

THEA233: Acting 2

Syllabus – Fall 2026

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Virtual Office hours: Mon & Wed, 11:00-12:45 pm, & by appointment

Class Time: MW 1:00 pm -2:50 pm / **Room:** WQ 12

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this Acting 2 course students will be introduced to embodied performance and stage acting rooted in Stanislavski's system of artistic self-analysis and physical action. Specifically, students will investigate elements of Stephen Wangh's physical approach to acting based on the work of Jerzy Grotowski. Students will explore movement, voice, character and text analysis, and scene study. Class work will build with the goal of combining emotional, mental, and physical awareness towards the creation of specific performance pieces from 19th century drama. We will focus on the plays of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen and Russian playwright Anton Chekhov, where students will explore psychological depth in character work and societal critique in scene work.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. You will train in voice-body-awareness
2. You will explore embodied presence in performance, experiencing how the body informs the content moment by moment.
3. You will explore inner emotional states and personal imagery through physical and vocal improvisational play.
4. You will engage in improvisational games as a means to activate self-expression, develop imagination, enhance listening and connect with others.
5. You will investigate your creative impulse and apply it to the exploration and performance of characters and stories.

NOTE: This studio performance course is worth 3 credit hours. In general, each hour of credit requires 73 minutes of in-class work per week as well as an expected 97 minutes of out-of-class work per week for reading, rehearsal, research, group projects, and individual work by students.

ADDITIONAL TIME FOR CLASS:

Individual and group rehearsal and preparation outside of class may be necessary. The amount of extra rehearsal time will be dependent upon the nature and specific requirements of various class projects.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- *An Acrobat of the Heart: A Physical Approach to Acting Inspired by the Work of Jerzy Grotowski*, by Stephen Wangh. Vintage Books, 2000
- Monologue and Scene Work assignment (including the reading of the entire play)

*Additional readings may be handed out in class as supplemental support for further reference and research, and in relation to classroom discussions, student interests, and emerging investigations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Classroom Exercises:** Students will engage in various physical and vocal exercises. Work can be demanding, both emotionally and physically. Hence, students are expected to ‘hold the space’ adequately, even when they are not the ones performing.
2. **Performance work:** For performances, students are expected to come prepared:
 - fully memorized for scripted text
 - rehearsed and

*****NOTE:** You are NOT ALLOWED TO MISS ON THE DAY OF YOUR PERFORMANCE, whether performing in person or virtually, particularly when performing with a partner. **Missing performance dates will result in failing grades for that performance assignment. If an emergency arises that causes you to be absent, you must promptly inform both your scene partner and the teacher of the situation.** With that said:
NOTE: Please refer to Attendance Policy on page 6.
3. **Discussion Boards with the readings of *An Acrobat of the Heart***
 Students will be assigned the reading of certain chapters of *An Acrobat of the Heart*. They will then participate in graded Discussion Boards on Canvas, answering questions related to the content and their impressions of the reading. They will also respond to comments from at least three of their classmates. (Refer to the ‘Course Calendar’ section indicating chapter readings and dates of submission.)
4. **Journal Papers:** Once a month, you will be asked to hand in a Journal Paper. See below on what goes into the Journal Paper and Journal Notebook.
 - Throughout the semester you will hand in a total of 3 Journal/Reflection papers. Papers will be submitted online on the dates specified in the Course Outline.
 - **NOTE: Journals won’t be accepted after the due date. If a student fails to hand in their Journal Paper on the due date, they will receive a failing grade for that assignment.**
 - **Papers must keep to the following format:**
 - 3 full pages, double-spaced
 - Arial font only
 - 12-font size only.
 - **NOTE: Please adhere to this rule.** The Journal Papers should begin with a single line stating your name and the title as Journal Paper #.
 - e.g.: *Anna Smith, Journal paper 1*

No other introductory information is required.

