Theatre 151: **THE ACTOR'S VOICE**  
Course Syllabus

Iowa State University, Spring 2020  
Class Location: Carver 0318  
Credits: 3 Office  
Time: T/TH 11:00-12:20  
Office Hours: T/TH 1-2 pm and by appointment.

Instructor: Leslie Bennett  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**
An introduction to the study and practice of psychophysical nature of the acting instrument. Study and practice in developing the expressive and communicative power of the human body and voice, with particular emphasis on exploring specific areas of vocal production, such as breath, quality, articulation, projection, range, freedom and power. The course is intended to instill a sense of the totality of what it means to be an embodied human being and how to transform that knowledge into viable theatrical and human practice.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**
- Release and develop the expressive potential of the body and voice
- Develop strength, flexibility, coordination and range.
- Connect the body, mind and imagination with the voice.
- Create and implement a daily practice (i.e. warmup) for preparing, protecting, improving and refining voice work for multiple platforms.
- Communicate purpose, emotion, intention, truth, intensity and desire by verbal and non-verbal means.

**METHODOLOGY**
Classes will consist of a warmup with additional exercises, explorations and lessons in technique. Much of this work is based in experiences that lead to knowledge that is both general and individualized. Over the course of the semester we will explore dynamic range, how bodies and voices create meaning and expression in space and time, and how movement can invoke emotion and action. Material will be drawn from a multiplicity of sources in the voice and movement canon such as Kristin Linklater, Patsy Rodenburg, Michael Chekhov, Delsarte, Ruth Zaporah, Jacques LeCoq and others. Storytelling, poetry, heightened text, melodrama and other will be utilized. Rather, it is to instill a sense of the totality of what it means to be an embodied human being and how to transform that knowledge into viable theatrical practice. The work of this class will include physical contact, both with your instructor and other students. We will practice a system based on Theatrical Intimacy Education for establishing appropriate physical boundaries and respectful communication regarding contact.

Writing Assignments
“There is no learning without reflection. There is no reflection without dedicated time.”
In keeping with the course’s commitment to engage critical thinking and wed theory to
practice, you will be responsible for regular reading and writing assignments. These are designed to help you reflect upon, synthesize, and determine your own aesthetic and training preferences. Some will be reflective in nature; others will be critical essays. (Further instructional materials will be handed out in class or posted on Canvas.) All assignments will be due in Canvas by the assigned day and time. Plan accordingly. I will not accept “Canvas/Internet issues” as an excuse for late work. Students are expected to write at college level with assignments that are correctly typed, appropriately formatted, grammatically correct and stapled if necessary. You will be graded both on content and form and significant points will be deducted for incorrect spelling and grammatical errors (including comma splices, run on sentences, sentence fragments, etc.).

Listening Reports
You will receive three listening assignments over the course of the semester designed to help you develop sensitivity and engage critically with voice acting, common speech and reading.

Play Attendance
Central to a Liberal Arts Education is the understanding that curiosity and expansion of knowledge make us better, deeper and wiser; engaging with the Arts as an audience member, reader, museum and concert goer, informs our artistic practice and broadens our horizons. It is expected that you will attend all ISU productions this semester in order to develop your critical faculties in the voice and movement work so essential to actor success. Please save your tickets as proof of attendance. There will be a one or two question quiz in the class to verify your attendance as well.

Performance Projects & Prep Work
You will perform numerous times throughout the semester to practice and develop the techniques and skills you are learning in class; specific guidelines will be provided. You are expected to perform on the day you are assigned. If you are absent during a performance, you will receive a 0 for the assignment. Just as a missed performance can’t be made up for an audience, you cannot make up a missed performance assignment. If you foresee an absence, speak with me immediately, as I may allow you to perform before your allotted time. In addition to the actual performances, there may also be various analyses required. For example, you might have a poem-scoring analysis which would be included in the overall grade for that project.

