

THEA 233: ACTING 2

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Office hours: By appointment only

The information presented in the syllabus is subject to change with adequate notification.

COURSE ANALYSIS

Intensive scene and character analysis with the goal of honing the actor's personal technique. Class will culminate in a final presentation of a scene as an ensemble.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

With this course, you will explore more approaches and interpretations of the Stanislavski system, diving confidently into script and character analysis—through theatre exercises, scene work, improvisation, class discussion, and examination of contemporary literature—to expand your voice, body, and imagination while sharpening your artistic and aesthetic awareness of theatrical storytelling.

REQUIRED TEXTS (all available on Canvas)

- Excerpted readings from:
 - *The Art of Acting* (Stella Adler)
 - *The Acting Book* (John Abbott)
 - *The Actor and the Target* (Declan Donnellan)
 - *Audition* (Michael Shurtleff)
- Various assigned scenes and scripts (including *Metamorphoses* by Mary Zimmerman)

ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECTS

- **Contribution to Learning:** Acting is not a mystery. It is a set of skills, the skills of a storyteller. While some may have better instruments than others—naturally resonant voices, physical prowess, and active imaginations—we are all storytellers. This is an opportunity to practice and explore the craft of acting in the safety and security of the classroom, free from prejudice and marginalization. As talent is subjective, you will never be graded on it or on your expertise. Rather, it is your effort and commitment to all class and performance work that will be evaluated.

Acting class is a laboratory for exploration and discovery, and as such, we must all work to protect ourselves and our colleagues at our most vulnerable. Therefore, it's important for us to be respectful and critique each other's work objectively, and in doing so, learn to clarify and reflect on our own techniques. We focus on the practical aspects of working on contemporary texts and conveying the intention of the script rather than making personal choices for our colleagues. We critique the performance, not the person. If anyone ever feels unsafe in class for any reason, please speak with me immediately.

All reading assignments are discussed as a class. Please take notes as you read and be prepared to share your thoughts and opinions with the class. Again, we are always respectful of our classmates' opinions, just as we wish them to be respectful of ours.

On scene days, all partners must be present and ready to work to receive a grade. All scene and monologues must be prepared on time. Scenes must be memorized by the second in-class rehearsal, and monologues by the first. You may use scripts for the initial readthrough/work-through, but after that, no scripts will be permitted onstage. Make-up scenes will be at the instructor's discretion. Scripts and texts must be printed so that notes and adjustments may be written in the margins.

- **Dress-Up Days:** There are three dress-up days over the course of the semester: You Are Your Parent, You Are Your Friend, and You Are a Character from Literary Fiction. For each of these days, you will assume the personality of the assigned character, both physically, vocally, and emotionally, with full costumes and props. Each character will make an assigned presentation.
- **LAB:** As stated, the classroom is “a laboratory for exploration and discovery.” During this assigned time, we investigate methods, play games, and explore exercises to deepen and refine our skills as actors. Please bring your best and most curious selves to these sessions. Whether improvisations, games, and exercises, or clearly defined systems of working, each LAB requires we bring open minds and hearts to the process.
- **Verbal In-Class Criticism:** Students are encouraged to provide their peers with helpful feedback. To tell someone his or her scene was “great” or “I really liked it” is nice but not particularly helpful. We must learn how to critique each other appropriately and beneficially, and (perhaps more importantly) learn to accept criticism (in all its forms) and apply it to our own work. In this class, we critique the performance, not the person. We ask permission before we offer our opinion with the understanding that it may not be wished for, and we accept that graciously. If anyone ever feels personally attacked in class, please speak with me immediately.
- **Creative Projects:** There will be **in-class activities, games, and exercises** as well as **one scene and two monologues**, assigned as a part of an individual student's classwork. All students will participate in the...
- **Final Project:** With your class partners, you will perform **an ensemble scene from Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses***. The scene will be staged, appropriately costumed, and fully memorized.
- **NOTE:** If you are having difficulties finishing any assignment and come to me 24 hours before it's due, I will try to adjust the due date for you. However, if you come to me less than 24 hours before an assignment is due, there is nothing I can do. Stay focused. Be proactive.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

- I promise to do my best to return email from your official BSU address within 24 hours during business days and within 48 hours on the weekend.
- I'll make every effort to grade your assignments for class no later than within 10 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.