- ❖ **NOTE on Journal work:** The Journal reflects your personal response to each class session. Because acting is an immediate and ephemeral experience, the journal is an aid for the actor’s discipline as it helps to clarify technical lessons. Most importantly, it is a chart of the actor’s personal creative growth and artistic gains. Therefore, keeping a Journal is an effective tool for your learning process. Aspects that you may include in the Journal:
 - A log of your work on the exercises performed during class.
 - Personal acting notes, including areas considered successful in the work as well as points to be worked on.
 - Scene and character analysis.
 - Critical analysis and technical points learned from other students’ exercises.
 - Rehearsal notes.
 - Personal experiences that affect acting.
 - Interesting observations on people/situations for character work.
 - You are expected to bring your journal to every class in order to record your learning, observations and reflections. **NOTE: Please do not mix notes for other classes in your Journal. Your Journal notebook should be exclusively for this class.**

4. Materials: You are required to bring to each class:

- Journal notebook and writing utensils
- Any handouts/texts that have been provided and are being worked with
- If desired, a yoga mat and/or Chinese kneepads for floor work exercises
 - Chinese knee pads can be found at: **contactquarterly.com**
- (Recommended) Water bottle or warm water/tea, & throat lozenges if needed.
- **NOTE:** On book chapter discussion days, you are required to bring your textbook to class – *An Acrobat of the Heart*.

5. Classroom attire:

- **All in black, with no patterns or logos on clothing**
- Clothing that is comfortable and that allows for varied movement
- Closed-toe shoes that are comfortable for classwork.
- Hair should be kept out of your face at all times.
- No jewelry or caps please.

6. Cell phones: Turned off for the duration of the class, **no calling, no texting.** Use of cell phones will reflect negatively on the student’s participation grade.

7. Additional Classroom Etiquette

- **No food is allowed during class time.**
- At the beginning of class, please place your bags, shoes and other articles neatly in the designated area. At the end of class, make sure the studio is clean and free of any objects (chairs, tables, bags, etc.) used during class time. **We must leave the room clear and ready for any other group that may use it.**

- Please observe a working environment while in the studio space and keep all conversation focused on our class material.
- Please maintain good hygiene in respect of others (showering, using clean clothes, brushing teeth, etc.).
- If you have concerns during a particular exercise, it is your responsibility to speak up and notify the instructor. Exercises may be altered depending on the needs of the student. Please read below.

PHYSICAL INTERACTION & STAGE VIOLENCE POLICY

Depending on what arises from improvisational acting work, this class may or may not contain scene work that involves stage violence or physical / sexual intimacy. This material will always be approached with the priority on clear communication of expectations, clear consent of all performers, and a respect for student safety. At the beginning of the semester, you will be asked for your consent regarding stage violence or physical intimacy. If physical interaction with other students is not a part of your learning process or makes you uncomfortable, notify your instructor immediately so that accommodations can be made. Physical contact by anyone in the classroom should not and will not be used to demean you in any way and will only take place once clear and enthusiastic consent has been obtained. Any scenes involving violence or physical intimacy will be fully blocked / choreographed in class under instructor supervision. Any rehearsal of this material outside of class must follow the existing blocking / choreography exactly. If you are ever uncomfortable with a specific scene, exercise, or partner, notify your instructor immediately. If you are uncomfortable speaking with your instructor, contact departmental Associate Chair Tyler Smith (tasmith2@bsu.edu).

Your consent and mental/emotional wellbeing are paramount. We recognize and respect your right to decline participation in scenes involving violence or physical intimacy, especially in cases of recent/short-term trauma, and you are not obligated to disclose the reason for declining. That said, you have chosen a major (and a career) that will require your involvement with a wide range of material - some of which you may find uncomfortable. Your ability to successfully navigate this material may impact your career.

TACTILE TEACHING STATEMENT

Studio theatre courses often require the instructor to touch or be in close physical proximity to students in order to adjust/align the body and guide the student on how to best execute the material. The instructor will always verbally request student consent before touching them. If, for whatever reason, being touched or physically adjusted is not part of a student's learning process or makes them uncomfortable, please let the course instructor know as soon as possible so that accommodations can be made. If a student is uncomfortable speaking with the instructor, they should contact the departmental Associate Chair, Tyler Smith (tasmith2@bsu.edu).

