

MFA Acting 1 (TPP6115)—Altmeyer, Fall 2021

MODERN ACTING THEORY AND PRACTICE/MFA ACTING I

TPP 6115

Fall 2021

Meeting Times and Location: MWF Period 2-3 (8:30 AM - 10:25 AM), CON G14

Credits: 2

Professor Tim Altmeyer

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210 McGuire Pavilion

Office Hours: Email to make an appointment

MODERN ACTING THEORY AND PRACTICE: Over a series of progressive exercises, students begin to discover an effective, dependable, repeatable set of working tools for the actor, derived from contemporary acting philosophies (David Mamet/Atlantic Theatre Company), to enhance their sense of truthfulness in their performance work—through greater use of self, presence, purposefulness, and impulsivity.

OBJECTIVES/GOALS:

- The student develops a way of working to refine their acting in terms of immediacy, moment-to-moment living, clarity, specificity, and personal connection
- The student acquires a vocabulary and an extensive working knowledge of concepts with which to develop a readily accessible, repeatable, effective acting process
- The student demonstrates a competent knowledge of select contemporary acting theories and theorists
- The student develops an understanding of professional demands and expectations
- The student develops greater bravery in exploration, rehearsal and performance
- The student demonstrates the capacity to think critically and articulately about the acting process
- The student develops a more defined point of view as an artist

CONTENT WARNING: In this course, we will cover content and material that some may find difficult. It is important that we do not shy away from engaging with material that may be controversial or challenging. I encourage you to reach out to me if you are struggling with the course material. In class, if you need to step away for a period of time as we are covering particular content, you may do so without penalty, but I ask that you remember that you are responsible for any information covered in your absence. While I wholly support the idea of the classroom being a Safe Space, I also ask you to embrace it as a Brave Space.

TEXTS:

***A Practical Handbook for the Actor* (Paperback)** by Melissa Bruder et al (Vintage Original, 1986, ISBN: 0-394-74412-8)

***Acting Professionally* (Paperback)** by Robert Cohen & James Calleri (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, ISBN: 978-0-230-21724-9)

PERSONAL STATEMENT: As a white cis male associate professor, I am committed to becoming more acutely aware of how systemic racism and gender bias are embedded in my teaching and artistic practices as well as in my daily interactions. By doing so, I may consciously prevent the perpetuation of these behaviors and identify anti-racist and anti-bias practices that can assist me in undoing systemic racism and bias to promote a climate of diversity, equity and inclusion at the University of Florida.

MFA Acting 1 (TPP6115)—Altmeyer, Fall 2021

WORLD ACCORDING TO TIM (WATT):

“Portrayals of human behavior have a recognizable logic about them.”

“Interpretation is the marriage of story (fiction) with the personal, subjective experience of the actor.”

“As a teacher, I can only espouse and impart what I understand to be true and useful for me as an artist.”

CRITICAL DATES (Subject to Change):

8/23 Intro
8/27 Action
8/30 Scene Analysis
9/3 As-If Exercise
9/10 Monologue Workshop
9/17 Scene 1
9/27 Scene 2
10/6 Scene 3
10/15 Scene 4
10/25 Scene 5
11/1 Scene 6
11/10 “Business of the Business” Module
12/8 Final Presentations

COURSE OUTLINE:

WEEK 1	INTRO/ACTION/SCENE ANALYSIS
WEEK 2	EXPLORATION OF “AS-IF”
WEEK 3-4	MONOLOGUE WORKSHOP
WEEK 5-16	EXPLORATION/APPLICATION/INTERROGATION

GRADING BREAKDOWN:

Performance	50%
Written Work/Participation	30%
Final	<u>20%</u>
Total	100%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	% Equivalency	GPA Equivalency
A	100-94	4.0
A-	93-90	3.67
B+	89-87	3.33
B	86-84	3.00
B-	83-80	2.67
C+	79-77	2.33
C	76-74	2.00
C- *	73-70	1.67
D+	69-67	1.33
D	66-64	1.00
D-	63-60	.67
E, I, NG, S-U, WF	59-0	0.00

- Please note that a C- is no longer an acceptable grade for any course in which a 2.0 GPA is required, for example, any course in the major.

