

**Course Outline for THEA 1A**  
**THEORY/PRACTICE OF ACTING I**  
**Effective: Fall 2021**

**I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

THEA 1A — THEORY/PRACTICE OF ACTING I — 3.00 units

This course prepares a student to apply basic acting theory to performance and develops the skills of interpretation of drama through acting. Special attention is paid to skills for performance: memorization, stage movement, vocal production, and interpretation of text. An introduction to the techniques and theories of acting, explored through improvisation, exercises and scene study. Students should be able to demonstrate the following skills: development of the physical and psychological resources for acting including relaxation, concentration, creativity, believability, and commitment.

3.00 Units Lecture

**Strongly Recommended**

ENG 1A - Critical Reading and Composition  
 with a minimum grade of C  
 or

ENG 1AEX - Critical Reading and Composition Expanded  
 with a minimum grade of C

**Grading Methods:**

Letter Grade

**Discipline:**

- Drama/Theater Arts

**Family:** Theater Studio

	<b>MIN</b>
<b>Lecture Hours:</b>	54.00
<b>Expected Outside of Class Hours:</b>	108.00
<b>Total Hours:</b>	162.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

**Before entering this course, it is strongly recommended that the student should be able to:**

A. ENG1A

1. Critically read texts and materials from a variety of academic and cultural contexts, demonstrating in writing and discussion the ability to:
  - a. Summarize a thesis and main points;
  - b. Analyze main ideas;
  - c. Relate ideas and information in the text to his/her own experience as well as other texts;
2. Write multiple-paragraph papers that:
  - a. Accurately and appropriately respond to a given assignment;
  - b. Develop a relevant, focused thesis;
  - c. Synthesize facts and ideas originating outside his/her direct experience to develop and support a thesis;
  - d. Use standard American English correctly;
3. Research a specific topic using the Internet, databases, journals, and books demonstrating an ability to:
  - a. Review sources for relevant evidence and arguments;
  - b. Integrate researched material into his/her own writing with appropriate context, explanation, punctuation, and citation;
  - c. Document sources in an academically responsible way.

B. ENG1AEX

1. Critically read texts and materials from a variety of academic and cultural contexts, demonstrating in writing and discussion the ability to:
  - a. Summarize a thesis and main points;
  - b. Analyze main ideas;
  - c. Evaluate the validity and logic of the text's reasoning and support;

- d. Relate ideas and information in the text to his/her own experience as well as other texts;
- e. Create a coherent position or argument based on reading;
- 2. Write multiple-paragraph papers that:
  - a. Accurately and appropriately respond to a given assignment;
  - b. Develop a relevant, focused thesis;
  - c. Are well-developed with sufficient and relevant evidence;
  - d. Synthesize facts and ideas originating outside his/her direct experience to develop and support a thesis;
  - e. Use standard American English correctly;
- 3. Research a specific topic using the Internet, databases, journals, and books demonstrating an ability to:
  - a. Review sources for relevant evidence and arguments;
  - b. Integrate researched material into his/her own writing with appropriate context, explanation, punctuation, and citation;
  - c. Document sources in an academically responsible way.

#### IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

**Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:**

- A. Discuss the basic techniques and principles of acting
- B. Read and analyze works of theater by 20th century playwrights for cultural connection to 20th century realism and social/cultural issues
- C. Recognize theater performance as an aesthetic and creative process, analyzing live performance for theatrical style and cultural narrative
- D. Use written analysis and/or group discussion to explore personal reflection to prominent works for culturally responsive contemporary theater
- E. Demonstrate basic skills of acting, including physical, vocal, imaginative, analytical, and emotional elements
- F. Participate in acting improvisations, warm-ups, technique work and scene study
- G. Work individually and with a partner in the process of rehearsing and performing an acting scene
- H. Use and apply a basic craft of acting in performance
  - I. Perform in both scripted and improvisational scenes in front of an audience
  - J. Analyze a character, scene, and play as part of the actor's preparation
    - 1. Compose a character analysis
    - 2. Analyze dramatic textual components as they pertain to performance
    - 3. Utilize appropriate theatrical terminology and jargon
- K. Critically evaluate the acting performances of other students and other actors
  - 1. Critique a scene from an observer's point of view, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of that presentation