UNIVERSITY and DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Ball State University is 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](#) 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.

ATTENDANCE

As this class meets 2 days per week, students are permitted, according to university policy, **2 unexcused absences** for the semester. Your third unexcused absence will result in a 10% grade deduction for the semester. No exceptions. Every subsequent unexcused absence will be an additional 10% deduction. When you reach your 6th absence, it is no longer possible to achieve the course learning outcomes. There are two options at this point: 1. You will receive an "F" in the course. 2. You may request an Incomplete in the course. To do this, you must provide paperwork regarding hospitalization, extensive illness, recurring absences due to mental health issues as documented by a letter from Disability Services, or other documented issue that has caused your excessive absences. If your documentation is approved, your GPA will NOT be impacted and will be required to complete the coursework in a future semester. Those details will be worked out on an individual basis.

The **ONLY** excused absences are religious holidays; 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 produce a note from their medical professional.**

NOTE: The university is no longer processing and/or vetting excused absences for COVID, just as an absence for the flu, cold, etc. would not be excused.

In addition to being in class, students are required to be there on time. **Tardiness is not acceptable.** Class starts on the hour, and **three (3) instances of lateness will add up to one unexcused absence.** NOTE: If an emergency happens and you must be absent or tardy, you are responsible for contacting me by way of our GroupMe chat as soon as possible.

I check my email twice a day: in the morning and in the evening. If you are running late, please do not email me. I will not see it if you try and email me during the day. Instead, text the class by way of our GroupMe thread immediately. Do not wait until class has already started to get in touch. Give me your ETA, and then stick to that time. If you accrue more than 3 late excuses, they will be registered in my attendance book as one absence.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty – both intentional and unintentional – is an offense that the university takes very seriously, as do I. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to know what constitutes academic dishonesty. The university, the department, and I have provided numerous resources to help you with this. If you want to check something with me personally, don't hesitate. Just don't say, after the fact, "I didn't know that counted as plagiarism." That's unacceptable.

MINIMUM GRADE POLICY

The lowest acceptable grade in a course for credit toward a major or minor in Theatre or Dance is C. Any student receiving a C- or lower must retake the course to receive credit towards a major or minor in the department.

TACTILE/PHYSICAL INTERACTION TEACHING STATEMENT

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

COURSE EVALUATIONS

You are expected to complete a course evaluation prior to the final class session. These evaluations are essential to the development of the acting curriculum and are required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for Belmont to maintain its accreditation and, therefore, the value of everyone’s degrees.

GRADING

Recorded grades will be uploaded online.

Grading Breakdown:

Scene/Monologue Work	50%
Ensemble Work	25%
<u>Class Participation</u>	<u>25%</u>
	100%

Grading Scale:

A: 94-100%	A-: 90-93
B+: 87-89	B: 84-86
B-: 80-83	C: 74-76
C+: 77-79	C-: 70-73
D+: 67-69	D: 64-66
	D-: 60-63

Earn the Grade You Want

- A:** All assignments are completed on time. Each demonstrates thoughtfulness with attention to detail.
- B:** All assignments are completed on time. Each demonstrates thoughtfulness.
- C:** All assignments are completed on time.
- D:** An attempt was made to finish the work.
- F:** No work was turned in.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

JANUARY

Monday, 5: Course Introduction

- Introductions: Syllabus, course design, and expectations
- **LAB:** Ensemble games

HOMEWORK DUE: January 7

- Read “Acting Is Doing” from *The Art of Acting* (Adler) and “The Character Questionnaire” from *The Acting Book* (Abbott). Both are available on Canvas.
- Come to class prepared to move and to sweat. No skirts or short shorts, please. No tight jeans. No hard sole shoes or heels. No sandals or flip flops. Sweats and sneakers are best.

Wednesday, 7: Discuss “Acting Is Doing” from *The Art of Acting* (Adler) and “The Character Questionnaire” from the *Acting Book* (Abbott).

- **LAB:** Games and exercises focusing on Observation and Specificity.

