

## Course Description

This is an introductory course in the theory and practice of acting for the stage. Using the techniques of the actor, the class is designed to help you develop communication skills and confidence that you can carry with you into everyday life whenever appearing before others, whether personally or professionally. The course will include fun and challenging physical and vocal exercises, creative group work and various performance activities such as monologues and scene-work.

- **Course Name:** THTRE 251 - Acting I
- **Department:** Music and Theatre
- **Current Semester and Year:** Spring 2024
- **Credit Hours:** 3
- **Course Prerequisites:** N/A
- **Course Meeting Time:** M/W/F 11-11:50
- **Course Format:** Face to Face
- **Final Exam:** Wednesday, May 8 - 7:30-9:30am

## Instructor Information

**Instructor:** Tiffany Antone

**Email:** [tlantone@iastate.edu](mailto:tlantone@iastate.edu)

**Office location:** Carver 328

**Student hours:** T/Th 12:30-1:30 *and other times by apt.*

You can contact your instructor in the following ways:

- General announcements will be posted via Canvas announcements. Properly [configure your Notification Settings in Canvas](#)
- [Links to an external site.](#) to receive notifications.
- Email: [tlantone@iastate.edu](mailto:tlantone@iastate.edu)

## Methods of Instruction:

This class involves intellectual and experiential exploration of acting and performance theories and techniques. The plan of study for this course includes heavy ensemble work, in addition to solo exercises, partnered exercises, and small group exercises. The class will also include readings, videos, demonstrations, discussions, projects, performance critiques and analytical work.

**\*WE WILL UTILIZE MODULES IN CANVAS - make sure you get used to checking Canvas for class updates/assignments!\***

## More About This Course:

Acting I is an introductory course designed for anyone to explore performance and build/improve their performance skill set. Experience and “talent” are far less important than hard work, risk-taking, and enthusiastic participation. Grading policies follow this philosophy.

### Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and effectively apply fundamental acting vocabulary, techniques, and processes in practical acting situations.
- Use and integrate acting skills, including control of the actor’s instrument (voice and body), collaboration, play instinct, imagination, flexibility, courage, focus, discipline, and communication.
- Build effective collaborations through creativity, self-awareness, confidence, and sensitivity to self and others.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To develop the students’ observational skills toward life, its experiences, toward artistic sensibility and toward becoming a more informed audience member.
- To offer the student a basic knowledge of theatrical terms.
- To explore various approaches to creating honest relationships on stage.
- To utilize fundamental acting terminology and techniques in character analysis and performance.
- To expand the student’s spectrum of trust, relaxation, and imagination.
- To introduce the student to various live performances.
- To identify and practice better physical and vocal control, expression, and projection techniques
- To develop in the student an ability to objectively critique their own work and the work of their classmates.
- To introduce to the student a beginning approach to rehearsing scripted scenes.
- Fun Fact: In theatre (as in many things), if you're not uncomfortable, you're not learning.

### Course Materials

**Required Text:** [The Actor and The Target](#)

[Links to an external site.](#), by Declan Donnellan (Fun Fact: Once you purchase this book, you can shout “I’m ready! I’m ready! I’m ready!”)

## Course Considerations

We will spend most class periods learning and practicing various movement, voice, and breathing techniques. You should therefore dress in clothes that will allow for full movement (this means clothes and shoes that allow you to comfortably run, jump, kick, roll, etc). Personal hygiene is also important as there WILL be times we get sweaty.

Additionally, we will do daily breathing exercises, which means we will be sharing a lot of air with each other. It is therefore imperative that you pay attention to your health and make effort to maintain the health of our shared space.

**IF YOU ARE ILL AND FEEL UNABLE TO COME TO CLASS:**

Stay home! Send me an email. Don't freak out - this is why you have three unexcused absences before your participation grade dips below an A.

