

# THRE 353: ACTING FOR THE CAMERA

## Course Syllabus—Spring 2023

Instructor: Cason Murphy, M.F.A. (he | him | his)

TA: Liam Ray III

**Course Time:** Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 3:20-4:35pm    **Classroom:** Carver 308

**Office:** Carver 320    **E-mail:** cwmurphy@iastate.edu    **Phone:** 515-294-8936

**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30pm-2:00pm  
Tuesdays from 11:00am-2:00pm / Thursdays from 11:00am-12:00pm  
*or other times by appointment*

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This course aims to prepare students for the particular demands and challenges of acting on camera and will give an overview of the terms and techniques used in professional on-camera acting to assist in making the transition from the theatre to the screen.

**NOTE:** This class is an intermediate course designed for anyone to explore performance and build/improve their performance skill set. Experience and “talent” are important, but so are hard work, risk-taking, and enthusiastic participation. Grading policies follow this philosophy.

### COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

<b>Students should be able:</b>	<b>This will be measured by:</b>
To introduce and develop skills and techniques for on-camera performance.	<i>Reading assignments, in-class discussion, viewings, exercises, self-tapes, and on-camera performances</i>
To develop a basic understanding of the on-camera production process.	<i>In-class exploration and exercises, self-tapes, and on-camera performances</i>
To develop critical on-camera audition and performance evaluation skills.	<i>In-class discussions, weekly journals, reaction papers, reading assignments, and exercises</i>
To develop an understanding of the professional landscape of on-camera performance.	<i>Reading assignments, in-class exercises and performances, self-tapes, and market research project</i>
To be conversant in the differences between acting for film and acting for theatre.	<i>Reading assignments, in-class discussions, and weekly journals</i>
To recognize their “type” and create professional materials reflective of that knowledge.	<i>Typing assessment, professional material evaluation, on-camera performances, and market research project</i>

### TEXT AND MATERIALS

Our required text is **Secrets of Screen Acting by Patrick Tucker**. Outside of the required text, any additional material/articles/sides will be provided on Canvas (it is the student’s responsibility to read/prepare prior to class). Otherwise, you will be responsible for access to:

- **Some type of recording device**—either a camera, webcam, or smartphone
- **Editing software**—Microsoft Movie Editor (PC), iMovie (Mac), Adobe Premiere, or any other preferred editing program (you can find a [list of free and safe programs here](#))
- **Ring light** (while not explicitly required) is a good investment if you plan to do any on-camera work.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Your final grade will be calculated on the 1000 point scale:

900-1000: A	600-699: D
800-899: B	000-599: F
700-799: C	

<b>Course Requirements</b>	<b>% of Grade</b>	<b>Points</b>
Attendance and Participation	10%	100
Weekly Journals	30%	300
Market Research Project Portfolio and Professional Materials	10%	100
On-Camera Exercises/Auditions	35%	350
Final Performance Re-creation	15%	150
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1000</b>

### **ITEMS TO BE GRADED**

**ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:** Students are expected to be at, and participate in, every class. In addition to just showing up, participation includes being fully engaged in all exercises, activities, and discussions (readings done, prepared, memorized, rehearsed, with all necessary supplies and positive mental attitude). Additionally, during viewing sessions, students will participate in feedback sessions, both as listener and critique-giver. All students are expected to contribute intelligently, articulately, and frequently.

A student can be excused for missing a class for any of the following—with proper documentation. **NOTE: Any university-approved absence must be communicated to the instructor by your supervising faculty at least one week prior to the absence.**

- Field trips or curricular-related activities
- Extra-curricular activities as a representative of the university, such as:
  - Academic or professional conferences, workshops, presentations, or programs
  - Intercollegiate athletic, academic, and judging competitions
  - Musical, theatrical, dance, or other artistic performances
- Military or National Guard service
- Court appearances
- Funerals
- Positive COVID-19 test or necessary isolation from exposure
  - The period of excusal from class will extend to the full length of the isolation period under current CDC guidance.

