Beginning Acting
DRAM 1351.001/1051.020
Fall 2023

Instructor: Slade Billew
E-mail: billewbs@sfasu.edu
Office Hours: T 10:00AM – 11:00AM, WF 12:00PM – 2:00PM, or by appointment

Class Time and Place: M 2:00 – 2:50, WF 2:00 – 3:50 TBD

Catalogue Description: Three semester hours, one-hour lecture, four hours lab per week. Emphasis on the understanding and exploration of the actor’s tools and the application of the actor’s basic skills through the creative process.

Objectives: In this course we will use foundational acting techniques to come to better understand ourselves as creative artists. We will use these exercises in imagination and creative discovery to develop presence on stage, effective partnering, and script analysis. Further, we will discuss fundamental aspects of the career of the performer. You will notice that the course calendar is quite vague. My experience in teaching acting is that different groups need different things at different times. Therefore, we will discover the day to day work of the class together as we move through the semester.

Course Contact Hours and Study Hours: This three-credit hour course meets for 5 hours each week and in alignment with federal financial aid policy expects students to spend on average 4 hours per week of practice, rehearsal, and reading outside of class.

Teaching Philosophy: I do not believe that teaching is me giving you information and you receiving it. Rather, I believe that we engage together in a process of research, challenge, and negotiation. It is important to me that you consent to the work of the class. To consent you must understand what it is we are doing and believe that you are encouraged to ask questions and even to challenge ideas I present. Sometimes you will disagree with me, and that is what should happen. We must develop the capacity to say “no” to nourish our personal and artistic autonomy. It is only by being able to say “no” that we can truly say “yes.” This does not make class a free for all where everyone just does what they want. Instead, we work together to craft the class environment and there may be times when we need to discuss, negotiate, and accommodate individual difference. I recognize that there is a power imbalance in any classroom and that many, if not most of you will distrust that I really mean the above statement. We will work to create an environment where you can develop that trust. I don’t approach class this way because I want you to like me or because I am a “nice human”, rather I believe that part of what you must learn in your time at SFA is to think of yourself as an autonomous artist with your own thoughts, visions, and ideas that are just as important (but crucially not more important) than the thoughts visions and ideas of everyone else in the room.

Required Texts: Selected Readings posted on Brightspace
A dedicated notebook for analysis notes
Grading components:

1) Engagement  45%
2) Performance Work  55%

Final Grading: (0-59.4) F  (59.5-69.4) D  (69.5-79.4) C  (79.5-89.4) B  (89.5-100) A

Engagement (45%): The expectation in this class is that you are fully engaged as an artist for each class session. You must be present and ready to work at the beginning of each class. You are expected to be mentally, emotionally, and physically prepared. You will be asked to engage as a student, artist, and collaborator every day. You should meet or exceed the expectations of the course, the School of Theatre, and the University. Your engagement will be noted and evaluated.

NOTE: You should expect to commit significant out of class time to preparation and rehearsal. You must treat this out of class work as a serious commitment. If I receive more than two complaints about any student’s presence, preparation, or participation in outside rehearsals, that student will be asked to withdraw from the class. Below is a rubric for Engagement grading:

A – Student shows a heightened level of attention, commitment, and effort.
B – Student shows an acceptable level of attention, commitment, and effort.
C – Student is present and not disruptive or obviously disengaged,
D – Student is present and mildly disruptive or disengaged.
F – Student is present and significantly disruptive or disengaged.
0 – Student is not present or asked to leave class.

Asynchronous Assignments: At several points throughout the semester, you will be asked to watch a short video outside of class and participate in the activities described in these videos. Completing these assignments will count towards your engagement grade.

Performance Work (55%): Throughout the course of the semester, you will rehearse and perform several pieces. Each of those assignments is outlined below. More specific details will be forthcoming in class.

Breakdown of Performance Work Assignments:
Open Scenes (10%) – You will perform a short open scene with a partner.

Monologue (15%) – You will rehearse and perform a new one-minute monologue of your choosing. It should be from a realistic play written in the last 30 years, and a piece that would be appropriate for you to use in a professional audition.

Directing Scenes Performance (10%) – You will audition for the Beginning Directing class and perform in two of the scenes directed by those students. You will turn in a journal of your rehearsal experience.

Class Scene Performance (20%) – You will perform a scene you select from one of three plays we will read as a class.
Program Learning Outcomes

This course applies to the following School of Theatre Program Learning Outcomes at an introductory level.