**IF YOU ARE ILL BUT FEEL OK TO COME TO CLASS:** Wear a mask. Nobody in here wants anyone else's germs and masks are an effective way to contain virus spread. Masks are helpful not only for reducing the spread of COVID-19, but also reducing transmission of colds and flu, and thereby ensuring students can attend class and complete coursework as scheduled. Further information on the proper use of face masks is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>

[Links to an external site.](#)

**FEEDBACK:** Each student will be expected to not only receive, but also give constructive feedback. Emotionally and socially prepare yourself to enter into a space in which all constructive feedback has a place and is encouraged. Listening to/working with feedback is a fundamental part of our personal evolution, both as artists and as human beings. Don't be afraid to ask questions when feedback is confusing & remember that feedback in this class is always designed to help you progress through the material.

**COLLEGIALITY:** It is VITAL that students display respect towards one another in this class. Creative work does not flourish in harsh, negative, or overly critical environments. In this class we will practice outstanding audience skills and hone the art of giving/receiving creative feedback. Students who do not give their attention to/respect their peers' work will lose points. Students who are repeatedly disruptive/disrespectful will be dropped from the course.

Students are responsible for living the tenets established in ISU's Principles of Community: Respect, Purpose, Cooperation, Richness of Diversity, Freedom from discrimination, and the Honest and respectful expression of ideas. Visit ISU's Principles of Community website (<http://www.diversity.iastate.edu/principles-of-community>)

**Things to Remember About Coursework**

- You will engage in partner/group projects in this class - be prepared to schedule outside rehearsal time
- Every week you will complete a Process Report. This is an opportunity to reflect on the week's readings/lessons/work, and to create a record of your progress/process over the course of the semester. These assignments are worth 20 points every week. **\*\*Do NOT overlook/skip this assignment.\*\*** Reflection and introspection are important skills for us to cultivate as both actors and as human beings—this assignment is intended to inspire healthy reflective/critical thinking habits. **\*Your first and last week's Process Reports are worth more points, as they ask more of you\***

- Please turn everything in via Canvas. I will not accept emailed assignments unless there is a technical error and you absolutely cannot upload your assignment to Canvas. If this happens, it is your responsibility to email the assignment to me before the posted deadline along with an explanation of why you are emailing the assignment to me in the body of the email.  
\*This policy exists to best serve you, as emails can/do get lost and overlooked. Canvas is the most secure way to ensure assignments are documented/receive full credit.\*
- Performance days are scheduled ahead of time and are non-negotiable. If you are called to perform your scene and are not prepared or present, it will result in a 0 or an “F” for the assignment.
- You must attend\* and respond to at least two\*\* productions this semester (Guidelines will be provided) All ISU Theatre productions are eligible, but so are outside digital productions if you are uncomfortable attending in-person performance.
  - Always Plenty of Light at the All-Night Starlight Diner
  - The Crucible
  - John Proctor is the Villain

\*If you are involved in a production, you will write about your experience from *within* the project for this assignment

\*\*You can attend and write a response to a third productions for 50 pts extra credit!

## Assessment & Grading

Acting is a creative skill, but also a technical one. This is a participation-based and individualized growth-oriented class. While performing is the goal of an actor, a class in acting can benefit other aspects of your life, both professionally and personally. Students will be graded on completing each assignment’s required creative and technical elements as well as each student’s growth and progress as a performer.

\*\*It is very important to remember that this a performance based course. In a performance class, it can be tempting to compare yourself to your peers. In other classes, you don’t watch your peers perform their homework, so you don’t have this temptation. The work we do in theatre is done out loud, in-person, and in front of an audience. Remember then, that each person’s prior experience (or lack thereof) will effect the work they bring to class, and that we enter this class at different places on our theatrical journey as a result. It is important to keep this in mind and resist the urge to evaluate your own progress based on that of your peers’. Additionally, do not seek perfection in regards to your performances—perfection is just a myth. Your progress/process is more important than a final, “perfect” product.\*\* (See “Do Over” Days below)

Remember: In Theatre, creative risk taking will always yield bigger rewards than “playing it safe”. In this class, we will practice vulnerability and engage in A LOT of wacky/weird group work in order to create dynamic theatrical experiences! It will also be FUN! Bring your sense of adventure and get ready to step outside your comfort zones!

## GRADING SCALE

A-to A= 90-100% Exceptional work: Always prepared; extensive outside-of-class preparation;

self-motivated. Active, positive contributor to class. Punctual; always present. Demonstrated mastery of course materials.