HOMEWORK DUE: January 12

- Prepare to come to class in character as one of your parents. You must dress and act like them for the duration of the class. This is not a comic impression. You must embody and improvise with others as your parent. Prepare a one-minute presentation of a hobby or interest as that parent. Bring or demonstrate evidence of this skill or talent to the class. In other words, don’t just talk about it; show us. Imagine this as a high school reunion. Use the “The Character Questionnaire to answer as many questions as you can.
- Read Chapter 10: “Identity, Persona, and the Mask” from *The Actor and the Target* (Donnellan), available on Canvas and be prepared to discuss it.
- Write down the five identifying and five un-identifying characteristics that you most associate with the parent/guardian you play for us. Your choices should come from information you know and what others say about them. Start with the Given Circumstances (name, age, occupation, etc.), and then let your imagination fill in any blanks and get you to the essence of your parent’s character.

Monday, 12: You Are Your Parent Day

- Come to class in character as one of your parents. You must stay in character for the duration of the class, improvising with your classmates. Present your two-minute demonstration of a hobby or interest, demonstrating evidence of that skill or talent.
- Discuss Chapter 10: “Identity, Persona, and the Mask” from *The Actor and the Target*.
- Share the ten identifying and un-identifying characteristics of your parent’s character. Be prepared to answer questions and to defend your choices with examples.
- Discuss Stage One of the Physical Life Project.

HOMEWORK DUE: January 14

- Prepare your Stage One of the Physical Life Project to perform in class. You will find the full instructions on Canvas.

Wednesday, 14: Present your Stage One version of the Physical Life Project for class. Commit to the story you have created with specificity and detail.

- As you observe your classmates, take detailed notes on everyone's behavior. Identify what you see without passing judgment. You only get one shot to watch them without self-awareness.

NO HOMEWORK DUE: January 19

Monday, 19: MARTIN LUTHER KING JR'S BIRTHDAY/NO CLASSES

HOMEWORK DUE: January 21

- Think about your personal experience with Stage One of the Physical Life Project. Write down your assessment of your work and be prepared to share it with the class.
- Review your notes regarding your subject's presentation. Be as detailed as possible in what you observed. How did they answer the questions of the Physical Life Project? What were their rhythms and tempos? Where was their center?
- Write out their scenario as if it were a script. Be as detailed as possible.
 - Who or what was the target? Were the stakes high?
- You may have reservations about portraying a classmate. You may worry it will seem cruel or condescending. Do not worry. It won't. Your subjects will enjoy seeing themselves portrayed honestly and fairly. And they'll get new information about themselves from your observations, and for that, they will be grateful. Besides, this is not a comic impression but a genuine portrayal of a studied character. Be prepared to discuss your choices with the class.

Wednesday, 21: Present your Stage Two version of the Physical Life Project. Commit to the observations and choices you have made with specificity and detail. This is not a comic impression but a genuine portrayal of a studied character. Be prepared to discuss your choices.

- Be prepared to defend the choices you have made with specificity and detail. This is not a comic impression but a genuine portrayal of a studied character. Be prepared to discuss your choices.

HOMEWORK DUE: January 26

- Prepare to come to class as a friend of a gender or identity different from yours. You must dress and stay in character for the duration of class, improvising with your classmates. This is not a comic impression. You must embody this person as a character. Use the Given Circumstances that you know of this person, and then fill in the gaps with your imagination.
- Prepare sixteen measures of their all-time favorite song. You will sing this for the class in character. If you need accompaniment, have it queued and ready to go. Explain to us why this is song is "so amazing." Imagine this as a mega-fan gathering.
- Write down the identifying/un-identifying characteristics and "Character Questionnaire" answers. Consider their center, tempo, and rhythm. Prepare to discuss your process.

Monday, 26: You Are Your Friend Day

- Come to class as a friend of a gender or identity different from yours. You must dress and stay in character for the duration of the in-class assignment, improvising with others in class. This is not a comic impression. You must embody and improvise with others as this person. Present a three-minute talk about a favorite band or musician and why they get you so damn excited. Cite a treasured concert experience or album. Sing sixteen measures of their all-time favorite song.
- Discuss your process with the class.
- **LAB:** Distribution of scenes and partners.