COURSE POLICIES

Participation and Preparation
You are expected to fully participate in all projects and exercises, with alert and whole-hearted engagement. This includes completing all course readings and writing assignments by their due dates and participating in class discussion. You must also come to class prepared to present whatever exercise or project that has been assigned for that day. Performance assignments CANNOT be made up in the event of absence. Course participation and preparation is evaluated during each course meeting day throughout the semester. This grade is based on attendance, full and engaged participation in each class activity, and thorough preparation for each class session. Thorough preparation includes
completion of all readings, analysis and effective rehearsals outside of class for assigned work. It also includes effective mental and physical preparation for each class session, including appropriate attire.

Decorum
Essential to the work of this class is a laboratory environment in which each student can feel free to explore and take risks, without fear or shame. We all share this responsibility and must support, respect, and encourage one another. True ensemble requires that judgment of others and personal likes and dislikes must be set aside in favor of fostering the creative efforts of the whole group. Absence, tardiness, or disrespectful behavior such as yawning, fidgeting, chatting, lethargy or caustic comments are harmful to the ensemble. An open countenance, alert mind and energized body is needed in order for you to succeed. Kindness, generosity, openness, leadership and respect will foster growth and success.

Attire
You are required to dress appropriately for physical work in solid color sweatpants, yoga pants or leggings. We will work in bare feet, or if needed, athletic shoes. The following are prohibited: jeans, street clothes, pants with zippers, swinging jewelry, hats, shorts, stripes, insignias or t-shirts turned inside out. Please dress neatly, avoiding clothes that are excessively concealing or revealing, and pull hair away from face. Layers for guarding against excessive heat or cold are highly recommended. You may need or want appropriate character clothing for selected assignments.

Classroom Rules
It is imperative that we create an environment free of disruption in order to obtain the focus required for our work. Therefore, cell phones, computers, ipads, etc are not allowed; please bring old-fashioned writing material and ensure that all electronic devices are turned off and put away for the duration of each class (including breaks if applicable.) If your device becomes a problem for any reason, you will be asked to leave and will lose the privilege of participating in that day’s class, resulting in an absence for the day. If you need access to a device for an emergency situation, please speak to me PRIOR to class time. (Not 5 minutes before.) There is no eating or drinking in class except water, which you should bring with you at all times. Please, eat a healthy breakfast that includes some protein and/or have a snack prior to class so you don’t crash. If you wish, bring your own yoga mat for stretching and floor work

Physical Environment
Due to the nature and content of this course the student must understand that s/he will be required to work in close physical proximity, often requiring contact, with their instructor and their fellow students. Classwork will include a session on defining personal boundaries. Excellent personal hygiene is required and care to prevent the spread of illness should be taken. Please let me know if you have any physical problems, either chronic or acute, which may prevent you from fully participating in class work.

Attendance
This course is a laboratory performance course. If you are enrolled, it is expected that you will attend every class and fully participate. Course work is experiential and learning
requires you to be here. If you are absent or arrive late, you compromise not only your own experience, but that of your classmates as well. Illness or emergency is the ONLY reason to miss class and you are therefore allowed two absences without penalty. A third MAY be granted in extreme cases, such as three university-mandated conflicts in one semester. If you must miss a session, please notify me beforehand if you are able. If your illness is mild, you are encouraged to attend class, watch and take notes. For each subsequent absence, one-third of a letter grade will be deducted; after four absences it will go down a full letter grade. A total of 6 absences will automatically result in a failing grade. If you have missed three classes by mid-semester you will be advised to withdraw from the class; in my experience it is very difficult to recover at that point. A student will be considered late once class has begun, and will be considered absent if more than 10 minutes late. Three latenesses will constitute an absence. You are responsible for all announcements and assignments given in class even if you are absent. Talk to a classmate, about the work we did, whether or not there was an assignment and so on. If you are due to perform an assignment on a day you must be absent, you will lose credit for the assignment unless you have made a prior arrangement with me, likewise for written assignments. Simply sending me an email saying you will be absent does not constitute ‘making alternative arrangements.’ If you fail to show up on a day you are scheduled to present without prior notification, you will lose credit for the assignment. Late Work will not be accepted.