B-to B+ = 80-89% Good work: Always prepared; significant outside-of-class preparation, self-motivated. Punctual; always present. Positive contributor to class. Demonstrated proficiency with course materials.

C-to C+ = 70-79% Average work: Generally prepared; adequate outside-of-class preparation; often self-motivated. Often contributes to class. Punctual; almost always present. Working towards proficiency with course materials.

D-to D+ = 60-69% Below average work: Often not prepared; shows little outside preparation; rarely self-motivated. Seldom contributes to class, and/or may have negative attitude. Sometimes late; some absences. Demonstrated difficulty engaging with/applying course materials.

F = 59% and below. Unacceptable work: Rarely prepared and lacks adequate outside-of-class preparation; not motivated. Does not contribute to class and/or may have negative attitude. Not punctual; accrued absences. Student has not gained sufficient proficiency with course materials to pass the class.

## ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION POINTS

This is a performance-based class and attendance is mandatory\*. Theatre is a collaborative art. To learn to perform, you must be here and participate. The participation and enthusiasm of each member in this class contributes to the success of the whole. Show up (on time), engage with class discussions, invite one another into the conversation, and be present for one another!

**Attendance and Participation is 20% of the grade for this course!**

Remember:

If you are ill and unable to come to class: Stay home, send me an email - Remember you have 3 unexcused absences before your participation grade dips below an "A". \*Don't burn your unexcused absences on oversleeping/unnecessary travel/etc.\*

If you are ill, but still up for coming to class: Wear a mask! We will be doing breathing exercises EVERY DAY. That's a lot of shared air. Masks are an effective way to contain virus spread! (Remember, nobody wants your germs)

Attendance/Participation points will be awarded using the following scale:

Exceptional (300pts) - Student has zero absences and is an active, positive contributor to class.

Above Average (270pts) - Student has accumulated no more than three unexcused absences, is always prepared and a positive contributor to class.

Good (240pts) - Student has accumulated no more than four unexcused absences, is always prepared and a positive contributor to class.

Average (210pts) - Student has accumulated no more than five unexcused absences, is always prepared and a positive contributor to class.

Below Average (180pts) - Student has accumulated no more than six unexcused absences, is always prepared and a positive contributor to class.

Below Below Average(150pts) - Student has accumulated no more than seven unexcused absences, is always prepared and a positive contributor to class.

**Students who accrue eight or more Unexcused Absences will receive a 0 in regards to the attendance/participation grade and are at risk of being dropped from the class.**

**\*Excused Absences do NOT count against your Participation grade** - these include school sanctioned absences, absences due to medically documented illness (always get a doctor's note!), or legitimate family emergencies. Remember that you have up to three unexcused absences before this grade dips below an "A". Use those unexcused absences wisely!

**\*\*Extenuating Circumstances:** Students experiencing family crisis or prolonged medical absences may be offered an additional assignment to help make up a deficit of participation points on a case by case basis and at the discretion of the professor.

## Assignments

Assignments are due in class on the day assigned. Work due on the date of campus-sanctioned activity absences must be turned in prior to the absence date. Students are responsible for making up all work missed because of absences.

Each assignment will be covered in class with detailed guidelines given for each. It is the student's responsibility to make sure they are completing each assignment as outlined in order to earn full points. Assignments will be discussed in class AND posted in Canvas. Please make sure you have this course bookmarked in Canvas, with course notifications turned ON.

**\*\*Every week we will have a new module. Get in the habit of reading each week's module and relying on those modules for due dates!\*\***

Performance assignments are graded using the following scale:

- Above Average work - Student meets all assignment objectives with aplomb, or only a few minor missteps.
- Average Work - Student is mostly meeting assignment objectives, There is clear effort and intentionality in their work, even if the performance is "unpolished."
- Not Yet There - Student has shown up for their performance, but is missing key objectives and/or under-prepared. Student has room for improvement and is encouraged to continue working on the assignment in order to take advantage of "Do-Over" days for the opportunity to earn a higher grade.

**"Do-Over" Days** - Every semester I offer a "Do-Over" day for students wishing to pursue improved marks on their performance assignments. *This pertains ONLY to performance assignments and is not applicable to written work.* Fun Fact: With Do Over Days, improving your grade is as easy as shouting "Zip! Zap! Zop!"

