Introduction to Acting Syllabus – THTR 105
Assistant Professor Susan Pfeffer

Spring Semester 2014-Building CFA, Rm 19
Tuesday/Thursday: 1:00 – 2:15 pm
Office Hours: Wednesday: 12:00-4:00 pm
Office: CFA #144
or by appointment
Phone: 775-784-6541
Email: spfeffer@unr.edu

Acting is the ability to live truthfully under imaginary circumstances.
-Sanford Meisner

Course Objectives:

How do actors develop a charismatic three-dimensional presence? In an illumination of space, time and action, techniques for working on the body and voice will be explored in a personalized acting process. These tools identify how to become comfortable with being uncomfortable onstage and how to communicate clearly and expressively in solos (monologues), duets (scenes) and group (ensemble) activities. Through training in Alexander Technique, various vocal/physical techniques, long-standing Stanislavski approaches and introductory Viewpoints, awareness of the use of the self will create connection with collaborators, audiences, objects and spaces in the environment. The elements of theatre (props, set, lights, etc.) will enhance the vitality and presence of character/performer. In coordination with Service Learning and Silver State Fair Housing Council, acting techniques will be used in community engagement and as a tool for social change.

Student Learning Outcomes

Demonstrates a critical understanding of text and character as examined in studio practice and verbal and written responses to readings and attended plays.

Indicates a fundamental understanding of the use of the self and the ability to magnify presence through the speaking body onstage.

Shows a strong capacity for presence when listening and responding to other performers and the audience.

Exhibits informed knowledge of the main theatrical elements and how they relate to acting.

Ability to actively connect the acting process with community engagement and social awareness of discrimination.

Required Texts:
Fire Island (online) by Charles Mee at http://charlesmee.org/html/fire_island.html
Extreme Exposure: An Anthology of Solo Performance Texts from the Twentieth Century, edited by Jo Bonney
365 Days/365 Plays by Suzan-Lori Parks
Water by the Spoonful by Quiara Alegría Hudes
Chinglish by David Henry Hwang
The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later by Tectonic Theater
Love and Information by Caryl Churchill

Performance (including rehearsal outside of class):
Dance theatre piece from Fire Island-1-3 minutes
Scene #1 from Fire Island-3 minutes
Monologue from Extreme Exposure-1 minute
Scene #2 from 365 Days/365 Plays-3 minutes
Final exam: Monologue #2 from class material-1 minute
Silver State Fair Housing Council in partnership with Service Learning-Following the three hour workshop: 1 test by on-site visit or phone

Theatre & Dance Production Attendance:
Farflung Directed/devised By Susan Pfeffer
Friday, Feb. 28 at 7:30 pm Saturday, Mar. 1 at 7:30 pm
Sunday, Mar. 2 at 1:30 pm  
Wednesday, Mar. 5 at 7:30 pm
Thursday, Mar. 6 at 7:30 pm
Friday, Mar. 7 at 7:30 pm
Saturday, March 8 at 7:30 pm

The Museum Plays Student Directed One Acts
Friday, April 18 at 7:30 pm Saturday, April 19 at 7:30 pm
Sunday, April 20 at 1:30 pm

Writing Assignments (no late papers will be accepted)

Acting Experience: Due: Thursday, January 23
Write a 1-2 page paper describing your acting experience.

On Performance:
Farflung Acting Critique Due Tuesday, March 11
The Museum Plays Acting Critique Due Tuesday, April 22

Please submit a 2 page paper that discusses the actor’s choices and techniques, as well as what you saw, felt, heard during the performance. You may include an examination of the plot, theme, set, lights, props and costume in your analysis.

On Plays:
Extreme Exposure Due Thursday, January 30
Fire Island Due Thursday, February 13
Love and Information Due Tuesday, February 25
Chinglish Due Thursday, February 27
Water by the Spoonful Due Tuesday, March 4
365 Days/365 Plays Due Tuesday, April 8
The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later Due Tuesday, April 15

Please submit a one-paragraph play analysis with your questions and responses to the theatrical events, themes, plot, and style of the playwright.

Participation in Service Learning Project
In collaboration with Service Learning and the Silver State Fair Housing Council, you will participate in one community testing activity as an actor. In preparation, you will be attending one three-hour workshop and partaking in an on-site or phone test.

Grading:

Monologue #1 from *Extreme Exposure* 10%
Dance theatre piece from *Fire Island* 10%
Scene #1 from *Fire Island* 10%
Scene #2 from *365 Days/365 Plays* 20%
Monologue #2 from class material 20%
*Farflung* – Acting Critique 5%
*The Museum Plays* – Acting Critique 5%
Paragraph Play Critiques (Extreme Exposure/365 Days-1 point; all other plays-.5 points) 5%
Service Learning Project 5%
With Silver State Fair Housing

Attendance/Participation 10%

Grading Scale
95---100 A
90---94 A-
86---89 B+
83---85 B
80---82 B-
Attendance Policy
The decision to take this class includes the decision to be present every time it meets. You are granted two absences for the semester. Each additional absence drops your grade two points. Failure to attend on a performance day will result in a failing grade.

