

**University of South Dakota**  
**Theatre 131, Sec U035, Introduction to Acting**  
**3 Credits**

**Time/Place:** TTH 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.; Fine Arts 183 (Arena); Fall 2008  
**Instructor:** Priscilla Hagen, Fine Arts 184F; 677-5734; [phagen@usd.edu](mailto:phagen@usd.edu)  
**Office Hrs:** 11:00 – 12:00 MWF, 1:30 – 2:30 TTR and by appointment;  
**Crs Prereq:** None

**Department of Theatre Vision Statement**

The Department of Theatre prepares the student for a career in the theatre and encourages personal and creative growth. It does this by providing a comprehensive, humanistic education, supplemented by intensive craft training, in which classroom study and practical experience are of equal and complementary value. The Department promotes excellence in education, research, and service; explores new questions, techniques, and practices in the theatre; and inspires students to become life long learners who contribute to their respective discipline and profession while enhancing the cultural life of their community.

**A. Catalog Course Description:**

Designed for the non-major interested in exploring acting as a means of improving communication skills and self-expression. Includes a specific process for role development, text analysis, and opportunities to practice the craft and art of acting.

**B. Additional Course Description and Objectives:**

1. To develop the student actor's powers of concentration, relaxation, and creativity;
2. To explore a specific process of character and text analysis to be used in performance;
3. To provide opportunities for the actor to practice applying theories learned in class to the performance situation;
4. To foster respect and appreciation for the art of acting;

**C. Instructional Methods:**

Craft based exercises, performance, discussion, written analysis papers.

**D. South Dakota Board of Regents General Education Goal #4**

**GOAL #4:** *Students will understand the diversity and complexity of the human experience through study of the arts and humanities*

**Student Learning Outcomes:** As a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will:

Learning Outcomes:	Assessment
<p><b>1. Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of values, beliefs, and ideas embodied in the human experience</b></p>	<p>by analyzing (via written character biography) and <i>embodying</i> the behavior of diverse characters in plays, by studying and experiencing many different plays by authors of different genders, nationalities, races, and sexual orientations, by exploring a variety of characters and representing these varied viewpoints via a graded acting scene, and by evaluating self and classmates' performances through class discussion;</p>

<p><b>2. Identify and explain basic concepts of the selected disciplines within the arts and humanities.</b></p>	<p>as a result of specific craft based training in releasing tension, developing concentration, promoting creativity and self expression, and by learning a specific process of character and scene analysis assessed by written papers and performance;</p>
<p><b>3. Demonstrate creative and aesthetic understanding</b></p>	<p>through participation and observation of craft based exercise work, class performance, and attendance at a theatre production. Aesthetic understanding of theatre will be made concrete through a written critical review of a theatre production and through in-class discussions of the performance experience.</p>

**E. Required Text:**

Cohen, Robert. Acting One. Mountain View CA: McGraw-Hill, Fifth Edition (2008)  
Acting scenes from plays will be provided by the instructor

**F. Attire and Physical Requirements:**

Please wear loose, comfortable clothing (with no caps or hats) which will allow for complete freedom of movement (no heels, mini-skirts, or clothes that restrict movement). Also, if you have any special needs (e.g. dyslexia) or a physical condition (w/heart, back, epilepsy, asthma, etc.) that would impede your ability to learn the material or could be aggravated by aerobic or stretching activities, or deep relaxation, please let me know.

**G. Disability Services:**

Any student who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access to accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register w/Disabilities Services during the first week of class. Disability Services is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students currently registered w/Disability Services must obtain a new accommodation memo each semester. (For information contact: Ernetta L. Fox, Director Disability Services, rm 119, Service Ctr, 605.677.6389, [www.usd.edu/ds](http://www.usd.edu/ds); [dservices@usd.edu](mailto:dservices@usd.edu)).

**H. Attendance Policy:**

This course requires active participation from everyone on a daily basis. The material that is taught is sequential and others in the class will depend upon your presence. Thus, your timely attendance is vital. To facilitate your growth as an actor, attendance is mandatory. If you should miss more than two class periods, your final grade in the course will be lowered. Additionally, after four absences, the instructor reserves the right to withdraw you from class. Exceptions to this policy may occur due to family emergency or *serious* illness.