Any student who has an excused absence must provide the proper documentation to me prior to the date of the absence to excuse your absence. You must also make arrangements with me to make up any missed assignments within a reasonable amount of time. 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.

**WEEKLY JOURNALS:** Weekly journals will be utilized to track students’ development in on-camera performance and theory, thoughts on assigned readings, film viewings, responses to guest speakers, along with any additional question prompts.

**ON-CAMERA EXERCISES/AUDITIONS:** Students will have multiple exercises and four performance opportunities on-camera—a commercial audition, a sitcom audition, a horror film “callback” scene, and a green screen audition—each emphasizing and evaluating different skills. Auditions will be scheduled during class times throughout the course of the semester—missing a scheduled audition day will result in a zero for the assignment, and cannot be made up.

**SELF-TAPES:** Twice during the semester, students will be assigned material to rehearse, perform, and submit as a self-tape. Students will be responsible for following instructions in order make sure the requested material is filmed, edited, and returned before the deadline.

**MARKET RESEARCH PROJECT PORTFOLIO:** Students will research a city/market for their potential post-graduation career. For the portfolio, students will compile their professional materials (current headshot(s), résumé, and website) as well as a useful document that reflects the information they’ve found about their chosen market.

**FINAL PERFORMANCE RE-CREATION:** For our final project, students will rehearse, film, edit, and submit a performance re-creation from a film of their choice.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** Students may earn 15 extra credit points for finding and submitting an audition for on-camera work (outside of this class). **Limit of 2 for extra credit**

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Date	Topic of Class Meeting	What’s Due For Next Time?
<b>Week 1</b>		
Jan. 18	Introduction to Class / Course Expectations <i>Discussion: Theatre vs. Film/TV</i>	<b>READ: Chapters 1-2</b> <b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #1</b>
<b>Week 2</b>		
Jan. 23	<b>NO CLASS – KCACTF</b>	<b>READ: Chapter 3, 4 &amp; 7</b> <b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #2</b> <b>UPLOAD: Recorded Slate and Current Professional Materials</b>
Jan. 25		
<b>Week 3</b>		
Jan. 30	<b>PLAYBACK: Slates</b> <i>Discussion: Who are You?</i>	
Feb. 1	<i>Discussion: The Basics of Film</i>	<b>READ: Glossary (and complete Quiz)</b> <b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #3</b>
<b>Week 4</b>		
Feb. 6	How to Read / Decode a Film Script Exercise: Beating a Text	

Feb. 8	"SET VISIT" <i>Discussion: Commercial How-To's</i>	<b>READ: Chapter 8, 9 &amp; 13</b> <b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #4</b>
<b>Week 5</b>		
Feb. 13	AUDITION: COMMERCIAL Group A	
Feb. 15	AUDITION: COMMERCIAL Group B	<b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #5</b>
<b>Week 6</b>		
Feb. 20	PLAYBACK: Commercial Auditions <i>Self-Tape Assignment</i>	
Feb. 22	GUEST SPEAKER TBD	<b>READ: Chapters 5 &amp; 6</b> <b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #6</b> <b>UPLOAD: Self-Tape 1</b>
<b>Week 7</b>		
Feb. 27	<i>Discussion: Sitcom How-To's</i> Exercise: Working with a Reader	
Mar. 1	AUDITION: SITCOM Group A	<b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #7</b>
<b>Week 8</b>		
Mar. 6	AUDITION: SITCOM Group B	
Mar. 8	PLAYBACK: Sitcom Auditions	<b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #8</b>
<b>NO CLASS – Spring Break (Mar. 13-Mar. 17)</b>		
<b>Week 9</b>		
Mar. 20	<i>Discussion: Playing Big Emotions</i> Exercise: Partner Listening and Reacting	
Mar. 22	AUDITION: Horror Scene "Callback" A	<b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #9</b>
<b>Week 10</b>		
Mar. 27	AUDITION: Horror Scene "Callback" B	
Mar. 29	PLAYBACK: Horror Callbacks	<b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #10</b>
<b>Week 11</b>		
Apr. 3	GUEST SPEAKER TBD <i>Self-Tape Assignment</i>	
Apr. 5	<i>Discussion: Final Re-creations Assignment</i>	<b>READ: Chapter 10, 11 &amp; 14</b> <b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #11</b> <b>UPLOAD: Self-Tape 2</b>
<b>Week 12</b>		
Apr. 10	<i>Discussion: Green Screen How To's</i> Exercise: Creating Effective Visualizations	
Apr. 12	AUDITION: GREEN SCREEN Group A	<b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #12</b>
<b>Week 13</b>		
Apr. 17	AUDITION: GREEN SCREEN Group B	
Apr. 29	PLAYBACK: Green Screen Auditions	<b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #13</b>
<b>Week 14</b>		
Apr. 24	GUEST SPEAKER TBD	
Apr. 26	GUEST SPEAKER TBD	<b>SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #14</b>