HOMEWORK DUE: January 28

- Read the assigned play. Apply the techniques you learned last semester—objectives, tactics, playing to win—as well as what you’ve learned over the past few weeks. Using the Given Circumstances of the play, write down the identifying and un-identifying characteristics and answers to “The Character Questionnaire.” Determine their center, rhythm, and tempo.
- Schedule time with your partner to read and rehearse your scene. As you stage it, make specific choices regarding the physical space. Share as much of your personal choices with your partner as you feel comfortable to be in the same world of the play.

Wednesday, 28: Present the first round of scenes to the class. You may carry a book for this first round, but be on your feet, rehearsed and prepared.

FEBRUARY**HOMEWORK DUE: February 2**

- Continue to rehearse your scenes and memorize your text. Apply the notes you’ve received in class. Dig deeper into the physical and emotional life of your character.

Monday, 2: Continue to present the first round of scenes to the class. You may carry a book for this first round, but be on your feet, rehearsed and prepared.

HOMEWORK DUE: February 4

- Continue to rehearse your scenes and memorize your text. Apply the notes you’ve received in class. Dig deeper into the physical and emotional life of your character.

Wednesday, 4: Continue to present scenes to the class. Your text is memorized, and you are filling out the physical and emotional life of your characters.

HOMEWORK DUE: February 9

- Continue to rehearse your scenes and memorize your text. Apply the notes you’ve received in class. Dig deeper into the physical and emotional life of your character.

Monday, 9: Continue to present scenes to the class. Your text is memorized, and you are filling out the physical and emotional life of your characters.

HOMEWORK DUE: February 11

- Continue to rehearse your scenes and memorize your text. Apply the notes you’ve received in class. Dig deeper into the physical and emotional life of your character.

Wednesday, 11: Continue to present scenes to the class. Your text is memorized, and you are filling out the physical and emotional life of your characters.

HOMEWORK DUE: February 16

- Continue to rehearse your scenes and memorize your text. Apply the notes you’ve received in class. Dig deeper into the physical and emotional life of your character.

Monday, 16: Continue to present scenes to the class. Your text is memorized, and you are filling out the physical and emotional life of your characters.

HOMEWORK DUE: February 18

- Rehearse to present your final scenes. They must be fully staged, costumed, and memorized with all the props you will need. There must be no pantomiming.

Wednesday, 18: Present your final scenes for a grade.

HOMEWORK DUE: February 23

- Prepare to come to class as a favorite character from literary fiction. You must dress and stay in character for the duration of the class, improvising with others. This is not a comic impression. You must embody this person to your best ability.
- Write down the identifying and un-identifying characteristics as well as answers to “The Character Questionnaire.” Consider their center as well as their tempo and rhythm. Fill out the physical and emotional life of the character. Prepare to discuss your process with the class.
- Prepare a one-minute “how to” demonstration of a manual task, something at which they would excel. Imagine this is a job fair for unemployed fictional characters.

Monday, 23: You Are a Character from Literary Fiction Day

- Come to class as a character from literature. You must dress and stay in character for the duration of the class, improvising with your classmates. This is not a comic impression. You must embody this person to the best of your ability. Present a two-minute “how to” demonstration of a manual task, something at which this character would excel. Imagine this is a job fair for unemployed fictional characters.
- Discuss your process with the class.

NO HOMEWORK DUE: February 25

- Come to class prepared to move. That means sweats, leggings, and sneakers. You’ll be on the floor for much of the class, so remember to layer appropriately.

Wednesday, 25: LAB: Metamorphosis exercise.

MARCH

SPRING BREAK/NO CLASSES

March 2-6, 2026

HOMEWORK DUE: March 9

- Read “Monologues, Soliloquies, Style” from *Audition* (Shurtleff)
- Choose two contrasting one-minute contemporary monologues, memorize, and prepare them for class. List the identifying/un-identifying characteristics and answer the “Questionnaire.” Be specific and detailed.

Monday, 9: Discuss “Monologues, Soliloquies, Style” from *Audition* (Shurtleff)

- Present your contrasting monologues for the class and discuss your process.

