The commonly accepted definition of acting today (and I think it’s a great one) is "living truthfully under imaginary circumstances". Working from this definition, we will learn basic principles of acting and apply them to our work onstage through exercises, sustained practices, and scenework.

This course features an eclectic approach to learning acting fundamentals. During the first few weeks, we will be focusing on full body listening, following impulses, imagination, concentration, and building ensemble, drawing primarily from the the techniques of Jerzy Grotowski by way of Stephen Wangh, as well as Rudolf von Laban, Mikhail Chekhov, and Viewpoints (Anne Bogart, Tina Landau and Mary Overlie). Next, we’ll focus on Uta Hagen exercises, actions and objectives via Robert Cohen, and work Monologues in preparation for auditions for Directing scenes. We’ll finish our semester by learning how to craft scenes through the use of contentless material. Underpinning all of our acting work will be an ongoing study of approaches to American actor training.

**A Note on Rigor:**
Beginning Acting is widely recognized in this country as a student’s chance to undergo foundational acting training (kind of like Intro to Calculus means you learn calculus). There are a lot of ways to teach this training, and all of them involve rigor, vulnerability, and risk-taking. I know that some of you are aspiring BFA Actors, and some are BFA Designers, and some are non-theatre majors. I do not expect anyone to execute exercises or scenes perfectly (nor would I want you to - perfection has no place in art) but I expect you to throw yourself into this work and to be prepared to reveal yourself through the work. It’s the only way to learn what the class needs to teach. It’s going to be a wild ride, and you will reap what you sow. Hold onto your hats.

**Grading Policy**
- Participation / Effort 40%
- Preparation of Assignments 20%
- Journals 20%
- Quizzes 10%
- Production Paper 10%

**Required Reading**
- The Training of the American Actor by Arthur Bartow

**Classroom Policies**
- NO CELL PHONES for any reason. Any instance of cell phone use during class counts as a tardy.
- Please call me by my first name (Rosie) in person and via e-mail.
- Submit all written work via email as a Word or PDF attachment.
- No gum chewing or eating are allowed in class.
- Any drinks must be in a non spill container.
- Wear black clothing that permits you to move freely and comfortably.
• Always come to class with writing utensil and paper.
• Memorize your lines. Memorize them better than you think you need. Set aside several days for this process. It won’t work if you try to jam it in your brain the night before, even if you spend 5 hours doing so.

**Journals**
One of the most fundamentally important parts of your process this semester will be keeping a journal about your day-to-day work in and outside of class. This journal offers you a space to reflect on your progress and the challenges you’re facing, to work out your evolving understanding of what makes good acting as reflected in your classmates’ work, to ask me questions, and to receive feedback from me. Journal entries should be at least 1.5 pages, double spaced, 12 point font, standard margins, and e-mailed to me as an attachment by 11:59 PM the day they’re due.

**Papers**
As part of your coursework, you will complete one paper this semester about the acting in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, due Sunday, May 12.

**Quizzes**
There will be a short reading quiz the day each reading is due, and one comprehensive performance theory quiz at the end of the semester. If you complete the reading, listen actively in class, ask questions and participate in discussions the quizzes should not be a problem for you.

**Participation/Effort**
It is impossible and pointless for you to assess or control your talent level, and it is impossible for me to judge or grade the same. Therefore, your participation/effort grade will depend on how willing you are to enter into every exercise, your thoughtfulness and curiosity in your progress and in asking questions, and your level of engagement in class. Try your best to work through any resistances you encounter and reflect on them either by talking to me in person or in your journal.

**Attendance/Tardiness**
Because acting happens in the moment and depends on partners and observers showing up, the class suffers when people are absent, and it is impossible to make up work from home. Furthermore, because acting involves a high degree of vulnerability and concentration, latecomers can cause unpleasant disruptions. Therefore, my attendance and tardiness policy is as follows:
• You may miss two classes without penalty. If you can, e-mail me in advance so I can make a plan.
• Each absence beyond two lowers your semester grade by 5%.
  Exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis in case of serious emergency or illness and will require documentation. Please let me know if you would like me to consider an exception.
• Three instances of tardiness, cell phone use or leaving class early counts as one absence.
• It is school-wide policy that seven or more absences will result in an automatic semester grade of F.

If you are sick and either feel unable to participate in class or are contagious, I prefer that you come to class, sit in the back, observe, take notes, participate in discussion and write me a ½ page-long report on your observations, due three days later. You will get full participation points for the day. Obviously not all illnesses allow for this. Your call.

**Extra Credit**
You may write one extra credit production paper on any Downstage production of your choosing, due one week after the production closes. If the paper is B quality or above and you have more than two absences, the paper will
make up for one absence. If you have two or fewer absences, the paper will push you into a higher grade bracket if you have a final grade ending in 9. (If you have an 89 and one absence and turn in a B quality paper, I will award you an A for the class).

If there is an odd number of students in class, it will occasionally be possible to receive extra credit by volunteering to do two scenes instead of one. I will e-mail the class if I need a volunteer.

**Late Work**
All assignments should be handed in in class or e-mailed to me by 11:59 PM the day they're due. Any assignment will be marked off 10% for each day it is late.