<b>Week 15</b>		
May 1	Final Re-creation Work Days	
May 3		<b>UPLOAD: Final Re-creations</b>
<b>Week 16 (Finals Week)</b>		
May 10 (2:15-4:15pm)	<b>FINAL MEETING:</b> Recreation Playbacks and Wrapping Up	<b>SUBMIT: Final Weekly Journal and Market Research Project</b>

## CLASSROOM POLICIES

**PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY:** This class honors ISU's Principles of Community and expects the classroom discourse and attitude to reflect them: respect, purpose, cooperation, richness of diversity, freedom from discrimination, and the honest and respectful expression of ideas:

<http://www.diversity.iastate.edu/principles-of-community>

**TECHNOLOGY:** Although this is an in-person class, there may be times we will utilize the Zoom platform for some on-camera instruction, please make sure to visit <https://zoom.us> and download the free platform for use in our class.

**Note:** I cannot assist with any technical issues that may arise while using Zoom or Canvas. Should you require assistance with technology at any time, students should contact ISU IT Solution Center first to resolve technical issues: email at [solution@iastate.edu](mailto:solution@iastate.edu) or call (515) 294-4000 or visit 192 Parks Library.

**REGARDING NAME, GENDER IDENTITY AND/OR GENDER EXPRESSION:** Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

**ATTIRE:** Anticipate you will be on camera during many class meetings. For regular instruction days, please make sure you are dressed appropriately. For audition days, be "camera ready" and dress according to any provided call information.

**FEEDBACK:** Each student will be expected to not only receive but also give positive criticism. Emotionally and socially prepare yourself to enter into a room in which all *constructive* feedback has a place and is encouraged.

**COLLABORATION:** Even though acting is by and large a solitary endeavor, this class will be set up as an artistic community, dependent on the participation and enthusiasm of each member for the success of the whole. Students will be present for all audition days (even if not performing, you *may* be assigned production roles in the room). This class will be largely hands-on and interactive. The more each student puts into this class, the more we will all get out of it.

**CONTENT:** Film can contain strong language and mature content: profanity, depictions of violence, graphic or sexual terms, religious references, and other mature themes/elements may be presented in this class. This is an art form that 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. **NOTE: It is a violation of copyright law to alter/change/omit dialogue from a script.**

**FLEXIBILITY:** All good theatre artists must constantly exercise their ability to be flexible, both physically and in life. In that vein, all dates and assignments are open to being changed at the instructor's discretion, particularly as we continue to navigate the pandemic.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** As a land-grant institution, we are committed to the caretaking of this land and would like to begin this event by acknowledging those who have previously taken care of the land on which we gather. Before this site became Iowa State University, it was the ancestral lands and territory of the Baxoje or Ioway Nation. The United States obtained the land from the Meskwaki and Sauk nations in the Treaty of 1842. We wish to recognize our obligations to this land and to the people who took care of it, as well as to the 17,000 Native people who live in Iowa today.

