

**FUNDAMENTALS OF ACTING II (THEA 172)**  
**SPRING 2018**  
**SECTION 1**  
**MONDAY/WEDNESDAY 1:00 – 2:50**  
**NFAC 283**

**INSTRUCTOR: STEVE TROVILLION SMITH**  
**715-346-4073**  
**ssmith@uwsp.edu**

**OFFICE: NFAC #171**  
**OFFICE HOUR: 2:30-3:30 FRIDAYS**

---

***LEARNING OUTCOMES***

Upon completing this course, you should be able to:

- employ the expressive and sensory skills acquired in THEA 170 on a more advanced level.
- examine given circumstance dictated by texted material to understand and inhabit the world of the play.
- create a character based on given circumstance dictated by texted material and use physical impediments to communicate that character without idiosyncratic mannerism.
- maintain an impulsive and honest connection with a scene partner while using texted material and characterization based on that texted material.
- prepare yourself emotionally before coming on stage.
- play an action and not an emotion while at the same time freeing your mind and body to allow the action to engender emotion.
- understand creative work as a process not simply geared to result but to exploration and risk.
- be a supportive ensemble member and use the theatrical vernacular (including Meisner terminology) to facilitate achievement of these learning outcomes.

***COURSEWORK***

- Weeks 1- 4: Continue work with Meisner Technique using assigned transitional scripted scenes while reading plays in search of 1) a second scene which should involve large emotional choices and 2) a third scene involving a specific physical impediment.
- Weeks 5-6: Work on Meisner emotional preparation exercises, including:  
*The Sleep Exercise*  
*Coming Home to Do Something*  
Second scenes approved; scene work begun.

## ***COURSEWORK CONTINUED***

- Weeks 7-10: Work on scene involving emotional preparation. At first scene showing, you will hand in a research breakdown according to the Stanislavsky planes of the role: external, psychological, physical, social, and personal. This breakdown should be a blueprint for the performance; i.e., the breakdown should include character choices based upon your research. It should also contain a rehearsal log, your emotional prep and your intention. *This breakdown will be updated to include bulleted notes from class work and handed in for grading at the second and final scene showing.* The physical impediment scene should be submitted for approval.
- Week 11 to end of semester: Work on third scene involving a specific physical impediment. The research breakdown procedure is the same as the second (emotional prep) scene.
- This schedule may change at any time due to the rate of growth and ability demonstrated by the class as a whole.
- *You are required to keep a journal that may be collected and evaluated at any time.* In addition to your thoughts, feelings and impressions about the Meisner work and your acting training, the journal should contain a list of all plays read and movies watched during the semester (see below). The journal should be written in pen, *not pencil* and must be with you during every class. *If the journals are collected and you do not have yours, you will lose a letter grade if it is turned in the same day and another letter grade for every day it is late.*
- *You are required to read at least one play from the play list per week.* Any play not on the list must be approved by me before it can be counted and must be from the school of realism; i.e., no verse or other classical forms. You must stay up to date on play reading; i.e., you cannot wait until the end of the semester to read all your plays. *If the journals are collected at any time during the semester for evaluation and you have not read a sufficient number of plays, your journal grade will be lowered by a letter for each play you are short.*
- You may purchase your own copies of plays or you may borrow them from the Learning Resources Center (LRC). If you cannot find the play in the LRC or it's been checked out, check the Players' Library for a copy. If neither of these two places has a copy, you may borrow my copy of the play (if I have it).
- You will receive a copy of the AFI's list of Top 100 American Films. You must watch at least 5 films from this list before the end of the semester; at least three of them must be watched by mid-term and at least three of them must have been made before 1970. All films must be watched by the end of the twelfth week of class. *If journals are collected and you haven't watched a sufficient number of films, your journal grade will be lowered one letter for each film you are short.*

## ***COSTUME POLICY***

If you wish to borrow a costume for a scene, you must have it approved by me before contacting the costume shop. The costume piece borrowed must NOT be on the list of rehearsal costumes you are required to have as specified in the student handbook. If it is something unusual and not easily obtained (i.e., a corset, nun's habit, fat suit, etc.) I will approve the request. You must then

## ***COSTUME POLICY CONTINUED***

send an email to Cece Hill in the costume shop that politely requests permission to borrow the costume. You should copy me on the email so Cece knows the request has been approved. You should take very good care of the costume piece and return it clean and in the same shape that you received it. You should make sure to deal with the costume shop at times when they are not busy (i.e., “crunch week”). You should know that borrowing a costume piece is a privilege and not a right and the costume shop has the right to refuse any request. If you do not follow these procedures or if you lose or damage a costume you may lose this privilege.

## ***PROPS/WEAPONS POLICY***

The props/weapons policy is similar to the costume policy. You must have any props or weapons request approved by me before making the request. The prop should be integral to the scene (i.e., no set dressing) and must be something that is not easily obtained. After I approve the request, you should send an email to Sarah Ross requesting to borrow the prop or Jared Hanlin requesting to borrow a weapon and copy me on the email. You should take great care with the prop or weapon and return it in the same condition as you received it. Borrowing a prop is a privilege not a right and Sarah or Jared have the right to refuse any request. If you do not follow these procedures or if you lose or damage a prop you may lose this privilege.

