

THRE 353X-3: ACTING FOR THE CAMERA

Course Syllabus—Spring 2021

Instructor: Cason Murphy, M.F.A.

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Course Format: Hybrid (*Virtual instruction plus select in-person sessions*)

Course Time: Mondays & Wednesdays 3:40pm–5:00pm

Classroom: Zoom/Carver 308

Office: Carver 320

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Phone: 515-294-8936

Virtual Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00pm–2:00pm (by appointment on Zoom)

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

Students should be able:	<i>This will be measured by:</i>
To introduce and develop skills and techniques for on-camera performance.	<i>Reading assignments, in-class discussion, viewings, exercises, and on-camera performances</i>
To develop a basic understanding of the on-camera production process.	<i>In-class exploration and exercises, 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, 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), or any other preferred editing program (you can find a [list of free and safe programs here](#))
- And while not required, a **ring light** is a good investment if you plan to do any other on-camera work.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

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

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

Course Requirements	% of Grade	Points
Attendance and Participation	20%	200
Weekly Journals	30%	300
Market Research Project Portfolio	10%	100
On-Camera Auditions/Performances	30%	300
Final Reel	10%	100
TOTAL	100%	1000

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 all exercises and activities (readings done, prepared, memorized, rehearsed, with all necessary supplies and positive mental attitude). Participation also includes being fully engaged in the online portions of class (being an enthusiastic member of class discussion and responsive to online discussions). Additionally, upon viewing sessions, students will participate in feedback sessions, both as listener and critique-giver. All students are expected to contribute intelligently, articulately, and frequently.

WEEKLY JOURNALS: Weekly journals will be utilized to track students' development in on-camera performance and theory, thoughts on assigned readings, 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 performance re-creation from a film, a commercial audition, a sitcom scene, and a space opera monologue—each emphasizing and evaluating different skills.

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 REEL: For our final class, students will compile, edit, and submit a reel of footage of themselves. Students will have access to any material from auditions, but may also generate new material (monologues, commercials, songs, self-tapes, etc.) that best showcases them.

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

As this is a hybrid class, class meetings marked in **BLUE** will be in-person meetings.
All other classes will meet on Zoom.

Date	Topic of Class Meeting	What's Due For Next Time?
Week 1		
Jan. 25	Introduction to Class / Course Expectations	
Jan. 27	<i>Discussion: Theatre vs. Film/TV</i>	READ: Chapters 1-3 SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #1
Week 2		
Feb. 1	Getting Comfortable on Camera	UPLOAD: Recorded Slate
Feb. 3	PLAYBACK: Slates <i>Discussion: Typecasting / Strength and Stretch</i>	READ: Chapter 4 & 7 SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #2 UPLOAD: Performance Re-creations
Week 3		
Feb. 8	PLAYBACK: Performance Re-creations Group A	
Feb. 10	PLAYBACK: Performance Re-creations Group B	READ: Chapters 5 & 8 SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #3
Week 4		
Feb. 15	<i>Discussion: Acting and Reacting</i> Paired Listening Group Exercises	
Feb. 17	GUEST SPEAKER	READ: Glossary (and complete Quiz) SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #4
Week 5		
Feb. 22	SET VISIT	READ: Chapters 9 & 13
Feb. 24	<i>Discussion: Commercial How-To's</i> <i>Working with Props</i>	SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #5
Week 6		
Mar. 1	AUDITION: COMMERCIAL Group B	
Mar. 3	AUDITION: COMMERCIAL Group A	SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #6
Week 7		
Mar. 8	PLAYBACK: Commercial Auditions	
Mar. 10	GUEST SPEAKER	SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #7
Week 8		
Mar. 15	<i>Discussion: Editing Tips and Tricks</i>	READ: Chapters 14
Mar. 17	Reading Day	UPLOAD: Editing Exercise SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #8
Week 9		
Mar. 22	PLAYBACK: Editing Exercises Group A	
Mar. 24	PLAYBACK: Editing Exercises Group B	SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #9
Week 10		
Mar. 29	GUEST SPEAKER	
Mar. 31	<i>Discussion: Sitcom How-To's</i> <i>Reading in the Room</i>	SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #10

Week 11		
Apr. 5	AUDITION: SITCOM Group B	
Apr. 7	AUDITION: SITCOM Group A	SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #11
Week 12		
Apr. 12	PLAYBACK: SITCOM Auditions	
Apr. 14	<i>Discussion: Space Opera How To's Playing Big Emotions</i>	READ: Chapter 6 SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #12
Week 13		
Apr. 19	AUDITION: SPACE OPERA Group A	
Apr. 21	TBD	UPLOAD: Market Research Project SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #13
Week 14		
Apr. 26	AUDITION: SPACE OPERA Group B	
Apr. 28	PLAYBACK: SPACE OPERA	UPLOAD: Final Reel SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #14
Week 15		
May 5 (Wednesday)	FINAL MEETING: 12:00-2:00pm (on Zoom)	SUBMIT: Weekly Journal #15

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: As noted above, this being a hybrid class, we will utilize both virtual and in-person instruction. We will use the Zoom platform for all virtual 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 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 most, if not all, class meetings—both virtual and in-person. 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 will be assigned production roles in the room); subsequently, if a student fails to contribute by not speaking up, participating, or attending the student's participation grade will be penalized. 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, 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 navigate the current global 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 (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. Contact SAS by email at accessibility@iastate.edu or by phone at 515-294-7220 for additional information.

COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS: Students are responsible for abiding by the university's COVID-19 health and safety expectations. All students attending this class in-person are required to:

- properly wear a face covering and/or face shield, covering the nose and mouth, while in classrooms, laboratories, studios, offices, and other learning spaces. It is important to remember that a face covering and/or face shield is required to be worn whenever you are on campus, in the presence of others, and unable to maintain physical distance.
- practice physical distancing to the extent possible;
- assist in maintaining a clean and sanitary environment;
- not attend class if you are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19;

- not attend class if you have been told to self-isolate or quarantine by a health official;
- follow the faculty member's guidance with respect to these requirements. Failure to comply constitutes disruptive classroom conduct. Faculty and teaching assistants have the authority to deny a non-compliant student entry into a classroom, laboratory, studio, conference room, office, or other learning space.

These requirements extend outside of scheduled class time, including coursework in laboratories, studios, and other learning spaces, and to field trips. These requirements may be revised by the university at any time during the semester.

Faculty may refer matters of non-compliance to the Dean of Students Office for disciplinary action, which can include restrictions on access to, or use of, university facilities; removal from university housing; required transition to remote-only instruction; involuntary disenrollment from one or more in-person courses; and such other measures as necessary to promote the health and safety of campus.

It is important for students to recognize their responsibility in promoting the health and safety of the Iowa State University community, through actions both on- and off-campus. The university's faculty asks that you personally demonstrate a commitment to our Cyclones Care campaign. Iowa State University's faculty support the Cyclones Care campaign and ask you personally to demonstrate a commitment to our campaign. Your dedication and contribution to the campaign will also protect your classmates and friends, as well as their friends and families.

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 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.

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, 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