- The student will be able to analyze a script in ways that are necessary to a theatre practitioner or scholar/critic. (All Degree Plans)
- The student will demonstrate an understanding of the component areas of theatrical creation, process, production, performance, and study, and their interrelationships. (All Degree Plans)
- The student will demonstrate competence in one or more areas of theatre specializations. (BA)
- The student will demonstrate collaborative and/or leadership competencies appropriate to participate or take a leadership role in an effective theatrical production. (All Degree Plans)
- 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, demonstrating advanced competence in the student’s specialty. (BFA)
- The student will be able to present an effective presentation appropriate to the student’s specialization. (BFA)

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- Analyze a dramatic text and interpret a character. (PLO:A)
- Embody fundamental concepts of modern acting theory. (PLO:B)
- Employ standard acting vocabulary. (PLOs:A,C)
- Articulate a basic personal artistic process. (PLOs:C,D,E,F)
- Translate analysis into specific vocal and physical choices. (PLOs:A,C,E,F)
- Demonstrate the ability to work cooperatively on a creative/interpretive project. (PLOs:B,D)

POLICIES and EXPECTATIONS

Course Specific General Expectations:

- All Acting, Movement, and Theatre Speech classes at SFA require the wearing of black movement clothing. This is a common practice in many Theatre training programs. It is intended to create a sense of neutrality across the performers, make it easier to step in and out of character, and help the performance classroom feel like a space where art is made. Your clothing should be solid black and not include designs, images or words. Small brand logos are acceptable. Your clothes should effectively cover your body through a range of movement possibilities. Hats if worn must be turned with the bill backwards. If you are not wearing class appropriate clothing, you will be asked to leave, and receive an absence for the day, as well as loss of engagement points.
- This class requires significant physical interaction between students. Please come to class clean, and with nails trimmed.
- Jewelry should be removed before class. This includes necklaces, long, dangling earrings, watches, body piercings and large rings. This prevents potentially dangerous snags on your own body or other’s bodies.
- Soft soled movement or athletic type shoes shall be worn for class. On occasion, we will work with bare feet. I would encourage black shoes, but as quality movement shoes are expensive any color is acceptable.
• Bring a no-spill water bottle to class. Only water is allowed. Fill it before class; you can’t leave class to fill it. No food in class (this includes gum and candy).
• Hair should be kept out of the face.
• Assist in keeping the space clean, organized, and ready for the next class.
• As a student in a pre-professional theatre program, you should approach class in the same way that you would a rehearsal. You should be on time. You should be prepared. You should leave any outside concerns at the door.

**Absences/Lateness:** Theatre is an intrinsically collaborative art, and the practical application side of your training occurs largely in the classroom. Therefore, your absence from class impacts not only your learning, but also the learning of other students. **You should not miss class.** You will lose some engagement points anytime you do. However, I recognize that life happens. If something comes up or you become ill, please do not come to class. What I ask is that you communicate with me about any absences. If you do not communicate with me about an absence within 24 hours or if your absences become excessive your grade will be significantly impacted. The same is true for chronic lateness. It is your responsibility to obtain any missed notes from a classmate. It is your responsibility to check in with me after class if you arrive after attendance is taken.

As stated by School policy: **ten (10) absences in a MWF class will result in an automatic failure of the course.**

**Course Work**
All course work must be completed and turned in as indicated by the course calendar, as discussed in class, or communicated on d2l. Late work will only be accepted in emergency circumstances. It is your responsibility to pursue making up missed work, not my responsibility to make sure you do so.

**Course Content Note**
This class engages material covering a diverse range of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, gender, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, and disability. I encourage you to explore the myriad of identities that constitute you and to formulate and express your thoughts and opinions throughout the semester; however, discriminatory remarks will not be tolerated and may constitute disruptive behavior under the student code of conduct.

*Students with documented disabilities must meet with the instructor in advance of accommodation to arrange accommodations for that disability.*

**General Expectations:**

*Please respect others as well as yourself; this includes other students, the instructor, guest speakers, and performers. Most of the following guidelines for behavior reflect this principle.*

1. Recording class in any form is not allowed.
2. Cell phones should be set to silent or turned off and stowed before you enter the room. Absolutely NO use of cell phones is allowed in class unless there is an emergency, or it is approved/requested by the instructor.
3. Use of your friend’s brain during a quiz will result in a grade of zero on that quiz.
4. Disorderly conduct or talking inappropriately in class is not permitted.
5. Failure to follow any of these expectations will result in being dismissed from class and counted absent (unexcused).

Academic Integrity (4.1)
The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy. Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one's self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the coursework because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf.

Students with Disabilities
Please copy and paste the following statement and place it in your course syllabus.
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 promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Student Wellness and Well-Being
SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
936.468.7249
dos@sfasu.edu

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic Human Services, Room 202
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
936.468.1041

The Health and Wellness Hub “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:
• Health Services
• Counseling Services
• Student Outreach and Support
• Food Pantry
• Wellness Coaching
• Alcohol and Other Drug Education
www.sfasu.edu/thehub
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu

Crisis Resources:
• Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
• National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
• Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
• johCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741
Additional Student Resources

Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC)

The webpage for the AARC is located here. The AARC provides free tutoring help for students, including virtually. If you need help with your writing skills, this is the place to go!