COURSE POLICIES

GRADING POLICY

- a) 25% Class Participation demonstrated through:
- active participation in **class discussions** through the articulation of questions, observations and comments on class activities and performance work of self and others.
 - attention to the work of other classmates and the ability to offer constructive feedback.
 - a receptive attitude
 - preparedness
 - staying focused
- b) 25% Discussion Boards
- c) 25% Performance work
- d) 25% Journal Papers

The lowest acceptable grade in a course for credit toward a major or minor in Theatre and Dance is a C. Any student receiving a C- or lower must retake the course in order to receive credit towards a major or minor in the department. If a course is repeated, the university will record the higher grade.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. ATTENDANCE

As a department, we believe that in order to excel in class you have to be in class. Regular class attendance is vital for success and for developing the work ethic necessary to succeed in the professional world. As such, we maintain a rigorous attendance policy.

a. Allowable absences

The number of allowable absences for this course is 2. Each absence over the 2 allowed will affect your participation grade by two letter grades up to C, as follows:

- 3 absences total = B
- 4 absences total = B-
- 5 absences total = C
- 6 absences total = withdrawal from the course

Six absences in the course are equivalent to missing three weeks of class, which makes it very hard to truly take advantage of the learning opportunities in this course.

NOTE: Excused absences are ONLY allowed for the following: *religious holiday; death in the family (number of days per University handbook), pregnancy, jury duty, active military duty; and an EXTENDED and DOCUMENTED absence related to illness or health issues (mono, broken leg,*

pneumonia, etc.). For all EXTENDED illness related absences, students MUST receive a note from their medical professional. Colds, flu bugs, and other common illness issues are NOT excused. Rather, they are part of your allotted absences for each course.

b. Zoom attendance

Acting 2 is an in-person course, therefore taking class via Zoom is **only meant for extreme cases** when the student cannot be physically present. Students in this course should not expect to attend this class via Zoom more than 2 times during the semester (unless seriously ill). If you Zoom in to class, please make sure you are ready to connect **five minutes before the start of class**. Connecting at 3 pm when the class starts means you are late to class.

In addition, no grade of “W” will be given to a student after midterm, unless they are earning a grade of “C” at the time of withdrawal. No grade of “I” will be given to a student who is flunking. Although this is the department policy, instructors are responsible for their individual attendance policies. Further, faculty members have the prerogative to ask students to drop any class if the student has a perpetual absence problem; this is regardless of whether or not the absences incurred are excused or unexcused.

NOTE: If you have cold/flu-like symptoms, please wear a mask to class.

2. Tardies

In addition to being in class, students are required to be there on time. Therefore, tardies are not accepted, and three instances of lateness will add up to one unexcused absence.

If an emergency happens and you must be absent or tardy, please email the teachers beforehand.

NOTE: You will not be allowed to join class if you arrive after 10 minutes.

In addition, no grade of “W” will be given to a student after the midterm, unless they have a grade of “D” at the time of withdrawal. No grade of “I” will be given to a student who is flunking. Faculty members have the prerogative to ask students to drop any course if the student has a perpetual absence problem; this is regardless of whether the absences incurred are excused or unexcused.

FEEDBACK POLICY

- I will try to return email from your official BSU address within 24 hours during business days and within 48 hours on the weekend.
- I will read your monthly journal submissions and weekly discussion posts. This is an excellent way for me to follow each student's personal creative progress, and it allows me to better serve your pedagogical needs and answer your inquiries related to class work. Note that I don't always personally comment on the journals and posts.
- I will make every effort to read and grade your journal assignments no later than within 8 business days of submission.