# LATE WORK POLICY

I understand that even in the best of times, students get overwhelmed and can fall behind. This semester will undoubtedly include challenges for many of us. If you encounter challenges (health related or otherwise) please message me so that I can do my best to help you stay on track. In general:

- Late work turned in up to 7 days past due date is eligible for 50% credit
- This policy ONLY applies to written assignments.
- This policy DOES NOT apply to in-class performances. If you are not in attendance on your scheduled performance day, you will receive a 0 on that assignment. Exceptions will only be made under extenuating circumstances (If you are sick/contagious or in case of medical/family emergency)
  - If you have an EXCUSED absence for a performance day, it is your responsibility to communicate with the professor & your scene partner(s) a time to make up the performance before we move to the next assignment.

**If you start to fall behind in this class, the best thing you can do is talk to me! I want everyone in this class to be successful - but I can only help if you let me know when you're having trouble.**

KEEP IN MIND: Late work is only eligible for up to 50% credit. That means that if you do an outstanding job on the assignment, but it is late\*, you can still only earn 50%. If you do a poor job on the assignment and turn it in late, you will most likely earn less than 50%. If you take advantage of this policy on too many assignments, it WILL negatively impact your grade and you may not pass the course.

**\*Don't Panic - Assignments coming in an hour or two past the due date/time will NOT be penalized! \***

## Grade Distribution

You can accumulate points by participating in the following way:



## Tentative COURSE SCHEDULE

If we've learned anything the past few years, it's that flexibility is a vital and necessary skill in these uncertain times. It is important that we collectively acknowledge that our best intentions may be disrupted. If it should become necessary to make changes to our course schedule, those changes will be clearly communicated via Canvas and email.

WEEK 1 - Expectations & Intros

WEEK 2 - Ensemble Begins

WEEK 3 - Ensemble and Ritual

WEEK 4 - Beginning with Text & Object Exercises

WEEK 5 - The Body

WEEK 6 - Working with Words  
WEEK 7 - Monologues and Tactics  
WEEK 8 - Rehearsing  
WEEK 9 - Monologues!  
WEEK 10 - Personalized Performance & Respecting Your Audience  
WEEK 11 - Making a Scene  
Week 12 - Rehearsal & Improv  
Week 13 - Putting it all together...  
Week 14 - Rehearsing Together  
Week 15 - Final Preparations  
Week 16 - Final Presentations

## Additional Course Policies/Expectations:

- ABSOLUTELY NO CELL PHONES or TEXTING during class.
- A creative environment is one in which all artists feel safe to fail – recordings of any kind (audio, visual, live-stream, etc.) are strictly prohibited and any student found to be in violation of this rule will be dropped one letter grade for the first offense, and dismissed from the class for the second. \*\*The only exception to this is on performance days IF (AND ONLY IF) an actor asks to have their performance recorded.\*\*
- Theatre is a collaborative art, and this class is no exception. We will be working collaboratively every day and you should think of your peers as fellow members of this artistic community. We will engage in class discussions, exercises, improvisation, and other theatre games/activities – which will help you build self-confidence as you find new ways to express yourself.
- No eating during class
- Plays written for theatre often contain strong language and mature content: profanities, violence, sexual terms, religious references and other mature themes/elements may be presented in this class. Theater provides us an opportunity to explore the human condition, and the human condition is not always pretty. Expect to examine material that challenges you as both an actor and as an audience member \*\*It is a violation of copyright law to alter/change/omit dialogue from a play. Keep this in mind when you select material, as you will NOT be permitted to change the text in any way.\*\* If you have any problems/questions about this please see me.
- Perfect costumes/props are not required for monologues and scenes; however, you should always dress appropriately for a role and bring in props that suit your basic performance needs.
- When attending theatre performances (both for those taking place in-person and online) arrive on time, and be attentive & respectful.
- Fun Fact: Students who read the whole syllabus are awesome!

## Required ISU Syllabus Statement

### Free Expression



Iowa State University supports and upholds the First Amendment protection of [freedom of speech](#) and the principle of [academic freedom](#)

[Links to an external site.](#) in order to foster a learning environment where open inquiry and the vigorous debate of a diversity of ideas are encouraged. Students will not be penalized for the content or viewpoints of their speech as long as student expression in a class context is germane to the subject matter of the class and conveyed in an appropriate manner.

