

THEORY AND TECHNIQUE OF ACTING | THEA 20A
Spring 2025
De Anza College

Instructor: Allie Pratt

Email: prattallie@fhda.edu and via Canvas (I will typically respond within the day.)

Class Meets: G-3 Mondays and Wednesdays 6:30-9:15pm

Office Hours: G-3 Mondays and Wednesdays 5:00-6:20pm

Methodology: Lab/Lecture | This is a fully in-person on-campus class.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the basic theory and techniques of acting, along with the actor's range of choices within the framework of scenarios and improvisation. Students will conduct a beginning analysis of acting styles and methods from diverse cultural and historical perspectives. Students will develop the actor's sense of truth, imagination, concentration, spontaneity and energy.

REQUIRED TEXT:

There is no required textbook for this course, however you will be expected to rent/buy/scavenge scripts from libraries, the internet, bookstores (new and used) and there are readings assigned in Canvas.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Develop the voice and body as an instrument of expression while gaining confidence through the experience of interaction and audience performance.
- Demonstrate ability to analyze text and performance content for self-advancement.
- Develop critical thinking and interpersonal communication skills as well as diversity perspectives through collaborative projects.

GOALS:

1. To practice the principle that "acting is doing."
2. To live truthfully under imaginary circumstances.
3. To develop the habit of working off the behavior of other actors.
4. To explore how onstage training can be applied to situations offstage.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

**** Per the department:***

- a. Demonstrate using the human body as an instrument of communication.
- b. Employ the functions of the vocal mechanism including breath support and vocal articulation.
- c. Apply the skills needed for character development and analysis
- d. Examine the acting styles and methods from diverse cultural and historical perspectives.

Each student will be expected to:

- Participate in class actively and with focus.
- Complete the assignments on time.
- Have the discipline to work independently.

THEORY AND TECHNIQUE OF ACTING

THEA 20A INTRO



CLASS NOTES:

Because this is a class of sharing and discovery for all students, there are a few issues we need to be alertly sensitive about. In our activities and improvisations, though you are working towards impulsivity, please try...

- to keep yourself cautioned against portraying offensive stereotypes particularly those targeted towards race and sexual orientation. Everybody's interpretations and humor limits vary. Please try and keep that in perspective.
- Please understand that because this is an interactive class there may be an impulse to touch and be touched by the teacher and other students. Please always ask consent to touch others and feel emboldened to ensure others ask consent of you. Asking consent is unfortunately not quite second nature for many of us. But it is becoming more and more commonplace in the industry. This is an environment to practice asking for consent, giving or denying consent, and adapting and working with any answers received.
- Occasionally scene work or improvisation may become emotionally upsetting or seem out of control. At this time any individual may stop the scene or improvisation.
- If a script is being worked on in class that has personally upsetting or triggering subject matter, please let me know. Your mental and emotional health is important and we want to make sure you feel safe in your learning environment.
- There is also the likelihood that class discussions could cover aspects of a character's sexuality, gender, race, trauma, etc. This is one of the few subjects in academia that requires personalization in this way. As we find and develop characters, please bear in mind that authenticity and respect are the two cardinal values of this class. Your boundaries will be respected.

An acting class has to be a safe and protected home for all of us in order for it to be successful.

For more broad information on De Anza's social expectations, see [Student Code of Conduct](#).

POLICIES:

LATE WORK

Assignments are due on the date listed in Canvas and the course calendar **in that order**. Oftentimes an assignment will be due on Canvas the day before it is due on the course calendar. This is to ensure it is done by class time. It is the student's responsibility to reach out to the instructor (email or office hours) if an extension is needed. Assignments will generally close on the due date reflected on the course calendar.

DROPPING

It is the student's responsibility to add or drop the class. If you are a no show by the end of Week 1 you will be dropped from the class. See [How to Drop a Class](#).

DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities, including invisible ones, are encouraged to communicate with the instructor their needs and appropriate accommodations. [De Anza Disability Support Services](#). The folks who work in DSS at De Anza are fierce advocates for your education. Seek them out.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Please see [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) as well as [Academic Integrity Policies](#). Also your grades are confidential. More info at [Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act](#)

PARTICIPATION

Participation is a key component of this craft and this will be reflected in your grade. (See **GRADING**: Skill Demonstrations, Other)

DRESS:

Please wear comfortable clothing and shoes in which you can move easily. Please no flip-flops or heels. You will also **need to gather props and costume pieces for scenes.** You will need to bring this clothing to class and change into it prior to your scene.

CELL PHONES AND TEXTING:

Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be turned off and out of sight. Texting, phone calls, headphones and any other electronic communication devices are forbidden during class time. If I see a phone when it's not being used to take notes, you may be asked to leave class. This may count as an absence for the day and negatively impact your participation grade. Excessive absences can lead to being dropped, per the attendance policy. Unplug from the matrix for a bit. Be present with us in the room.

RECORDING POLICY:

To ensure compliance with the [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA), student recording of class lectures or other activities is generally prohibited without the explicit written permission of the instructor and notification of other students enrolled in the class section. Exceptions are made for approved accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Recording of lectures and other class activities may be made by faculty to facilitate instruction, especially for classes taught remotely through Canvas. Participation in such activities implies consent for the student to be recorded during the instructional activity. Such recordings are intended for educational and academic purposes only.

LATENESS

This is a class where you matter. You matter a lot. Your presence in the room physically, mentally, and emotionally are vital to the work. Be in class and ready to participate on time.