**Diversity and Inclusion**
This class may engage in material covering a diverse range of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, and disability. While I encourage you to formulate and express your thoughts and opinions throughout the semester, discriminatory remarks will not be tolerated and may constitute disruptive behavior under the student code of conduct.

**Students with Disabilities**
Throughout this class you will be asked to share your thoughts in class and in writing. If English is not your first language or if you experience a speech, vision, hearing, or other learning difficulty, please bring this to my attention.

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/

**Academic Honesty**
Go see the plays you are required to see. And whenever you are writing something for this class, make sure you are using your own words and your own thoughts. Any instance of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in a 0 grade on the assignment. There will probably be other very unpleasant consequences. It's not worth it.

**Program Learning Outcomes Supported in this Course**
3) The student will demonstrate collaborative and/or leadership competencies appropriate to participate or take a leadership role in a theatrical production. (All degree plans)
4) The student will demonstrate an understanding of the component areas of theatrical creation, process, production, performance, and study , and their interrelationships. (All degree plans)
6) The student will demonstrate intermediate to advanced competence in one or more theatre specializations. (BA)
8) The student will be able to complete and document a major project as a stage manager, as a designer or technician, or as an actor or director, deTuesstrating advanced competence in the student’s specialty. (BFA)
9) The student will be able to present an effective presentation appropriate to the student’s specialization. (BFA)

**Student Learning Outcomes Supported in this Course (and supported PLOs)**
- An ability to apply terminology and techniques introduced in class to our work as actors (PLOs 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9)
- Increased sensitivity to one’s own impulses (PLOs 6, 8 and 9)
- Increased responsiveness to others and to the environment (PLOs 6, 8 and 9)
- An understanding of how to craft a scene (PLOs 3, 4, and 8)
• A freer physical, vocal, emotional and imaginative self (PLOs 6, 8, and 9)
• A working knowledge of the history of performance theory and contemporary approaches to actor training (PLOs 3 and 4)

Catalog Description
Emphasis on the understanding and exploration of the actor's tools and the application of the actor's basic skills through the creative process.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

January and February

Thurs 1/24  Introductions and Syllabus
What is acting?
Ensemble-building exercises

Tues 1/29  Grotowski
Ensemble, concentration and imagination-building exercises
Performance Theory discussion
Due: Read "The Training of the American Actor" (Introduction, pgs. xv-xxv)

Thurs 1/31  Grotowski
Ensemble, concentration and imagination-building exercises
Strasberg discussion
Due: Read p. 3-24 in "The Training of the American Actor" (Strasberg)

Tues 2/5  Grotowski
Ensemble, concentration and imagination-building exercises
Adler discussion
Due: Read p. 29-46 in "The Training of the American Actor" (Adler)

Thurs 2/6  Grotowski
Actions
Chekhov discussion
Due: Read p. 102-105, 107-109, 112-119 in “The Training of the American Actor” (Chekhov)

Tues 2/12  Grotowski
Ensemble, concentration and imagination-building exercises
Meisner discussion
Due: Read p. 51-72 in "The Training of the American Actor" (Meisner)
Due: Journal

Thurs 2/14  Grotowski
Ensemble, concentration and imagination-building exercises
Actions exercises
Hagen discussion
Due: Read p. 127-135 in "The Training of the American Actor" (Hagen)
Due: Initial Monologue selection
Tues 2/19  Grotowski  
Ensemble, concentration and imagination-building exercises  
Hagen exercises discussion  
*Due: Read p 160-164 in "The Training of the American Actor"*
  *(Guidelines for Approaching Uta Hagen Exercises)*

Thurs 2/21  Hagen Lesson 4 (Telephone exercise)  
Grotowski discussion  
*Due: Read p 169-181 in "The Training of the American Actor" (Grotowski)*

Tues 2/26  Performance Theory review  
Objectives, Obstacles, Expectations  
Hagen Lesson 1 (Slice of Life exercise)

Thurs 2/28  Hagen Lesson 1 (Slice of Life exercise)
  *Due: Final Monologue selection*

**March**

Tues 3/5  Work monologues  
*Performance Theory Quiz*

Thurs 3/7  Work monologues  
*Due: Journal*

Tues 3/12  Work monologues

Thurs 3/14  Work monologues

**SPRING BREAK**

Tues 3/26  Work monologues

Thurs 3/28  Final presentation of monologues with notes

**Sunday 3/31  1 PM**  Directing Scenes auditions

**April and May**

Tues 4/2  Hagen Exercise 3 (Lost Object Exercise)

Thurs 4/4  Hagen Exercise 3 (Lost Object Exercise)

Tues 4/9  Work contentless scenes

Thurs 4/11  Exercises with contentless scenes
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues 4/16</td>
<td>Present contentless scenes with notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>APRIL BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 4/24</td>
<td>Hagen exercises redux</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 4/26</td>
<td>Final presentation of contentless scenes</td>
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<td><em>Due: Final Journal</em></td>
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<td>Monday 5/6</td>
<td>1-2 and 3-6 PM Directing Scenes</td>
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<td>Wednesday 5/8</td>
<td>1-2 and 3-6 PM Directing Scenes</td>
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