## **Recommended ISU Syllabus Statements**

### **Classroom Disruption**

At the discretion of the instructor, disruptive conduct includes a single serious incident or persistent conduct that unreasonably interrupts, impedes, obstructs, and/or interferes with the educational process. Disruptive conduct may be physical and/or expressive in nature and may occur in person or in a virtual setting. Examples of disruptive conduct may include, but are not limited to, the following: speaking without being recognized, interrupting, or talking over others; arrival to class late or leaving early without instructor permission; the use of technology, such as cell phones, computers, or other devices, without instructor permission, particularly in uses unrelated to course content; creation of loud or distracting noises either carelessly or with intent to disrupt; eating, sleeping, or carrying out other personal activities in class that are unrelated to course content without instructor permission; non-protected malicious or harassing or bullying speech or actions directed at instructors or students, such as personal insults, ad hominem attacks, name-calling, other abusive or ridiculing comments, or threats; gratuitous use of cursing/expletives or other speech that is not relevant to class discussion; inappropriate physical contact or threats of inappropriate physical contact directed at instructors or students; refusal to comply with instructor's request for appropriate conduct.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

The class will follow Iowa State University's policy on academic misconduct ([5.1 in the Student Code of Conduct](#)). Students are responsible for adhering to university policy and the expectations in the course syllabus and on coursework and exams, and for following directions given by faculty, instructors, and Testing Center regulations related to coursework, assessments, and exams. Anyone suspected of academic misconduct will be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct in the Dean of Students Office](#). Information about academic integrity and the value of completing academic work honestly can be found in the [Iowa State University Academic Integrity Tutorial](#)

[Links to an external site.](#)

### **Accessibility Statement**

Iowa State University is committed to advancing equity, access, and inclusion for students with disabilities. Promoting these values entails providing reasonable accommodations where barriers exist to students' full participation in higher education. Students in need of accommodations or

who experience accessibility-related barriers to learning should work with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to identify resources and support available to them. Staff at SAS collaborate with students and campus partners to coordinate accommodations and to further the academic excellence of students with disabilities. Information about SAS is available online at [www.sas.dso.iastate.edu](http://www.sas.dso.iastate.edu), by email at [accessibility@iastate.edu](mailto:accessibility@iastate.edu), or by phone at 515-294-7220.

### **Discrimination and Harassment**

Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. Veteran. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies may be directed to Office of Equal Opportunity, 3410 Beardshear Hall, 515 Morrill Road, Ames, Iowa 50011, Tel. 515-294-7612, Hotline 515-294-1222, email [eooffice@iastate.edu](mailto:eooffice@iastate.edu)

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources**

Iowa State University is committed to proactively facilitating all students' well-being. Resources available on the ISU Student Health and Wellness [website](https://www.cyclonehealth.iastate.edu). (<https://www.cyclonehealth.iastate.edu>)

### **Prep Week**

This class follows the Iowa State University Prep Week policy as noted in section 10.6.4 of the [Faculty Handbook](#).

### **Religious Accommodation**

Iowa State University welcomes diversity of religious beliefs and practices, recognizing the contributions differing experiences and viewpoints can bring to the community. There may be times when an academic requirement conflicts with religious observances and practices. If that happens, students may request a reasonable accommodation for religious practices. In all cases, you must put your request in writing. The instructor will review the situation in an effort to provide a reasonable accommodation when possible to do so without fundamentally altering a course. For students, you should first discuss the conflict and your requested accommodation with your professor at the earliest possible time. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the [Dean of Students Office](#) at 515-294-1020 or the [Office of Equal Opportunity](#) at 515-294-7612.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

Students in this course are responsible for being familiar with the Iowa State University student rules and policies in the [Student Code of Conduct](#) in the Policy Library.

**Disclaimer:** In extenuating circumstances, the schedule, policies, or procedures are subject to change. All efforts will be made not to alter assignment due dates or

scheduled exams. Any modifications will be communicated in writing, verbally in class, and/or published in the Canvas course.