HOMEWORK DUE: March 11

- Continue to rehearse your contrasting monologues. Apply your notes from class and adjusting your list of characteristics and answers to the “Questionnaire.”

Wednesday, 11: Present your contrasting monologues for the class.

HOMEWORK DUE: March 16

- Choose two new contrasting one-minute contemporary monologues, memorize, and prepare them for class. List the identifying/un-identifying characteristics and answer the “Questionnaire.” Be specific and detailed.

Monday, 16: Present your contrasting monologues for the class and discuss your process.

HOMEWORK DUE: March 18

- Continue to rehearse your contrasting monologues. Apply your notes from class and adjusting your list of characteristics and answers to the “Questionnaire.”

Wednesday, 18: Present your contrasting monologues for the class and discuss your process.

HOMEWORK DUE: March 23

- Download *Metamorphoses* (Zimmerman) from Canvas for class.

Monday, 23: Read *Metamorphoses* (Zimmerman) aloud in class.

HOMEWORK DUE: March 25

- Research two of the myths from *Metamorphoses* —what are the origins, how close is Zimmerman’s adaption to the original, etc.—and prepare to share your findings to the class.

Wednesday, 25: Finish reading *Metamorphoses* aloud in class.

- Share the findings of your research with the class.
- Receive assignments for your final scene.

HOMEWORK DUE: March 30

- Research your character(s) from *Metamorphoses*. List the identifying/un-identifying characteristics and answer the “Questionnaire.” Prepare to discuss your findings in class. Begin memorization process.

Monday, 30: Discuss your character work with the class.

- **LAB:** Begin rehearsals for your final scene from *Metamorphoses*.

APRIL

HOMEWORK DUE: April 1

Begin memorization process for your *Metamorphoses* scene.

Wednesday, 1: Warm-up and rehearse your *Metamorphoses* final scene in class with your partners.

HOMEWORK DUE: April 6

- Continue memorizing your text from *Metamorphoses*. Dig deeper into the physical and emotional life of your character(s). Meet with scene partners to discuss choices.

Monday, 6: Warm-up and rehearse *Metamorphoses* in class.

- **LAB:** Devising exercise for your scene.

HOMEWORK DUE: April 8

- Continue memorizing your text from *Metamorphoses*. Dig deeper into the physical and emotional life of your character(s). Meet with scene partners to discuss choices and run lines.

Wednesday, 8: Warm-up and rehearse *Metamorphoses* in class.

- **LAB:** Devising exercise for your scene.

HOMEWORK DUE: April 13

- Get completely off-book for *Metamorphoses*. Meet with scene partners to run lines. Continue to ask questions, refining your choices. Remember to bring props and costume pieces to class.

Monday, 13: Warm-up and rehearse *Metamorphoses* in class. You may call for line. Incorporate some props and costume pieces into the play.

- **LAB:** Devising exercise for your scene

HOMEWORK DUE: April 15

- Get completely off-book for *Metamorphoses*. Meet with scene partners to run lines. Continue to ask questions, refining your choices.

Wednesday, 15: Warm-up and rehearse *Metamorphoses* in class. You may call for line. Incorporate some props and costume pieces into the play.

- **LAB:** Devising exercise for your scene.

HOMEWORK DUE: April 20

- Be completely off-book for *Metamorphoses*. Meet with scene partners to run lines. Continue to ask questions, refining your choices. Remember to bring props and costume pieces to class.

Monday, April 20: Warm-up and rehearse *Metamorphoses* in class, using some props and costume pieces. No more calling for line.

HOMEWORK DUE: April 22

- Be completely off-book for *Metamorphoses*. Meet with scene partners to run lines. Continue to ask questions, refining your choices.

Wednesday, 22: Warm-up and rehearse the final dress of *Metamorphoses* text in class, using props and costume pieces. No more calling for line.

HOMEWORK DUE: April 27

- Prepare for the final performance of *Metamorphoses*. Find all last-minute costumes and props. Continue to ask questions and refine your performance.

Monday, 27: The last day of class and the final performance of *Metamorphoses*.

FINALS and SUMMER BREAK