing Arts Department Guidelines

Academic Integrity: As a Jesuit institution committed to cura personalis—the care and education of the whole person—USF has an obligation to embody and foster the values of honesty and integrity. USF upholds the standards of honesty and integrity from all members of the academic community. All students are expected to know and adhere to the University's Honor Code. You can find the full text of the code online at www.usfca.edu/academic_integrity. The policy covers:

- Plagiarism — intentionally or unintentionally representing the words or ideas of another person as your own; failure to properly cite references; manufacturing references.
- Working with another person when independent work is required.
- Submission of the same paper in more than one course without the specific permission of each instructor.
- Submitting a paper written by another person or obtained from the internet.
- The penalties for violation of the policy may include a failing grade on the assignment, a failing grade in the course, and/or a referral to the Academic Integrity Committee.

Attendance: Learning in Performing Arts classes occurs through interaction, discussion, and hands-on exercises. Students who are late or absent in class deprive other students of the possibility of valuable learning opportunities and disrupt the creative and intellectual atmosphere of the course. As a result, absence and tardiness will have a profound effect on your grade.

You are allowed 3 absences in this course. 3 tardies (arriving late or leaving early) will be considered the same as 1 absence. After 3 absences, every additional absence will result in the lowering of your final grade 1/3 grade point (i.e. a “B” becomes a “B-“). Students who miss more than 4 classes may be asked to withdraw from the course; if they do not do so, they may be given a failing grade. **Regardless of the reason for absence, if you miss a class, arrive late or leave early, you are responsible for communicating with your instructor about your absence (in advance), finding out what course material and assignments you missed, and completing them on-time.** An absence does not exempt you from meeting assignment deadlines.

The following absences may be excused:

- Illness documented by a physician's note
- Participation in USF intercollegiate competition (i.e., athletics, debate)
- Attendance accommodations associated with a disability registered and documented by Student Disability Services

If you find yourself facing exceptional circumstances (i.e., an unanticipated medical or personal problem that requires immediate attention) during the semester, please see your instructor about possible accommodations. Such situations might include prolonged illness or family crises such as major illness, death or other unusual circumstances. In these cases, we will work together to preserve your participation in the course, or to determine if an “incomplete” is advisable. In some cases, dropping the course may be the best alternative. Your job is to let your instructor know as soon as possible what your situation is so that s/he can develop a good strategy for dealing with it.

Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a disability or disabling condition, or if you think you may have a disability, please contact USF Student Disability Services (SDS) at (415) 422-2613 within the first week of class, or immediately upon onset of disability, to speak with a disability specialist. If you are determined eligible for reasonable accommodations, please meet with your disability specialist so they can arrange to have your accommodation letter sent to me, and we will discuss your needs for this course. For more information, please visit: <http://www.usfca.edu/sds> or call (415) 422-2613.

**THERE IS NO FOOD OR DRINK (EXCEPT WATER) PERMITTED
IN PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT CLASSROOMS.**

Use of Technology: You may not use cell phones or other electronic devices during class. Please be sure to turn off all such devices before the start of class so that they do not disrupt the learning environment.

Behavioral Expectations: All students are expected to behave in accordance with the Student Conduct Code and other University policies (see <http://www.usfca.edu/fogcutter/>). Open discussion and disagreement is encouraged when done respectfully and in the spirit of academic discourse. There are also a variety of behaviors that, while not against a specific University policy, may create disruption in this course. Students whose behavior is disruptive or who fail to comply with the instructor may be dismissed from the class for the remainder of the class period and may need to meet with the instructor or Dean prior to returning to the next class period. If necessary, referrals may also be made to the Student Conduct process for violations of the Student Conduct Code.

Learning & Writing Center: The Learning & Writing Center provides assistance to all USF students in pursuit of academic success. Peer tutors provide regular review and practice of course materials in the subjects of Math, Science, Business, Economics, Nursing and Languages. Other content areas can be made available by student request. To schedule an appointment, log on to TutorTrac at <https://tutortrac.usfca.edu>. Students may also take advantage of writing support provided by Rhetoric and Language Department instructors and academic study skills support provided by Learning Center professional staff. For more information about these services contact the Learning & Writing Center at (415) 422-6713, email: lwc@usfca.edu or stop by our office in Cowell 215. Information can also be found on our website at www.usfca.edu/lwc.

Counseling and Psychological Services: Our diverse staff offers brief individual, couple, and group counseling to student members of our community. CAPS services are confidential and free of charge. Call (415) 422-6352 for an initial consultation appointment. Having a crisis at 3 AM? We are still here for you. Telephone consultation through CAPS After Hours is available between the hours of 5:00 PM to 8:30 AM; call the above number and press 2.

Confidentiality, Mandatory Reporting, and Sexual Assault: As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a faculty member. I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on USFs campus with the University. Here are other resources:

- To report any sexual misconduct, students may visit Anna Bartkowski (UC 5th floor) or see many other options by visiting our website: www.usfca.edu/student_life/safer
- Students may speak to someone confidentially, or report a sexual assault confidentially by contacting Counseling and Psychological Services at (415) 422-6352.
- To find out more about reporting a sexual assault at USF, visit USFs Callisto website at: www.usfca.callistocampus.org.
- For an off-campus resource, contact San Francisco Women Against Rape (SFWAR) (415) 647-7273 (www.sfwar.org).

Student Accounts - Last day to withdraw with tuition reversal: Students who wish to have the tuition charges reversed on their student account should withdraw from the course(s) by the end of the business day on the last day to withdraw with tuition credit (census date) for the applicable course(s) in which the student is enrolled. Please note that the last day to withdraw with tuition credit may vary by course. The last day to withdraw with tuition credit (census date) listed in the Academic Calendar is applicable only to courses which meet for the standard 15-week semester. To find what the last day to withdraw with tuition credit is for a specific course, please visit the Online Class Schedule at www.usfca.edu/schedules.



**UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO'S PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT
PERFORMING ARTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE MAJOR (PASJ)**

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Department offers the unique Performing Arts and Social Justice major, with concentrations in dance, music, and theater. The faculty and staff are committed to providing coursework, activities, and productions that acknowledge and study the performing arts' role as an agent of creative and social change. We strive to achieve academic and artistic excellence in the classroom, on stage, and in the community, offering students professional preparation for a variety of careers in the performing arts, as well as for further study, while working towards a more humane and just society.

LEARNING GOALS

1. Analyze principles, works, and methodologies in the Performing Arts within their socio-historical contexts.
2. Apply technique and conceptual skills to creative and scholarly practices.
3. Explain how the Performing Arts contribute to a humane and just society.
4. Prepare for professional work or graduate studies in Performing Arts and related fields.