

SYLLABUS

THP 194: Understanding Acting (iCourse) - Fall 2017, Session A

School of Film, Dance and Theatre

Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, Arizona State University

Course Site: <https://understandingacting.hol.asu.edu/>

Herberger Online Helpdesk: <https://courses.hol.asu.edu/help/>

Instructor: Joya Scott, MFA

Office: West Hall 246

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-4pm or by appointment

Email: UnderstandingActing@asu.edu

IMPORTANT:

Please read this syllabus carefully, as it describes the course requirements in detail.

If you proceed with this course, you are responsible for the information contained in this document.

Before contacting the instructor with questions during our course, please first check this syllabus and the course site.

Course Description

In this online course, students will analyze great performances of stage and screen, learn how the best actors train and practice their craft, and improve their skill in working with actors by learning how actors work.

Course Objectives

- To aid students in developing an understanding of acting history, styles, and techniques
- To give students the tools to cultivate a critical eye and a vocabulary for evaluating acting choices in the work they see
- To help students of all disciplines understand the actor's craft and creativity and work more effectively with actors

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to...

- Identify key moments in the evolution of major Western acting techniques
- Compare and contrast styles of acting
- Analyze an actor's performance in the context of a larger work of theatre or film
- Compare and contrast the methods and goals of various types of actor training
- Apply several script analysis and research tools actors use when approaching a role
- Identify a character's dramatic function in a script
- Understand how actors use objectives, tactics, and other tools of the Stanislavskian tradition to create a performance

Required Texts and Video Materials

- Required Textbook Purchases:
 - *FLIXACTING, Volumes 1 and 2* by Joe Olivieri and Catherine Telford. This is a multimedia ebook available via Adobe Digital Editions. You must buy both volumes at flixacting.com and download and install the free ebook reader software directly from [Adobe](http://Adobe.com).
 - [Digital course pack](#)

- All other videos, films, book excerpts, and articles will be provided by the instructor or available for free via the ASU library e-reserves or on the internet.

Course Expectations and Student Responsibilities

Online Course Responsibilities:

- **IMPORTANT:** This is an online course delivered entirely via the internet. **You should proceed with this course *only* if you have previous computer and internet experience and you're willing and able to assume the added personal responsibility of completing an online course.**
- It is your responsibility to ensure you have adequate computer resources and fast enough internet service to view course materials, use the required multimedia textbook and course pack, and complete all online activities, screenings, assignments, etc.
- If your computer or internet service malfunctions at any time during the semester, it is your responsibility to locate adequate resources elsewhere or to withdraw from the course.
- I strongly recommend you do not wait until the last minute to submit your assignments, just in case of internet service disruptions at your location or other technical problems. Requests for extensions due to computer or internet malfunctions may not be granted.
- **If you have technical questions or difficulties with the course site, please do not contact the instructor;** instead, submit a ticket via the [Herberger Online Helpdesk](#).
- If you have any issues purchasing, downloading, or accessing the *FLIXACTING* ebook or using the Adobe Digital Editions software, please contact the publisher and/or [Adobe](#) for technical support. Herberger Online does not administer this resource directly, and the instructor cannot provide technical support for this application.
- If you have any issues purchasing, downloading, or accessing the course pack, please contact XanEdu at 800-218-5971.

Instructor Information and Email Policy:

- If you have questions about the course content or need extra help, please feel free to contact me via email, stop by my office hours, or set up an in-person or Skype meeting. However, I do ask that you first re-read this syllabus and the check the course site, as the answer to your question may be there.
- **If you need to reach Joya with questions about this course, please email UnderstandingActing@asu.edu.** If you contact me by other means, I can't guarantee a timely response.
- I will reply to emails as soon as possible, but please allow at least 24 to 48 hours for a response during the busiest times of the semester.

Course Content and Assessment:

- This course assumes you are prepared to read and write, as well as watch and analyze films, in English at the college level.
- Please review the Rubric for Written Work and ASU School of Film, Dance and Theatre Writing Standards (available on the course site) for a detailed description of the writing expectations for this course. In all your written work, you will be graded on the ideas you present, the degree to which you draw upon course materials, and the clarity of your written expression. Please make sure to organize your thoughts in advance and proofread carefully.
- Our course materials include many examples from the canon of great performances of stage and screen from the last century. You will also read and analyze at least one play by a respected contemporary playwright. Some of the above contain vulgar language or adult content. If watching or reading such material is a concern for you, please contact the instructor immediately.