The Career Closet

The Career Closet lends professional clothing to current students and alumni for job interviews, conferences, auditions, etc... See info here.

Counseling Services

The people at the counseling center are here to help with a wide range of issues including anxiety, depression, and grief. Their information can be found here. In the event of a crisis outside of business hours, please call the Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1-800-392-8343.

Disability Services

If you have a disability and require special accommodations, either during class or during exams, or both, disability services are here to help. Just remember: while we generally do everything in our power to accommodate requests, we cannot do so unless you go through the Office of Disability Services first. If you feel like this service may be of use to you, visit them as early as you can, at the start of the semester. Their information can be found here.

Food Pantry

If you are struggling with food insecurity (or, alternatively have food to donate), please consider visiting SFA's Pantry. Information about the pantry (and other pantries) is located here.

Health Clinic

As a student you can gain access to medical services through the health clinic. Information can be found here.

Veterans Resource Center

If you are a military veteran, you may find the veterans resource center helpful. Information can be found here:

This list is a work-in-progress. If you are aware of resources that you believe should be added, please let me know!
**Tentative Course Calendar**

*PLEASE NOTE:* Dates and topics will be revised if necessary. Additional reading and assignments may be given in class. Dates indicate when assignments and reading are DUE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>M 8/28</td>
<td>Course orientation, What is acting?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W 8/30</td>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F 9/1</td>
<td>How to choose a Monologue, ESP/Noble Method</td>
<td>ESP Article Reading Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>M 9/4</td>
<td>Discuss Play #1</td>
<td>Read Play #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W 9/6</td>
<td>Noble Method, Exercises</td>
<td>Async Response #1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F 9/8</td>
<td>Discuss Memorization (Asynchronous Class)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>M 9/11</td>
<td>Discuss Play #2</td>
<td>Read Play #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W 9/13</td>
<td>Discuss Monologue Selections, Open Scene</td>
<td>Async #2/ Monologue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F 9/15</td>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>M 9/18</td>
<td>Discuss Reading #1</td>
<td>Reading #1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W 9/20</td>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>Perform Open Scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F 9/22</td>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>M 9/25</td>
<td>Discuss Reading #2</td>
<td>Reading #2 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W 9/27</td>
<td>Monologue Work</td>
<td>Async Response #3 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F 9/29</td>
<td>Monologue Work, Discuss Play #3</td>
<td>Read Play #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>M 10/2</td>
<td>Monologue Work</td>
<td>Monologue Off-book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W 10/4</td>
<td>Monologue Work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F 10/6</td>
<td>Audition Technique, Monologue Work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>M 10/9</td>
<td>Monologue Work</td>
<td>Async Response #4 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W 10/11</td>
<td>Monologue Work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F 10/13</td>
<td>Attend Stage Combat Workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>M 10/16</td>
<td>Discuss Play</td>
<td>Monologue Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W 10/18</td>
<td>Monologues Performed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F 10/20</td>
<td>Exercises (Asynchronous Class)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Beginning Directing Auditions Sunday 10/22 1:00PM - ??? Location TBA**

<p>| Nine | M 10/23 | Auditions AAR                                             |
|      | W 10/25 | Exercises                                                 |
|      | F 10/27 | Exercises                                                 |
| Ten  | M 10/30 | Discuss Reading #3                                         | Reading #3 Due                    |
|      | W 11/1  | Exercises                                                 |
|      | F 11/3  | Exercises                                                 |
| Eleven| M 11/6 | Scene Work                                                 | Due Off-Book for Scene            |
|      | W 11/8  | Scene Work                                                 |
|      | F 11/10 | Scene Work                                                 |
| Twelve| M 11/13| Scene Work                                                 | Async Response #5 Due             |
|      | W 11/15 | Async Class (Thespians)                                    |
|      | F 11/17 | Async Class (Thespians)                                    |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thirteen</th>
<th>M 11/20</th>
<th>No Class – Thanksgiving</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W 11/22</td>
<td>No Class – Thanksgiving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F 11/24</td>
<td>No Class – Thanksgiving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourteen</td>
<td>M 11/27</td>
<td>No Class – Directing Scene Rehearsal</td>
<td>Class Scene Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W 11/29</td>
<td>No Class – Directing Scene Rehearsal</td>
<td>Class Scene Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F 12/1</td>
<td>No Class – Directing Scene Rehearsal</td>
<td>Class Scene Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifteen</td>
<td>M 12/4</td>
<td>No Class - Directing Scenes Performed</td>
<td>Class Scene Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W 12/6</td>
<td>No Class - Directing Scenes Performed</td>
<td>Class Scene Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F 12/8</td>
<td>No Class - Directing Scenes Performed</td>
<td>Class Scene Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixteen</td>
<td>Finals Week</td>
<td>Class Scenes Performed</td>
<td>Class Scene Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 12/15</td>
<td>8:00am – 10:00am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>