



# Theatre 280: The Craft of Acting

## SYLLABUS

**QUARTER:** Winter 2009  
**CREDITS:** 5  
**LEVEL:** U  
**CLASS TIME:** Tues & Thurs, 9:30AM-11:18AM  
**LOCATION:** Drake 2064

**INSTRUCTOR:** Jimmy Bohr  
**OFFICE:** Drake 1106  
**OFFICE EMAIL:** bohr.6@osu.edu  
**OFFICE PHONE:** (614) 292-9922  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Mon & Wed 3:30-5:18

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Craft of Acting teaches basic acting techniques including imagination, concentration, human psychology as applied to creation of character, and development of stage presence. To develop these techniques, students will read and discuss note-worthy plays, analyze said works for performative characteristics and social/social impact, create character analyses, perform monologues and scenes, attend and write written responses to two productions discussing the productions interpretation and impact as a piece of dramatic literature, and participate in group activities including warm-ups, discussion of scripts, and oral presentations about the dramatic literature. No prior acting is required to take this course and non-majors are welcome.

### GENERAL GOALS and LEARNING OBJECTIVES of the ARTS AND HUMANITIES GEC:

Arts and Humanities coursework develops students' capacities to evaluate significant writing and works of art, and for aesthetic response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience. Expected outcomes are:

- Students develop abilities to be enlightened observers or active participants in the visual, spatial, musical, theatrical, rhetorical, or written arts.
- Students describe and interpret achievement in the arts and literature.
- Students explain how works of art and literature express social and cultural issues.

### SPECIFIC GOALS and LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

Theatre 280 meets the Visual and Performing Arts GEC requirement under section 2 part C, focusing on arts appreciation and an understanding of theatre in culture. Through this course, students will develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience.

- Students will learn to describe and interpret dramatic texts, and to recognize those works as significant cultural achievements in order to be enlightened observers and active participants in visual, spatial, musical, theatrical, rhetorical and written arts.
- Students will learn general principles and strategies of character analysis through which they can appreciate and begin to understand performative art, including works from historical and cultural contexts other than the ones covered by the course itself.
- Students will develop an ability to engage in cross-cultural comparison, not only among those cultures covered by the course, but also between them and our contemporary context in order to explain how works of art and literature express social and cultural issues.
- Students will acquire a basic understanding of acting, primarily through an exploration of the technique, analysis, and relevance of specific actions and events within their "imaginary" context.
- Students will develop their critical and analytic abilities, as well as work on the clarity and precision of their writing in order to describe and interpret achievement in the arts and literature.

**TEACHING METHOD:** Lecture, Discussion, Lab

**REQUIRED TEXTS/SUPPLIES:**

- COHEN, ROBERT. *Acting One*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002.
- MASTERS. *Spoon River Anthology - Literary Touchstone Classic*. Prestwick House, Inc. 2007.
- Course Packet, available from UniPrint, which includes a selected group of plays from which the final scenes will be chosen

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

GIBALDI, JOSEPH. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

**PARTICIPATION:**

Discussion requires more than just talk. You should pay attention and listen to others, ask questions of your peers and the instructor, picking up the dialogue when we hit silences or points of disagreement, and help keep the conversation on track. This will help keep the discourse moving in a democratic direction, where a variety of ideas, theories, and interpretations coexist and help inform one another.

Your participation includes being prepared and offering thoughtful comments throughout the course. Participation also means that you give your full attention during the class discussion, individual and group presentations and guest lectures, and asking questions and providing feedback afterward.

Discussion, participation, active engagement in the course materials, and characteristics of comments will be assessed each class session. Failing to pay attention, not contributing to discussions, or exhibiting distracted or distracting behavior (including, but not limited to, using electronic devices for non-course related activities, reading or engaging in discussion about non-course related material, or acting inappropriate with, or having disregard for, students, guests, or the instructor) during class will negatively impact your grade. If there is any reason that you cannot fully participate in class please let me know as soon as possible so we can discuss your options.

In this course I am committed to engaging you as critical citizens who value social and cultural difference, free speech, democracy, and self-reflection. As critical citizens, you are expected to demonstrate integrity, be responsive to the welfare of others, foster a positive classroom climate based on trust and mutual responsibility, and exhibit sensitivity to and respect for multiple socio-cultural realities, diversity and difference including, but not limited to, sexual identity, ability, class, race, gender, ethnicity, and age. This includes using suitable language, mannerisms and interpersonal skills. Together, we will learn from each other as we build and strengthen our critical skills for understanding the discourse of visual culture in the performing arts.

**IN-CLASS PERFORMANCES AND REHEARSALS**

Students are expected to be ready for each event by having their lines memorized, be dressed in a way that does not impede their movement, have rehearsed the scene outside of class, have all props present, and be open to constructive criticism and ready to try potential adjustments as suggested by the instructor. Character analysis, consisting of the cultural and social circumstances of the character being portrayed, as well as an analysis of the play and its historical and cultural relevance, will all be a part of this exploration and evaluation. Observing students will respect and support the performers by listening attentively and providing feedback when requested by the instructor.

