Introduction to Acting Sample Syllabus

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
[THE111] Introduction to Acting is a beginning level three-credit course; it has no prerequisite. It is designed for non-majors with minimal or no experience or training in acting. Students will learn basic acting skills through class participation in monologue work, scene work, and improvisations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. To introduce the student to the basic imaginative, physical, and vocal skill necessary to effective acting.
2. To develop the student's observational skills and artistic sensibility
3. To enhance physical skills related to the actor's craft: concentration, focus, relaxation, and collaboration, as well as physical and vocal awareness.
4. To experience the collaborative process of theatre making by creating and presenting characters in monologues and scene work and thereby cultivate respect for fellow students in the development of their creative potential.

CONTENT OVERVIEW:
The main focus of the class is the process of acting and creating a character. This helps students develop an appreciation for the art of theatre and the discipline of acting, thus becoming more knowledgeable audience members. Exercises are designed to cultivate creativity and explore the mind and world of the character in monologue and scene work from well known dramatic texts. The process of acting is a multi-faceted process that cultivates many skills, including: concentration, observation, problem solving, critical and analytical thinking, oral presentation, interpersonal and communication. The exercises and techniques used in teaching this course utilize these skills.

TEXTBOOK OPTIONS (individual teachers prefer one of several excellent texts)

Acting: The First Six Lessons, by Richard Boleslavsky
The Actor as Storyteller: An Introduction to Acting, by Bruce Miller
The Actor in You: Sixteen Simple Steps to Understanding the Art of Acting, by Robert Benedetti (2008)

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS:
Introduction to Acting is a participatory course. Acting exercises and improvisations are geared to teach elements of building and creating a stage character. The use of theatre games is instrumental in developing concentration, interpersonal, interactive, and communication skills. The in-depth study of a dramatic text utilizes analytical and critical thinking and promotes class discussions. Students will prepare, memorize, and perform two characters from two contrasting scenes in the course of the semester. In addition to the in-class acting experience, students are required to attend two live theatre productions and write two evaluations. Students will discover the encompassing aspect of theatre as an art form and attend a related event and write an evaluation on their experience. Actors engage in written character and script analysis. The paper topics, format and requirements will be handed out in class and discussed in detail.

EVALUATION METHODS:
The evaluation process emphasizes an honest and sincere commitment to the work. An open minded, willing attitude is integral to the course work, as is preparedness, dependability, memorization and handing in assignments on time. The most important aspect of this course is class participation in the acting exercises and activities. Participation requires attendance. Without live bodies live theatre does

not exist. Scene work also takes place during the class period and is designed to teach the performance aspect and ethic of this course. Responsibility to scene partners and showing respect to classmates is of extreme importance. This respect is also demonstrated in attendance.

Written assignments are executed to balance out the participation component. Aspects of evaluation are comprised of the following:

- Regular attendance, punctuality, participation, and class exercises.
- Attend two live theatre productions.
- Attend one related experience (i.e. dance, music, visual art, museum, live sporting event, etc.)
- Acting Assignment #1(Playwright scene) / Clues to Character
- Acting Assignment #2 (Name of assigned play) / Character Project

GRADING SCALE:

Each student enters the class with unique experiences and abilities. Each is expected to work to the best of his/her ability. Grading/evaluation depends heavily on student attitude, growth, and progress.

1.	Regular attendance, punctuality, participation, and class exercises.	50 points
2.	Attend two live theatre productions.	10 points
3.	Attend one related experience.	5 points
4.	Acting Assignment #1/Clues to Character.	15 points
5.	Acting Assignment #2/Character Research.	20 points
	Total	100 points

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS/Coursework:

1. Introduction – Syllabus
2. Acting Exercises – Get Acquainted
3. Acting Exercises, Discussion – Assign Observation Exercise
4. Acting Exercises
5. Acting Exercises – Last day to drop
6. Observation Exercise Due
7. Select Scene Partners – Discuss Acting Assignment I
8. Acting Exercises – Given Circumstances
9. Discuss Clues to Character – Format handed out in class
10. Acting Exercises – Prep for scene work
11. Scene selected – copy of scene for Instructor
12. Play read - discuss
13. Scene work
14. Clues to Character due – N0 LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED
15. Present rough run through of scene – Memorized!!
16. Scene work
17. Scene work
18. Final Performance – Acting Assignment I Bring copy of play to class
19. Discuss Character Project Paper
20. Discuss play
21. Acting Exercises – Subtext
22. Scene work
23. Scene work

24. Scene work
25. Present rough run through of scene
26. Class discussion and Scene work
27. Character Project Paper Due
28. Scene work
29. Scene work
30. Final Scene– All Production Forms and Related Experience Forms Due NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED
    Final 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Performance: Clues to Character:
Guidelines and format to be given in class

Character Research Paper:
In-depth character research on the scene character you are portraying. The purpose of this research is to enhance your character development by additional research. The research will help you, the actor/actress, to get into the mind of the character and experience the world of the play. Select research that will be most helpful to you as the actor/actress. It may involve any one of the following:

1) study and research of the playwright,
2) study and research of a particular time period and/or historical event of the play,
3) engage in a physical activity the character does or talks about doing in the play, or
4) research of the social, cultural, and political influences of the play that affect your character.

The research paper must be typewritten and three-four pages in length. Write with depth and detail about what you researched, experienced, and insights gained into the character. Discuss how this research can benefit you as an actor/actress creating a character. Additional guidelines and instructions will be given in class.

Theatre Productions and Related Experience:
Write briefly of your experience on the form provided for you and staple ticket stub or photocopy of ticket stub to the form. Forms are due the following class period after you have attended the production or related experience.

"When in doubt, make a fool of yourself. There is a microscopically thin line between being brilliantly creative and acting like the most gigantic idiot on earth. So what the hell, leap."
Cynthia Heimel . . . .