## ***GRADING***

Grading will be based on:

### *Journal (including play reading and movie watching) – 25%*

- “A” – the journal was complete, specific, introspective and clearly formatted.
- “B” – the journal was complete and clearly formatted but lacked specificity and/or introspection.
- “C” – the journal was missing at least one entry and lacked specificity and/or introspection.
- “D” – the journal was missing multiple entries, lacked specificity and introspection and was unorganized. Some entries are indecipherable.
- “F” – the journal is missing multiple entries, lacks specificity and introspection and is unreadable. This will also be the grade if the journal isn’t handed in at all.

*If any plays or movies are missing when the journals are collected, the journal grade is further lowered from the above grades as described in the coursework section.*

### *Emotional Prep Scene (Planes of the Role paper and performance) – 25%*

### *Physical Impediment Scene (Planes of the Role paper and performance) - 25%*

- “A” – The paper is properly formatted and articulately expresses the student’s character choices. Each plane has been well explored and has been used as a blueprint to develop the character. The choices are bold, appropriate to the text, respect the given circumstances and show impressive creative imagination. The classroom performance reflects these choices, has been adequately rehearsed and reflects a level of skill commensurate with a rehearsal run-through (not a final performance). The notes given during the first showing have been acknowledged and integrated.

## **GRADING CONTINUED**

“B” – The paper is properly formatted and expresses the student’s character choices. Each plane has been adequately explored and has been used as a blueprint to develop the character. The choices are appropriate to the text, respect the given circumstances and show some creative imagination but there are still issues (such as personalization of the choices) that have not been resolved. The classroom performance has been adequately rehearsed and reflects a level of skill commensurate with a rehearsal run-through (not a final performance). Most of the notes given during the first showing have been acknowledged and integrated.

“C” – The paper is properly formatted and expresses the student’s character choices. One or more of the planes have not been adequately explored and this is reflected in the performance. The choices are appropriate but show little creative imagination. There are still performance issues that have not been resolved. The classroom performance has been rehearsed and reflects a level of skill commensurate with a rehearsal run-through (not a final performance). Some of the notes given during the first showing have been acknowledged and integrated. This grade could also reflect a poor attitude towards taking direction.

“D” – Most of the paper is properly formatted but the student’s character choices are still unclear. Multiple planes are still not adequately explored and this is reflected in the performance. The choices are weak and not creatively imaginative. There are still performance issues that have not been resolved. The classroom performance has not been adequately rehearsed and does not reflect a level of skill commensurate with a rehearsal run-through (not a final performance). Most of the notes given during the first showing have not been acknowledged or integrated. This grade could also reflect a poor attitude towards taking direction or difficulties working with a partner.

“F” – The paper is incorrectly formatted or not handed in. Multiple planes are not explored and this is reflected in the performance. The classroom performance has not been adequately rehearsed and does not reflect a level of skill commensurate with a rehearsal run-through (not a final performance). The notes given during the first showing have not been acknowledged or integrated. This grade could also reflect a poor attitude towards taking direction, difficulty working with a partner or failure to perform the scene in class.

### Studio work – 25%

“A” – The student was a positive member of the ensemble, participated in discussion and gave performance feedback to peers. The student explored in depth the skills required for the transitional scene work and the emotional prep exercises.

“B” – The student was a positive member of the ensemble, usually participated in discussion and gave performance feedback to peers. The student explored the skills required for the transitional scene work and the emotional prep exercises.

“C” – The student was usually a positive member of the ensemble, rarely participated in discussion and occasionally gave performance feedback to peers. The student tried to explore the skills required for the transitional scene work and the emotional prep exercises.

*There will be no “D” grade given for studio work. If the student doesn’t fulfill the minimum requirements for a “C” grade, they will receive an “F” for their studio work.*

## ***ABSENCE POLICY***

You are allowed two absences per semester. These excused absences are to cover illness or family emergency. These absences are in addition to official university holidays and university condoned religious holidays. Following the second absence, your grade will be lowered one grade level for every additional absence.

## ***PHYSICAL CONTACT***

This class may require physical contact. You should be aware that you might be physically touched by others in the class and/or by me. If this is a problem for any reason, you must come speak with me and we'll initiate the process to make an accommodation.

## ***OFFICE HOUR***

I have an office hour on Fridays from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. or you may schedule an appointment if this time conflicts with your schedule. Please do not consider a meeting confirmed until we have spoken in person or by email ([ssmith@uwsp.edu](mailto:ssmith@uwsp.edu)).

## ***EMERGENCY PROCEDURES***

See UW-Stevens Point Emergency Procedures at [www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures](http://www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures) for details on all emergency response at UW-Stevens Point. We will discuss tornado and fire procedures in class.

## ***SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT***

Meisner, Sanford and Longwell, Dennis. *On Acting*. New York: Vintage Books.

*Acting is just as hard as ditch digging. And if you do all the yeoman work, inspiration will come.*  
-Frank Langella

*The finest actors do not try to avoid criticism; they solicit it.*  
-Robert Cohen