**I. Make-up Policy:**

In the event of a family emergency or serious illness the student should, if able, contact the instructor *prior* to the performance so that the student’s scene partner can be informed. The student will be expected to make up the performance during the next scheduled class period

**J. Evaluation** based upon 100 point with 90/80/70/65 grade divisions include the following:

1. **Classwork:** this includes a positive commitment, attitude, concentration, participation in class discussion, and growth in exercise work.....10
  2. **Performance:** one open scene (gotesheet analysis 10 pts, acting 15pts).....25
  3. **Theatre Review:** one USD Theatre Production response paper.....5
  4. **Performance:** One realistic scene (biography 10pts, gotesheet 10pts, acting 20pts).....40
  5. **Final Exam:** A monologue performance (acting 20 pts).....20
- Extra Credit** for acting: Knutson Theatre performance – 7 pts, Arena/Workshop – 5 pts, Directing scene performance – 2 pts, perfect attendance – 2 pts for a max of 10 points of extra credit  
**Note:** Late papers (gotesheet, bio analysis) have diminished usefulness to the actor and will be penalized one point for every class period that they are late.

- A = 90-100, excellent work; complete, detailed, consistently dynamic and inventive
- B = 80-89, very good work; fairly complete w/numerous details, but not consistently dynamic
- C = 70-79, average to good work; meets the minimum requirements but lacks details and credibility
- D = 65-69, below average work; sloppy, incomplete, shows lack of care/respect for assignment
- F = 0-64, failed to meet any of the assignments goals

**K. Cheating and Plagiarism Policy:**

Plagiarism is defined as the act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of writings, or the ideas or language of the same, passing them off as the product of one's own mind (*Black's Law Dictionary*). By extension this has traditionally been applied to the appropriation of artistic product including music compositions, designs, paintings, sculpture, etc.

Credibility and integrity are essential traits in a professional who is guaranteed the exclusive ownership of his or her own creations and must respect the same right of others. No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. At the discretion of the instructor, a student caught engaging in any form of academic dishonesty may be:

- a. Given a zero for that assignment.
- b. Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit.
- c. Assigned a reduced grade for the course.
- d. Dropped from the course.
- e. Failed in the course.

**L. Freedom in Learning:**

Students are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled. Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance shall be evaluated solely on an academic basis and students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study. Students who believe that an academic evaluation is unrelated to academic standards but is related instead to judgment of their personal opinion or conduct should contact the dean of the college which offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

## M. Course Outline:

- SEPT** 4: Review syllabus, discuss release of tension and trust;  
9: Read and discuss Intro and Lessons 1&2 in text, learn Harry Hill Relaxation technique, trust/ensemble building exercises, ex.3-4;  
11: Discuss Lessons 3-5 , heartbeat ensemble exercise, continue work on trust exercises;  
16: Working with the other, ex. 4-1, mirror exercise;  
18: Viewpoints warm-up, discuss goal, obstacle;  
23: Work on tactics, work on (ex. 4-4, 6-1);  
25: Read and discuss Lessons 6-8, work on ex. 4-6, 7-1, positive goals;  
30: Speeches of enthusiasm are due (ex. 7-2);
- OCT** 3: Discuss Lessons 9-14, the gotesheet analysis, work on simple contentless scenes;  
7: Begin work on scene # 1, tour the theatre facility, review ground rules for working on acting scenes, discuss floorplan, costume list, prop list, given circumstances\*;  
9: In class rehearsal with instructor;  
14: In class rehearsal with instructor, GOTE analysis due;  
17: In class rehearsal with instructor;  
21: Graded performance of scene # 1;  
23: Practice spine lengthening (p.8);  
28: Discuss Character Biography, distribute Scene #2, work on floor-plan, costume list, prop list, simple activities, moment before,\*  
30: In class rehearsal with instructor;
- NOV** 4: In class rehearsal with instructor;  
6: In class rehearsal with instructor;  
11: Veteran's Day Holiday;  
13: Dress rehearsal;  
18: Dress rehearsal;  
20: Performance of scene #2;  
25: Performance of scene #2;  
27: Thanksgiving Holiday;  
28: In class rehearsal of monologue performance;
- DEC** 2: TBA;  
4: Discuss the challenges of the monologue performance, work on introduction and presentation;  
9-11: In class rehearsal of monologue performance;  
Polishing rehearsal of monologue performance;

\*Detailed rehearsal schedules with assigned scene, scene partner, preview, performance, and analysis due dates will be distributed at this time.