- Please feel free to email me at any time throughout the course if you have any questions or concerns about your performance in class.
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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- All students are expected to act with civility, personal integrity, and respect for other students' dignity, rights and property.
 - Academic integrity includes a commitment to not engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception, such as: cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another person's work as one's own, using Internet sources without citation, taking or having another student take your exam, tampering with the work of another student, facilitating other students' acts of academic dishonesty.
 - Sanctions for breaches in academic integrity may range, depending on the severity of the offense, from an "F" grade on an assignment or test to an "F" in the course.
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NO GENERATIVE AI USE

All work conducted and/or submitted in this course should reflect your own ideas and demonstrate your current knowledge, abilities, and skills. Therefore, generative AI should not be used to complete any portion of the assignment(s). Doing so constitutes a violation of Ball State University's Student Academic Ethics Policy.

INCLUSIVITY, COURSE ACCOMMODATIONS, CANVAS ACCESSIBILITY, AND YOUR PRIVACY

UNIVERSITY INCLUSIVITY AND ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse.

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's [Disability Services](#) [Links to an external site.](#) office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

ACCOMMODATIONS STATEMENT

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CANVAS ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Canvas provides a user experience that is easy, simple, and intuitive. Special attention has been paid to making Canvas screen-readable. The Rich Content Editor encourages users to create accessible content pages (i.e. text formatting is accomplished using styles). Canvas is designed to allow limited customization of colors and schemes to be accessible for all users. The National Federation of the Blind granted Canvas the Gold Level Web Certification in 2010.

Find more information by visiting the [Canvas Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

FERPA AND PRIVACY STATEMENT

As a student, your educational records are considered confidential. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most circumstances, your records will not be released without your written and signed consent. However, some directory information may be released to third parties without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file. You can learn more about student rights to privacy by reading [Ball State's FERPA and Privacy and Protection](#).

ADDENDUM 1 - ZOOM TIPS for CLASS

The overall goal is to create a quiet space in which you can rehearse with little to no distraction for you, the class ensemble, and the director.

1. SPACE

- Size: At least a 6 x 6 foot square, preferably more. Arrange your furniture to create open space on the floor. Beds in corners? Bunk the beds?
- Clean: Move items out of your way and out of view of the camera.
- View: Limit pictures, posters, etc. in the background so we may focus on you.
- Chair: Have a chair to sit in for class. Do not sit on the bed or lounge.

2. LIGHT

- Keep the light source in front of you and not behind you.
- Get a lamp and set it just behind the camera. Test the lighting in Zoom

3. SOUND

- Find a space that is quiet. Close doors and do not allow pets in the space.
- Turn off your phone; **place it somewhere where you do not have access to it**.
- Turn off sound notifications on your computer.
- Please follow the Zoom preferences of the Director. DO I use chat? No. To mute or not to mute? Ask.

4. DRESS and FORM

- Use black clothing required for class in your Zoom sessions.
- Have hair pulled away from the face.
- No jewelry.
- Sit upright in a chair and do not lounge on a bed or the floor unless work is taking place on the floor.
- **Do not eat while we are rehearsing. Take snacks during break time.**

5. TOOLS

- Have the hardcopy of your script available at every rehearsal.
- Have a notebook to take notes, not the computer so that you can keep your notes separate from the device catching you on zoom.
- Have all devices charged and/or plugged in.
- Make sure the device capturing you on Zoom is stable and at a good height. Try not to use your phone for Zoom if possible.
- Have a water bottle.

6. THE SHOT

- Test your shot- when listening make sure your computer is at eye level not below or above you.
- Test your shot- when working make sure the camera catches you at least from the waist up and can capture your entire form if necessary.
- PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE test all of this prior to rehearsal beginning. Watching you constantly adjust the screen is a waste of time and speaks to a lack of preparation. Know your shots, spaces, and distances prior to class beginning.

- Join the rehearsal early; test OR zoom a fellow actor & work it all out together.

7. ETIQUETTE

- Ask the teacher for their preferences.
- Do not take any screenshots or record without the permission of the director.
- Do not have private side chats with your colleagues.

TREAT A ZOOM CLASS/REHEARSAL AS IF YOU WERE IN PERSON. It's hard to work on camera and your respect can help your colleagues grow and work.