Clothing:
Wear warm, comfortable clothing, such as, yoga wear, t-shirts and sweat pants that you can move in. Do not wear skirts, jeans, jewelry or perfume/cologne. Tie your hair back away from your face. Unless it is particularly cold, we will be working in bare (clean!) feet.

Beginning of Class:
Leave gum and drinks outside. You may bring water. Approach the learning space with focus. If any objects are littering the studio, please clear them. If the floor is dirty, please sweep. Enter class quietly. Place your bags and shoes in the designated area and sit in a circle in the center of the room. Feel free to move in gentle ways that your body needs as you are waiting. Each class will begin with five minutes of meditation.

End of Class:
Please return furniture, props and chairs to their storage positions and double check that our room is clean of belongings and trash.

Academic Dishonesty:
Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to university code. Academic dishonesty is not tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student’s enrollment without a grade and giving an F for the course or for the assignment.

Disability Statement:
If you have a disability, please notify me or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

Cell Phone
Please turn off your cell phone before entering the room. Secretive videotaping or audio recording is prohibited by law and Board of Regents policy. You may video or audio tape a class with the permission of myself and the entire class. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students have been given permission to record class
lectures and discussions. Under these circumstances, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

**Schedule**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, January 21</td>
<td>Introduction/Syllabus/ Common Ground/Yes -Theatre Games</td>
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| Thursday, January 23| Focus/Attention/Memorization Sound and Movement in Lines  
1 page paper on Acting Experience |
| Tuesday, January 28| **Discuss Extreme Exposure**  
Hard copy of chosen monologue  
Warm-Up, Body/Voice  
Partnering/Tableau |
| Thursday, January 30| **Discuss Extreme Exposure**  
Rehearse monologue |
| Tuesday, February 4 | Use of the Self, Stance, Skeleton, Walking  
Rehearse monologue |
| Thursday, February 6 | **Perform monologue #1 from Extreme Exposure** |
| Tuesday, February 11| Visit from Service Learning and Silver State |
| Thursday, February 13| **Discuss Fire Island**/assign scene partner for Fire Island/work on dance-theatre piece  
Action/Objective/Obstacle |
| Tuesday, February 18| Given Circumstances-Images |
| Thursday, February 20| Character-Status  
**Perform dance-theatre piece from Fire Island** |
| Friday, February 21 | Visit from Silver State-Rm 19 from 2:00-5:00 pm |
| Tuesday, February 25| Discuss Love and Information  
Primary Control, Feelings, Endgaining, Non-doing |
<p>| Thursday, February 27| Discuss Chinglish |
| Tuesday, March 4 | Discuss Water by the Spoonful/Endowment, Subtext, Tactics |
| Thursday, March 6 | Review of Stanislavski/Alexander Technique |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, March 11</td>
<td>Rehearse <em>Fire Island</em> Scenes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 13</td>
<td><em>Farflung Acting Critique</em>/Rehearse <em>Fire Island</em> scenes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday March 18</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>Thursday, March 20</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday March 25</td>
<td>Practice Time/explore activity</td>
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<td>Thursday, March 27</td>
<td>Practice Space/explore activity</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 1</td>
<td>Practice Emotion/explore activity</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 3</td>
<td>Discuss <em>365 Days/365 Plays</em>/<em>scene partner chosen</em>/Practice Story</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 8</td>
<td>Discuss <em>365 Days/365 Plays</em>-scene chosen/Movement/Gesture</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 10</td>
<td>Props, Set, Light/Rehearse scenes</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 15</td>
<td>Discuss <em>The Laramie Project: Ten Years Later</em>/Rehearse scenes</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 17</td>
<td>Rehearse scenes</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 22</td>
<td><em>Scene #2 from 365 Days/365 Plays</em> <em>The Museum Plays Acting Critique</em></td>
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<td>Thursday, April 24</td>
<td>Service Learning visit/Rehearse Monologues</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 29</td>
<td>Rehearse Monologues</td>
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<td>Thursday, May 1</td>
<td>Rehearse Monologues</td>
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<td>Tuesday, May 6</td>
<td>Monologue #2</td>
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<td>Wednesday, May 7</td>
<td>Prep Day-No Classes</td>
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Please complete teacher evaluations on webcampus. The system will be open as a course from April 18 at 8:00 am to May 7 at 11:59 pm.