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Iowa State University is committed to assuring that all educational activities are free from discrimination and harassment based on disability status. Students requesting accommodations for a documented disability are required to meet with staff in Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to establish eligibility and learn about related processes. Eligible students will be provided with a Notification Letter for each course and reasonable accommodations will be arranged after timely delivery of the Notification Letter to the instructor. Students are encouraged to deliver Notification Letters as early in the semester as possible. SAS, a unit in the Dean of Students Office, is located in room 1076, Student Services Building or online at [www.sas.dso.iastate.edu](http://www.sas.dso.iastate.edu). Contact SAS by email at [accessibility@iastate.edu](mailto:accessibility@iastate.edu) or by phone at 515-294-7220 for additional information.

**PUBLIC HEALTH:** If you are not feeling well, you should stay home and focus on your health. Should you miss class due to illness, it is your responsibility to work to arrange for accommodations and to make up coursework, as consistent with the attendance policy.

You may choose to wear a face mask and/or receive the COVID-19 vaccine and boosters, as well as other vaccines such as influenza, but those options are not required. Thielen Student Health Center will continue to provide COVID-19 vaccinations free-of-charge to students. The university will continue to offer free masks and COVID-19 test kits during the fall 2022 semester. Other wellbeing resources for students are available at: <https://www.cyclonehealth.iastate.edu/wellbeing-resources/>.

Please know that the following on-campus services are available for assistance regarding your physical, intellectual, occupational, spiritual, environmental, financial, social, and/or emotional needs:

- Student Wellness call (515) 294-1099 or via website (<http://studentwellness.iastate.edu>)
- Thielen Student Health Center call (515) 294-5801 (24/7 Medical Advice) or via website (<http://www.cyclonehealth.org>)
- Student Counseling Services call (515) 294-5056 or via website (<https://counseling.iastate.edu>)
- Recreation Services call (515) 294-4980 or via website (<http://recservices.iastate.edu>).
- Students dealing with heightened feelings of sadness or hopelessness, thoughts of harm or suicide, or increased anxiety may dial 988, use the ISU Crisis Text Line (Text ISU to 741-741) or contact the ISU Police Department (515) 294-4428.

Public health information for the campus community continues to be available on Iowa State's public health website. All public health questions should be directed to [publichealthteam@iastate.edu](mailto:publichealthteam@iastate.edu).

**CHEATING AND PLAGIARIZING:** Plagiarism is defined as copying or paraphrasing the ideas of others and passing them off as your own. Cheating and plagiarism are very serious issues. Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing in this class will automatically receive a "0" on the assignment and be turned into the Academic Dishonesty Committee. Please see the student handbook for more information. If you have any question about whether you are plagiarizing an assignment, please ask me about it before you turn it in. The class will follow Iowa State University's policy on academic dishonesty. Anyone suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students Office: <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/ja/academic/misconduct.html>

**WRITING AND MEDIA CENTER ASSISTANCE:** The Writing and Media Center (WMC) helps students become effective, confident communicators by supporting students during all stages of the writing process, from brainstorming to revising, as well as with oral, visual, and electronic communication. The WMC offers one-on-one and group consultations online—to register and schedule an appointment, see <https://iastate.mywconline.com/>. For more information, visit our website at <https://www.wmc.dso.iastate.edu> or [emailwritctr@iastate.edu](mailto:emailwritctr@iastate.edu).

**FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND EXPRESSION:** Iowa State University supports and upholds the First Amendment protection of freedom of speech and the principle of academic freedom 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.

**RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION:** If an academic or work requirement conflicts with your religious practices and/or observances, you may request reasonable accommodations. Your request must be in writing, and your instructor or supervisor will review the request. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the Dean of Students Office or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance.

**HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION:** Iowa State University strives to maintain our campus as a place of work and study for faculty, staff, and students that is free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and harassment based upon race, ethnicity, sex (including sexual assault), pregnancy, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, or status as a U.S. veteran. Any student who has concerns about such behavior should contact his/her instructor, Student Assistance at 515-294-1020 or email [dso-sas@iastate.edu](mailto:dso-sas@iastate.edu), or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance at 515-294-7612.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** If you are experiencing, or have experienced, a problem with any of the above issues, email [academicissues@iastate.edu](mailto:academicissues@iastate.edu)