- Email me before class has begun if you are going to be late.
- If you are more than ten minutes late (and you have not contacted me prior to the beginning of that day's class) you will not receive points for that day's attendance and it may or may not affect your participation in the day's lesson (which will also result in a lack of points).
- Plan accordingly. I myself am coming in from Santa Cruz in rush hour traffic. If I can do it, so can you.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

The official De Anza policy states:

"Instructors determine individual class attendance policies, which are distributed to students at the beginning of each quarter. State guidelines also recommend that absences in excess of one week's class meetings may be considered excessive. Faculty may drop students for excessive absences, which will contribute to the total allowable enrollments in a course." [De Anza Attendance Statement](#)

One week's class meetings means two classes. Please contact me about your absences. Emergencies happen, people get sick, email me or message me on Canvas as soon as you suspect you're going to be late or miss a class. With enough time we can make a plan for your success.

Each class itself is worth 5pts, being excused does not earn back these points. Being late affects these 5pts at my discretion. (How late, how disruptive coming in, was your partner thrown under the bus at all, did you communicate, etc...)

As this class is highly participatory you may not be able to make up for in class labs even if the absence is excused. This will be determined based on the particulars of that activity.

For current Covid guidelines, please visit [Latest Covid Updates](#).

SAFETY PROTOCOLS:

[Health Rights & Responsibilities](#) & [De Anza Rules and Policies](#)

THIS SYLLABUS MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INSTRUCTOR.

IMPORTANT DATES:**March 26**

Drop for nonpayment on cumulative fee balances of \$250 or more

April 7

Spring classes begin

April 20

Last day to [add 12-week classes](#)

April 20

Last day to [drop classes](#) without a W

May 24 - 26

Memorial Day holiday – no classes; offices closed

May 30

Last day to [drop classes](#) with a W

June 19

Juneteenth holiday – no classes; offices closed

June 23-27

[Final exams](#)

June 29

[Graduation](#)

HELPFUL SERVICES:

California Community Colleges (CCCs) are incredible. During the 2020 shut down I started taking online classes. Because I was on unemployment, the tuition was remitted. I paid the small student fee which got me free mental health counseling the entire time I was taking classes. My local community college got me free courses which helped me toward my drama therapy work, and I received free therapy.

The services are out there, you just have to seek them out. Everyone I've met at De Anza has been extremely helpful and enthusiastic about sharing resources. Take advantage of your CCC experience.

Financial Aid and Assistance: [Financial Aid Office](#), [Scholarships](#), & [Installment Plan](#) information.

Resources for your basic needs (e.g. food, shelter): [De Anza Resources](#) & [Food Pantry](#)

This class may feel like therapy at times, but it is certainly not. This is: [Mental Health Services](#)

Designated quiet spaces with power and wifi are here: [Student Zoom Spaces](#)

De Anza College Library Website: [De Anza College Library](#)

Zoom tutoring and workshops at De Anza's Student Success Center: [De Anza Student Success Center](#)

Find your village: [Guided Pathways Villages](#)

PLAGIARISM:

Students who present the work of others without giving proper credit (citation), will receive an "F" grade for that assignment which cannot be made up. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to Student Affairs. If you feel that you are having trouble with an assignment and require assistance please meet with me during my office hours or schedule an additional time to meet.

GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS:

Opportunities for extra credit may be offered in addition to:

- WRITING 12%
- SKILL DEMONSTRATION 62%
- EXAMS 11%
- OTHER 14%

Grading: 880 Points Possible

Writing: 12% 105 pts

- Monologue Score 10 pts
- Monologue Palette of Tactics 10 pts
- Monologue 3 Lists 10 pts
- Monologue Given Circumstances 10 pts
- Scene Score 10 pts
- Scene Palette of Tactics 10 pts
- Scene 3 Lists 10 pts
- Scene Given Circumstances 10 pts
- Scene Rehearsal Journal 25 pts

Skill Demonstrations: 61% 540 pts

- Personalized warm-up 50 pts
- Open Scenes 25 pts
- Improv 101 25 pts
- Object Exercise 25 pts
- Monologue Memorized 15 pts
- Milling Monologues 25 pts
- Share monologue 100 pts
- Casual play presentation 10 pts
- Scene Blocking Sharing 25 pts
- Scene Rehearsal 40 pts
- Scene Final Dress 50 pts
- Scene Sharing 150 pts

Quizzes & Exams: 12% 105 pts

- 8 online quizzes 55 pts
- Final 50 pts

Other: 14% 130 pts

- Attending each class (21 x 5 pts) 105 pts
- Bringing materials to class 15 pts
- Monologue selections 10 pts

GRADING:

Grade	Numerical Equivalent
A	880 - 818
A-	817 - 792
B+	791 - 765
B	764 - 730
B-	729 - 704
C+	703 - 678
C	677 - 616
D+	615 - 590
D	589 - 555
D-	554 - 528
F	527 - 0

****A note on accessibility & grading:**

This is a creative and expressive art and there is much skill and craft to build in order to support each individual's artistry. I cannot grade creativity, charisma, or talent. I can grade skill and application of craft. I pride myself on very detailed rubrics that are very clear and attainable with real work.

This being said, my rubrics break things down in a very neurotypical way. I am interested in engaging in ways to make this rubric more accessible. Many theater makers I know identify themselves as neurodivergent or even "neurospicy"! There are certain social norms which characters uphold in scenes. These may include eye contact, physical stillness, vocal control, and nuanced listening and reacting to body language, facial cues, etc.

If these are pieces of the work that are less accessible to you, I urge you to communicate with me as well as [Disability Support Services](#). I firmly believe that theater is for everyone and everyone should be held to equitable standards of what is considered quality work in the field as it stands today. Let's find ways to make sure you can thrive and absolutely slay your work in this class.