Observation Paper - If injury or minor illness prohibit your full participation, you may, up to twice a semester, observe class and submit an observation paper which will be 400 words minimum, due within 48 hours of the observed class. The paper must be an examination of class work as it relates specifically to your own experience and possible application. You must submit this on your own recognizance, without a reminder from me.

Communication
When you have any concerns or questions, I have office hours or can meet you by appointment, or you can email me or call my office. Please understand that it may be 24 hours before I can get back to you and plan accordingly, although if I have not responded within 48 hours the chances are excellent that even with the best intentions that I may have lost track of your message. Email must be written formally, with correct punctuation and grammar, and please do include a phone number. Very often it is far easier and clearer if I can talk to you, even if you can’t come in to see me.

If you need support, I want to know! But I must know in time for me to be responsive; five minutes before class is too late or even the night before, other than for me to squeeze your hand compassionately. But if that does happen, then let’s figure out strategies so it doesn’t happen again. I want all of you to excel. If you are having difficulty with any aspect of the course it is essential that you take responsibility and contact me BEFORE your performance or assignment is due.

Groups/Partners
Over the course of the semester you will work in many groups and with multiple partners. Being a team player in these groups is essential to the success of your work. It will be very important for members to come to me immediately if something isn’t going well so we can address it in a positive and useful way.
Email
You must check your email on a regular basis for this class. Please check your email at least
two times per day. If you do not check your email, you may miss pertinent class
information or schedule changes. **You are responsible for any information sent by email.**
As assignments are added and new due dates accrue, the instructor will make every effort
to give plenty of advance warning and to follow up with announcements posted on Canvas.

Canvas
This online platform is NOT meant to be a substitute for coming to class.
Announcements and changes made in class may supersede those previously posted on
Canvas and you are responsible for them and for all class material and assignments
whether or not you were in class. Do not compound an absence by lack of preparedness
for the following class. If you must miss a class you must contact a fellow student about the
material and any assignment. Once you have done that, you may contact me if you still
have questions. Please notify me immediately if there is a glitch to obtaining course
materials on Canvas.

Sensitive Material
The theatre explores the full range of the human experience. Therefore, some of the
assigned material and class discussions will cover sensitive (and possibly explicit) material
that may offend some people. It is not the intention of this course or the instructor to
change anyone’s worldview, and students will be encouraged to share any and all opinions
they may have. Students should contact the instructor if they have any questions or
concerns.

Assignments
No late assignments will be accepted. Assignments are due on the day assigned and at the
beginning of class time. unless a legitimate emergency occurs and PRIOR
ARRANGEMENTS are made with the professor. Written assignments may be delivered
electronically if you are ill but performance assignments CANNOT be made up.

Grading Divisi
Body Story, Aspirational Statement
5% Mindfulness Course
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. Demonstrates significant
improvements in skill and knowledge during semester.
B- to B+ = 80-89% Good work: Always prepared; significant outside-of-class preparation, self-
motivated. Punctual; always present. Positive contributor to class. Demonstrates notable
improvement in skills and knowledge during semester.
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. Demonstrates some
improvement in skills and knowledge during semester.
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. Little skill and knowledge improvement demonstrated during semester.
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; 6 absences = AUTOMATIC FAILURE. Virtually no demonstrated growth in skills and knowledge.

(+ and - grades will be assigned on the following scale: percentages ending in 0-2 will result in a -; percentages ending in 7-9 will result in a +. Example: 70-72%=C-, 73-76%=C, 77-79=C+)

Course Outline
This calendar is entirely subject to change! We are going on a journey together, where, inevitably, there are opportunities as well as obstacles along the way that will impact our work. Being able to respond and adjust to the needs of the class rather than clinging stubbornly to my own agenda is an important part of what I do as a teacher. Think of it like a road trip where we might encounter signposts that could lead us somewhere other than where we originally planned to go. When that happens (notice I said ‘when’ and not ‘if’!) you will get good communication and plenty of time and appropriate guidance to prepare for your performance projects.