#### V. CONTENT:

- A. Application of acting methods; theoretical approaches to acting.
  - 1. Concentration and focus
  - 2. Basic vocal and physical technique
  - 3. Principles of stage movement and blocking
  - 4. Opportunities to apply basic craft approaches for acting.
  - 5. Introduction to script analysis
  - 6. Improvisation
  - 7. Basic acting and theatre terminology and vocabulary
  - 8. Performance, evaluation processes and techniques
- B. Theater Performance Social and Cultural Connections
  - 1. Introduction to 20th century playwrights of Realism as an exploration of social and cultural connectivity to theater, which may include:
    - a. August Wilson
    - b. Tony Kushner
    - c. Anna Devereaux Smith
    - d. Luis Valdez
  - 2. Play reading and analysis
  - 3. Critical response essays, discussions, and group projects
- C. Aesthetic Evaluation of Theater Arts
  - 1. Introduction to the process of theater performance as a creative endeavor
  - 2. Terminology and styles
  - 3. Live viewing of performance for aesthetic evaluation and analysis
  - 4. Critical response essays, discussions, and group projects
- D. Acting Theory and Technique
  - 1. Subtext and inner monologue
  - 2. Beats of Action
  - 3. Objectives, tactics, obstacles
  - 4. Believability and truthfulness
  - 5. "In the moment" presence
  - 6. Listening and reacting
  - 7. Relationships
  - 8. Concentration and focus
  - 9. Commitment and energy
  - 10. Physical life and stage movement
  - 11. Personalization
  - 12. Characterization
- E. Exercises
  - 1. Relaxation
  - 2. Body awareness and movement
  - 3. Vocal freedom and technique
  - 4. Development of individual creativity and imagination
  - 5. Development of group/partner awareness and creativity
- F. Scene Preparation
  - 1. Character, scene and play analysis
  - 2. Memorization
  - 3. Rehearsals with partner, in and out of class
  - 4. Blocking
- G. Scene Presentation
  - 1. Performing scene before the class and instructor
  - 2. Feedback and coaching from instructor
  - 3. Second presentation of scene after feedback

#### VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. Student participation in warm up exercises, improvisations and acting technique work
- B. Lectures, demonstrations and discussions on acting theories and techniques
- C. Reading from textbooks or handouts
- D. Prepared performances of scenes and monologues. Evaluation and critique of this performance work by instructor
- E. Reading and analyzing the plays from which scenes are taken
- F. In-class and outside-of-class rehearsal of scenes and monologues, with as much coaching and guidance by the instructor as possible
- G. **Research** - research historical/cultural events of assigned plays, relating events to play analysis, character development, and acting and behavior choices.
- H. **Written Exercises** - Read and provide written analysis of female, disabled, and BIPOC playwrights in the Western canon
  - I. **Discussion** - Discuss with classmates social issues as presented in specific works of 20th century theater and their impact on performance theory and production staging.

#### VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Read the entire play from which an individual's acting scene is taken, for the purpose of understanding characterization, theme, plot, style, etc.
- B. Write a play and character analysis based on an outline provided by the instructor.
- C. Present a rehearsed scene in class, with lines memorized and blocking created, using acting techniques and principles learned in class
- D. Write a review of a live theatrical performance, with particular attention given to a critique of the acting.
- E. Read and provide written analysis of female, disabled, and BIPOC playwrights in the Western canon
- F. Research historical/cultural events of assigned plays, relating events to play analysis, character development, and acting and behavior choices.
- G. Discuss with classmates social issues as presented in specific works of 20th century theater and their impact on performance theory and production staging.

#### VIII. EVALUATION:

##### Methods/Frequency

- A. Exams/Tests
  - 1 time per semester
- B. Quizzes
  - 1-2 times per semester
- C. Research Projects
  - 1 per semester
- D. Papers
  - 1 per semester
- E. Class Participation
  - daily
- F. Other
  - 1. Grading of prepared scenes and monologues, based on the objective quality of the work and the amount of improvement and growth shown by student - at least 3 times per semester
  - 2. Grading of written play and character analyses - at least 3 times per semester
  - 3. Grading of tests or quizzes -1 final exam
  - 4. Judgment of participation in class improvisations, discussions and technique work - at least 3 times per semester
  - 5. Grades should be assigned and communicated as soon as possible after prepared work is done.
  - 6. Participation grade should be made known to student at least once in the middle of the semester, via Blackboard or some other means of communication

#### IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Playwrights Canada Press, and Jill Lloyd-Jones. *Truth in Play: Drama Strategies for Building Meaningful Performances*. 1st ed., Playwrights Canada Press, 2015.
2. Barton, Robert. *Acting: On Stage and Off*, Hartcourt Brace Jovanovich, 2011.
3. Flacks, Niki. *Acting With Passion: A Performer's Guide to Emotions on Cue (Performance Books)*. 1st ed., Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015.
4. Carey, David, and Clark Carey . *The Dramatic Text Workbook and Video*. 2nd ed., Methuen Drama, 2019.
5. Rushe , Sinéad . *Michael Chekhov's Acting Technique: A Practitioner's Guide*. 2nd ed., Methuen Drama, 2019.
6. Hagen, Uta. *A Challenge for the Actor*. "Later Printing" ed., Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991.
7. Course Handbook

#### X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

- A. Handouts provided by instructor