

## Theatre 351 Acting II

Iowa State University, Spring 2020

Class Location: Carver 0318

Credits: 3 Office

Time: T/TH 9:30-10:50

Office Hours: T/TH 1-2 pm and by appointment.

## Course Syllabus

Instructor: Leslie Bennett (she)

email: lbennett@isu.edu

Office: Carver 324

Office Phone: 515.294.3574

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is designed to broaden, improve and enhance the skills learned in Acting I through further character study, scene analysis, improvisation, and applied physical techniques. With a focus on doing, this course will challenge students to sharpen skills in concentration, imagination, impulse in exploring the world of the play, the five senses and total engagement of the artist's own resources. This course will require strict attendance, wholehearted, embodied engagement, a willingness to take risks, and significant time outside of class for rehearsal, reading, reflection, repetition.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Apply and master the lessons of spontaneity, play and imagination learned in Acting I to listen, and respond truthfully in the moment during scripted scene work.
- Apply specialized acting principles, techniques, and theories for character development and rehearsal during practical acting situations and personal acting processes
- Develop and articulate a creative, productive, collaborative and personal process for rehearsal.
- Develop the critical thinking skills and vocabulary essential to an actor through character and play analysis, interpretation, reflection.
- Sharpen observation skills in order to develop resources for acting in everyday life and hone critical sensibilities of others' theatrical endeavors.
- Deepen the awareness of the actor as creator and acting as an art form, mastery of which requires passion, diligence, discipline, technique, time, devotion, curiosity, risk, vulnerability, strength and rigor.
- Develop strategies for fostering the above attributes and for maintaining physical and mental wellbeing.

## METHODOLOGY

A multi-layered approach to the art of the actor will be employed for the course. There will be individual acting work, partnered exercises, and large group exercises. Classes will include discussions, assigned readings, demos, acting projects, creative writing, reflective writing, script and character analysis and performance critiques. Embodied exercises based on the work of Michael Chekhov, Jacques Lecoq, Rudolf Von Laban, Viola Spolin and more, which involve physical, intellectual and emotional exploration of various theories and techniques. 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.).

### Production Requirements

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. As a theatre student, it is important to develop your critical faculties by seeing as much theatre as you can. You will be required to see all three ISU shows this year and an ‘alternative artistic event’ and write a response for The Wolves and one other. A well-organized and professionally presented ‘podcast’ may be submitted for one of these written responses.

### Performance Projects

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 will also be various analysis projects required for your scene. Those points are included in the final point total indicated. For example, you might have a scene analysis assignment, or a character biography, which is 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 verbally in class. You must also come to class prepared to present whatever exercise 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.

#### Attire

You are required to dress appropriately for physical work in solid black sweatpants, yoga pants or leggings. We will work in soft shoes, 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. Please practice good hygiene. If you are not properly dressed for physical work, you will not be allowed to participate in class and will become an observer, which will result in the loss of participation points. During scene performances, you should wear clothes that facilitate the creation of character.

#### 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.

#### 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 plays and class discussions will cover sensitive (and in some cases 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 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 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+)

### 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. Should that be the case, you will get good communication and plenty of time and appropriate guidance to prepare for your performance projects.

#### Week 1

- January 14 Introduction/Assign Reading and Reflection
- January 16 Body/Voice/Imagination - Assigned Readings reflections/surveys due
- January 18 Due: Pre-Course Survey, Personal Inventory Personal letter/preferences/goals/ prior experience in character creation and play analysis. due on the 24<sup>th</sup> by 5 pm.

#### Week 2

- January 21 No class; KCACTF
- January 23 No Class; Assignments due. KCACTF
  - Due: Readings, Viewings, Response.

#### Week 3

- January 28 Actor's Toolbox; Assign Open Scene III Partners Character/Action/Imagination/WWW/personalization
- January 30 Actor's Toolbox Character/Action/Imagination/WWW/personalization Open Scenes I

#### Week 4

- February 4 Actor's Toolbox Open Scenes II; assign scene I; assign monologue search Memorization Tools/Tips; podcast from Untangled
- February 6 Open Scene Presentations

#### Week 5

- February 11 Scene I Memorized and Analysis Due

- February 13 Scene I Work/Perform
- Week Six
- February 18 Scene I Work/Perform
  - February 20 Scene I Work/Perform; Proposals for PT Scene due
- Week Seven
- February 25 Scene I Work/Perform
  - February 27 TBA
- Week 8
- March 3 Character Observation Studies
  - March 5 Character Observation Studies  
Monologue Proposals due
- Week 9
- March 10 Mid-semester Conferences (come prepared with answers to questions. Monologue Writing and memorizing Time for Monologues and reflections)
  - March 12 Mid-semester Conferences and ditto
- March 17 – Spring Break*  
*March 19 – Spring Break*
- Week 10
- March 24 Work Monologues
  - March 26 Work Monologues
- Week 11
- March 31 Work Monologues
  - April 2 Perform Monologues
- Week 12
- April 7 Animal Studies Phase I
  - April 9 Animal Studies Phase II
- Week 13
- April 14 Physical Technique Scene Memorized and Script Analysis  
Due–  
PT work on scenes (Laban, Chekhov, Animal)  
Surveys on Class Questions/Needs/Review Due
  - April 16 More PT Teaching/TBA
- Week 14
- April 21 Work PT Scenes
  - April 23 Work PT Scenes
- Week 15
- April 28 PT Scene Share
  - April 30 TBA
- Week 16
- Final Exam Week – TBA Perform Monologue Package?

## 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**

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 webpage <http://bit.ly/isuprinciples>.

**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](http://www.sas.dso.iastate.edu), by contacting SAS staff by email at [accessibility@iastate.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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>
- 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.”

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>.

### **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).