January 14 Intro Movement, Voice, Imagination (Untangle Podcast)
January 16 Sonnet Monsters; Assign TTT TED-type talk
January 21 Movement, Voice, Imagination
January 23 Ditto – feed in juicy words, onomatopoeia, different kinds of consonants
January 28 How the Voice Works/Body Awareness
January 30 Relaxation, Breathing, Resonance...
February 4 Jabberwocky Games/Memorization
February 6 Play with JABS or Haikus...
February 11 Jabberwocky Lab
February 13 Jabberwocky Lab
February 18 Jabberwocky Lab
February 20 TBA
February 25 JAB SHARE
February 27 TBA
March 3 TTTs
March 5 TTTs
March 10 TTTs
March 12 TTTs
March 17 – Spring Break
March 19 – Spring Break
March 24  Readings due
Anatomy/Technique voice, breath pressure, closure,

March 26  Anatomy/Technique TBA
Poem/Heightened Text or other performance
assignment analysis due

March 31  Anatomy/Technique

April 2   Anatomy/Technique

April 7   Commercial Voice Over recordings due
April 9   Heightened Text Work (assignments due)

April 14  Heightened Text Work (assignments due)
April 16  Heightened Text Work (assignments due)

April 21  Radio/Fairy Tale LAB
April 23  Radio/Fairy Tale LAB

April 28  Radio/Fairy Tale LAB
April 30  TBA

May 5    Final Exams  Radio Labs...

This syllabus is entirely subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Community Agreements:
As agreed upon by the class, the following community agreements will be relied upon throughout this course:

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.

ISU’s Principles of Community

Academic Integrity: 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

Accessibility Statement
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 work directly with staff in Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to establish eligibility and learn about related processes before accommodations will be identified. After eligibility is established, SAS staff will create and issue a Notification Letter for each course listing approved reasonable accommodations. This document will be made available to the student and instructor either electronically or in hard-copy every semester. Students and instructors are encouraged to review contents of the Notification Letters as early in the semester as possible to identify a specific, timely plan to deliver/receive the indicated accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are not retroactive in nature and are not intended to be an
unfair advantage. Additional information or assistance is available online at www.sas.dso.iastate.edu, by contacting SAS staff by email at accessibility@iastate.edu, or by calling 515-294-7220. Student Accessibility Services is a unit in the Dean of Students Office located at 1076 Student Services Building.

**Dead Week**
This class follows the Iowa State University Dead Week guidelines as outlined in http://catalog.iastate.edu/academiclife/#deadweek

**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, or the **Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance** at 515-294-7612.

**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**.

**Usability, Disability, and Course Design**
I am committed to creating a course that is inclusive in its design. If you encounter barriers, please let me know immediately so that we can determine if there is a design adjustment that can be made or if an accommodation might be needed to overcome the limitations of the design. I am always happy to consider creative solutions as long as they do not compromise the intent of the assessment or learning activity. You are also welcome to contact the Student Accessibility Services via phone 515-294-7220 to begin this conversation or to establish accommodations for this or other courses. I welcome feedback that will assist me in improving the usability and experience for all students.

**Student health and wellness**
Iowa State University is committed to proactively facilitating the well-being of all students. We welcome and encourage students to contact the following on-campus services for assistance regarding their physical, intellectual, occupational, spiritual, environmental, financial, social, and/or emotional needs:

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

Students in this course are responsible for being familiar with the University’s student rules and policies. Visit the ISU Policy Library website [http://www.policy.iastate.edu](http://www.policy.iastate.edu).

**Contact Information**
If you are experiencing, or have experienced, a problem with any of the above issues, email academicissues@iastate.edu.