

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**ACTING I Course Syllabus – Fall 2020**

**Course Title:** ACTING I

**Course:** THEA 251

**Credits:** 3

**Meeting Times:** M/W/F 11:00-11:50 (Section B) 1:10-2:00 (Section A)

**Classroom:** Carver 308

**Instructor:** Tiffany Antone (She/Her/Hers)

**Email:** TLAntone@iastate.edu

**Office:** CARVER 0328

**Office Hours:** T/Th 1-2:10 AND by apt.

**CONTACTING ME:**



- I make every effort to respond to email within 24 hours, Mon-Fri, however, I tend not to check my work email after 7pm. If you have a concern about something due the next day, don't wait till the last second to email me about it.
- When emailing me, please address me by name. (Never begin professional/academic emails with "Hey" or "Yo")
- If you have problems with Canvas, please contact the IT department for assistance.
- I will hold both in-person and virtual office hours this semester. In-person meetings will take place either outside or in the Theatre office conference room.

**REQUIRED TEXT:** *The Actor and The Target*, by Declan Donnellan

**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.

**IMPORTANT:** 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.

**COURSE OUTCOME GOALS:**

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.
- To work as an artistic community to understand the collaborative and cooperative nature of acting.

## 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!\*

## CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS:

We will spend most class periods learning and practicing various movement, voice, and breathing techniques. *As a result, we will be sharing a lot breathing time together*, so masks are HIGHLY encouraged. Additionally, it is imperative that you dress in clothes that will allow for full movement. (this means clothes and shoes that allow you to comfortably run, jump, kick, roll, etc)



**FACE MASKS ENCOURAGED:** Because of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, all students are encouraged—but not required—to wear face masks, consistent with current recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Further information on the proper use of face masks is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>.

**VACCINATIONS ENCOURAGED:** All students are encouraged to receive a vaccination against COVID-19.

Multiple locations are available on campus for free, convenient vaccination. Further information is available at: <https://web.iastate.edu/safety/updates/covid19/vaccinations>. Vaccinations may also be obtained from health care providers and pharmacies.

**PHYSICAL DISTANCING ENCOURAGED FOR UNVACCINATED INDIVIDUALS:** Classrooms and other campus spaces are operating at normal capacities, and physical distancing by faculty, staff, students, and

visitors to campus is not required. However, unvaccinated individuals are encouraged to continue to physically distance themselves from others when possible

**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 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](http://www.diversity.iastate.edu/principles-of-community) website (<http://www.diversity.iastate.edu/principles-of-community>)

**ATTENDANCE:**

This is a performance-based class; attendance is mandatory\*. Theatre is a collaborative art. To learn to perform, you must be here and participate. Much of the process of learning about acting involves interacting with your peers in class. Please make sure you arrive on time with a positive attitude, and take an active role in all course activities.

*\*If you are ill or have had a Covid exposure, please do NOT come to class. We will utilize a make-up menu to help balance missed attendance due to illness.\**

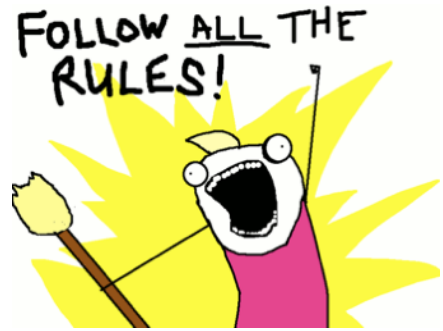
**GRADING:**

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 since this a performance based course, grading is often subjective. 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.\*\**

*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!*



### GENERAL ETIQUETTE REQUIREMENTS:

- 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.



### **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 (bah-kho-dzhe), 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.

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS:** 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 contact the ISU Crisis Text Line (Text ISU to 741-741) or contact the ISU Police Department (515) 294-4428.

**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 [emailwritectr@iastate.edu](mailto:emailwritectr@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.

**PREP WEEK:** This class follows the Iowa State University Pead Week guidelines as outlined in <http://catalog.iastate.edu/academics/#examinationstext>

**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.

**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)

## **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.

## **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; several absences. Virtually no demonstrated growth in skills and knowledge.

(+ and -grades will be assigned on the following scale: percentages ending in a 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+)

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. All written assignments will be posted in Canvas. Please make sure you have this course bookmarked in Canvas, with course notifications turned ON

## 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)
- In certain circumstances, some assignments can be made up through the CYOAA Project menu option.

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. 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.*

**FLEXIBILITY:** As theatre artists, learning to be flexible—both physically and in life— is an asset. During this time of global uncertainty, it is important that we remember this and lean into it when necessary. Although the course syllabus has been carefully laid out, it is entirely plausible that we will need to be adaptive/responsive to circumstances outside our control. Changes will be clearly communicated. Let us foster a culture of grace and understanding in this class, so that we may overcome any challenges together.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

\*\*While we will engage with a variety of exercises and assignments, I have included a list of this course’s primary projects below. This list is not exhaustive and is subject to change should circumstances require.

Weekly Process Reports	200
Attendance/Participation	100
Actor’s Inventory	50
Personal Intro	25
Attend and Respond – ISU play response assignment (two virtual performances worth 75 pts each)	150
Read/Respond/Discuss - Read a Play Assignments (3 x 50ps each)	150
Object Exercise	50
Mask/Character Study	75
Group Improv	50
Personalized Performance	100
Monologue (there are several parts to this assignment)	200
Final Scene (there are several parts to this assignment)	200
Additional class exercises	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1450</b>

### **Things to Remember About Coursework**

- Attendance and Participation: 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!
- You will engage in partner/group projects in this class - be prepared to schedule outside (digital) 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 track your progress 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.



- *NOTE: This class requires you to schedule some rehearsals outside of class!*

- 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. More details will be provided as production dates/times are announced.

- ★ **CLIMATE CHANGE THEATRE ACTION**

- ★ **GROVERS CORNERS**

- ★ **STREET SCENES (ISU Theatre collaboration with opera studio)**

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

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

### **Tentative COURSE SCHEDULE**

*If we’ve learned anything the past year, 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 due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. 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 and Masks**

**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...**

*Nov 22 - 26 = FALL BREAK*

**Week 14 - Rehearsing Together**

**Week 15 - Final Preparations**

**Week 16 - Final Presentations**