Workload, Course Schedule, and Late Work Policy:

- This course is made up of three units plus a final exam. Each unit consists of a series of lessons, and each lesson includes videos, readings from the textbook and/or other sources, and at least one graded assessment. You should complete all the assigned reading and viewing assignments in a lesson before you attempt the graded assessment for that lesson.
- Graded assessments in this course include quizzes, worksheets, discussion board posts, short essays, a final exam with essay questions, and a self-evaluation. Please **download the document entitled “Assessment Due Dates & Point Breakdowns” from the course home page** to view this session’s full list of graded assignments and due dates.
- **IMPORTANT: You must be willing and able to devote several hours each week to this class in order to complete it successfully.** This is an accelerated course; it covers three credits worth of material in just half a semester! You will be required to complete significant reading and writing assignments and view several films and videos. **Most weeks, graded assessments will be due on both Wednesdays and Saturdays.** You won’t receive reminders for every assignment; rather, **it’s your responsibility to keep track of due dates and plan the time to complete each lesson.** Before proceeding with the course, please consider your schedule for this semester carefully and ensure you have enough time to participate fully.
- Check your [MyASU](#) page for the current drop/add period dates and this class’ withdrawal deadline. (Since this is a half-semester course, note that the withdrawal deadline may be only a few days after the start of the class.)
- If it’s *before* an assignment’s due date: If you need an extension for an assignment and have a legitimate explanation for requiring extra time, please email me at least 24 hours before it’s due. Such extensions are not guaranteed and are at the instructor’s discretion.
- If it’s *after* an assignment’s due date: In general, late work will not be accepted except in the case of a serious medical issue or personal/family emergency. If such an event has occurred, please email me as soon as possible. Include proof in the form of a doctor’s note or other documentation if available, and I will give you a make-up for any assignments you missed due to the illness/emergency.

Academic Integrity:

- Plagiarism is not acceptable. Plagiarism is defined as presenting the work of another as one’s own. To avoid plagiarism, you should always cite carefully when you use information from a source in your written work.
- **IMPORTANT:** In your written work for this course, please use MLA format and cite all external sources using parenthetical in-text citations and a Works Cited list. (Information on how to use MLA format is available [here](#).) Please note that Wikipedia is not an accepted source for assignments in this class.
- Plagiarism is not the only possible violation of academic integrity. Please review [ASU’s academic integrity policies](#) for an explanation of each type of violation.
- Students who violate academic integrity may receive a failing grade for the assignment in question or, in the case of a severe violation, a failing grade for the course.

Accommodations:

- To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the [ASU Disability Resource Center](#). This is a very important step as accommodations may be difficult to make retroactively. If you have a letter from the DRC indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, please email this documentation to me no later than the end of the first week of the session so that your needs can be addressed effectively.

Course Outline (See course site for content, detailed guidelines, and due dates.)

Unit 1: Acting History and Acting Styles

- Lesson 1: The Actor's Job
- Lesson 2: The History of Acting
- Lesson 3: Styles of Acting/Great Performances #1
- Lesson 4: An Actor Prepares

Unit 2: Character Research and Script Analysis

- Lesson 1: The Actor's Homework
- Lesson 2: Given Circumstances
- Lesson 3: Understanding A Character's Traits and Needs
- Lesson 4: Objectives
- Lesson 5: Great Performances #2

Unit 3: The Actor at Work

- Lesson 1: The Actor's Process: Advanced Tools
- Lesson 2: The Actor's Process: Advanced Tools, Continued
- Lesson 3: The Actor in Rehearsal and Performance
- Lesson 4: Acting on Stage/Great Performances #3

Final Exam: Great Performances #4

Self-Evaluation

Grading Scale for Final Course Grades (Your work in this course is worth a total of 1000 points.)

A+ = 980 points and above

A = 940-979 points

A- = 900-939 points

B+ = 860-899 points

B = 830-859 points

B- = 790-829 points

C+ = 750-789 points

C = 700-749 points

D = 600-699 points

E (failing) = under 600 points