**Special Assignments (play attendance)**

Each student will attend two OSU Department of Theatre productions, which take place outside of class time. Students are expected to behave in accordance with respectful audience conventions, which include, arriving on time, refraining from talking, eating/drinking, or opening wrapped candy/cough-drops/gum during the performance. Cell phones and other electronic devices are to remain off during the entire performance. Particular attention should be given to the cultural and social issues raised by the play, as well as the plays artistic and literary relevance and merit.

## REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

### Reading Assignments, related discussions and mid-term quiz

Readings are to be completed by the date listed on the Topical Outline and will be discussed in class. The mid-term quiz will cover theatrical syntax and terminology from the readings and class discussions.

### Character Analysis Papers

Two Character Analysis Papers are assigned throughout the quarter (one for the monologue performance, one for the scene performance). A draft of the Monologue Character Analysis Paper is due a week prior to the time of Final Monologue Performance and a revised version will be due at the Final Monologue Performance. Analysis papers relating to the scene are due at the time of final scene performance. These analyses should not only include the acting elements, but also the social and cultural circumstances that define the character and the profound need the character finds himself in at that given moment. It is imperative that the student embrace the social and cultural truth of the character, no matter how foreign or alien it may seem.

### Play Attendance and Response Papers

Students are required to attend two OSU Theatre productions outside of class and write a two page, MLA style response discussing the successfulness/unsuccessfulness of each production and how a particular element (from class discussion or readings) helped/hindered each production. These responses should reflect the student's analytical skills as it pertains to the theatrical art, as well as a profound consciousness of the historical, social, cultural and artistic merit of the plays. Attention should be given to the themes and ideas presented in the plays, and how they relate to current issues and thought.

### Monologue and Scene Performance

Each student will perform one monologue from Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*, and one scene assigned by the instructor. Students must rehearse, explore and research alone and with their scene partner outside of class meeting times. Outside rehearsal is required for successful fulfillment of this class. There will be one rehearsal in class for each performance project, during which, all students will observe and provide feedback. Students are expected to have incorporated instructor comments (from the in class rehearsal) by the time of final performance. These performances will allow the student to gain poise and confidence, as well as a profound understanding of the creative process and the theatrical art and tradition.

### The Warmup and other Active Learning Exercises

Students will participate in an instructor led physical, vocal and mental warmup at the start of each class period. The warmup will prepare students to approach the work with focus and prevent physical or vocal injury. These are designed to give the student a basis of concentration and focus, as well as provide the emotional, physical, vocal and mental acuity to be productive and creative.

**GRADING:** Grading statement followed by breakdown:

Participation (see course content statement)	10%
Mid-term Quiz	10%
Character Analysis Paper #1 (draft)	05%
Character Analysis Paper #1 (monologue)	15%
Character Analysis Paper & GOTE* #2 (scene)	15%
Production Response Paper	05%
In-Class Rehearsals (see course content statement)	10%
Final Monologue Performance	15%
Final Scene Performance	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Grading Scale:

93 -	100.0	A
90 -	92.9	A-
87 -	89.9	B+
83 -	86.9	B
80 -	82.9	B-
77 -	79.9	C+
73 -	76.9	C
70 -	72.9	C-
67 -	69.9	D+
60 -	66.9	D
0 -	59.9	E

\*GOTE, which stands for "Goal, Obstacle, Tactics, and Expectation", is an acronym devised by Robert Cohen to remind actors of four basic elements to consider while preparing a character for the theater.

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:** It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES** that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

**FOR YOUR SAFETY,** the OSU Escort Service is available after 6 p.m. by dialing 292-3322.

## TOPICAL OUTLINE

### Week One

Introduction to course and Physical Warm-up

### Week Two

Discussion of monologue purpose and process and of *Spoon River Anthology*

Introduction of Character Analysis

**Reading due: *Spoon River Anthology* and monologue selection due**

### Week Three

Discussion of Character Analysis (cont.)

In-class *Spoon River* Monologue Rehearsals

**Draft of Monologue Character Analysis (#1) due**

**Reading Due: Section of Cohen Text (Part 1 & 2, pp. 3-65)**

### Week Four

Introduction to Vocal Warm-up

In-class *Spoon River* Monologue Rehearsals (cont.)

**Monologue Character Analysis drafts returned to student for revision**

Monologue Final Performances

**Final monologue Character Analysis due**

### Week Five

Discussion of reading and mid-term review

**Reading due: Section of Cohen Text (Parts 3 & 4, pp. 69-184)**

**Mid-term Quiz**

**Scene Assignments given by Instructor**

### Week Six

Introduction to Focus and Concentration Warm-ups

Discussion of Character Analysis as applied to scenes and of GOTE exploration (as outlined in Cohen text) defining character action in a scene

**Reading due: Section of Cohen Text (Part 5, pp. 187-247) & Assigned Play**

### Week Seven

Discussion of how to prepare for rehearsals and read-thrus of all assigned scenes

### Week Eight

In-class Scene Rehearsals

### Week Nine

In-class Scene Rehearsals

**Production Response Paper due**

### Week Ten

In-class Scene Rehearsals

Final Exam: **Final Scene Performance and Scene Character Analysis and GOTE sheet due**