UF grading policy website:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#calculatinggpa>

MFA Acting 1 (TPP6115)—Altmeyer, Fall 2021

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING BEHAVIOR/DEMEANOR: One goes to a good school to get a good education and, in turn, to get a leg up in her profession. The professional workplace demands disciplined work and behavior. Otherwise, you get fired and create a very bad reputation for yourself. Bad reputations get around. A similar work ethic is required of you in this class, as an advanced-level college student, a responsible citizen and future professional. Assignments will be completed in a timely, thorough fashion. They will meet a level of sophistication fitting for advanced students of the theatre.

Criteria by which performance work will be assessed:

- Energy & Commitment
- Authority
- Devotion to Course Concepts
- Openness to Exploration

Criteria by which written work will be assessed:

- Content (presentation, support, detail, development, and evidence of course concept knowledge)
- Quality of Writing (grammar, spelling, syntax and punctuation)

Also: **Attendance is mandatory.** (See *Attendance Policy*.) To learn to act, you must act. To act, you must be here. Your learning comes in the shared experience. Your participation has as much to do with others' growth as your own. Your absence is costly to everyone. The professional theatre does not make allowances for illness. Actors do not have the luxury of getting sick. Exercise. Eat healthfully. Drink lots of water. Don't smoke. Your body and your breath are your greatest tools as an actor. Protect them. Please note: **Attendance is not the same as participation.** You are expected to be not only physically present, but mentally. You will be expected to demonstrate your understanding of class concepts by the comments and criticisms you make. Speak thoughtfully and often.

Criteria by which participation will be assessed:

- Frequency of Participation
- Quality of Comments
- Listening Skills
- Behavior

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING COVID-19: In response to COVID-19, the following practices are in place university-wide to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones:

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit this link for details on where to get your shot, including options that do not require an appointment: <https://coronavirus.uflhealth.org/vaccinations/vaccine-availability/>. Students who receive the first dose of the vaccine somewhere off-campus and/or outside of Gainesville can still receive their second dose on campus.
- You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated. Please continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing. Following these practices is our responsibility as Gators.
- Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.

MFA Acting I (TPP6115)—Altmeyer, Fall 2021

- Hand sanitizing stations will be located in every classroom.
- If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email covid@shcc.ufl.edu) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website for more information.
- If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.
- Continue to regularly visit coronavirus.UFHealth.org and coronavirus.ufl.edu for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: In an attempt to create a disciplined environment that simulates the demands of the actor's workplace, I typically enforce an attendance policy that allows little room for you to exert any personal control over the business of being an actor. The callback, the shoot, and the evening's performance do not wait for your good health or your good night's sleep. However, given the lingering pandemic during which this course is being taught, there are special instructions that MFA Acting I students must abide regarding attendance:

*Students are expected to stay home and seek medical help for COVID-19 symptoms (persistent cough, fever 100.4+, new loss of taste or smell, muscle pain/headaches, shortness of breath, sore throat, chills, diarrhea, or feeling generally ill) or have known exposure to someone diagnosed with COVID. The culture of hiding illness or the "show must go on" mentality must be avoided. Students who are medically required to quarantine will have documentation from a medical provider. Students who self-quarantine must communicate with the instructor. At this time, there is no electronic alternative to face-to-face meetings for this course. **The UF Honesty Policy applies to self-quarantining as well.***

Students who elect to enroll in this course are expected to participate in in-person instruction. If a student is uncomfortable attending in-person, the student should plan to take the course in a future semester.

Barring the above circumstances, students are expected to be in attendance daily and to be on time. Students are allowed one (1) "unexcused" absence that does not require documentation and does not conform to the UF "acceptable reasons for absence." Any other "unexcused" absence will result in a penalty of a full letter grade (10%) from the final grade per "unexcused" absence. To be considered "excused" an absence must be accompanied by appropriate official documentation. Religious observances do not require documentation.

Any absence from class for the following reasons must be supported by official acceptable documentation to avoid a grade penalty:

MFA Acting 1 (TPP6115)—Altmeyer, Fall 2021

- *Illness. A doctor's note must be on official letterhead with address and phone number, noting the date and time of visit and diagnosis verifying that an absence from class is warranted, doctor name and signature*
- *Serious family emergencies*
- *Special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences)*
- *Military obligation*
- *Severe weather conditions (e.g., hurricane-related events)*
- *Participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate*
- *Court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena)*

To help organize accommodations, students should inform the instructor by the end of the second week of classes of religious observances of their faith that will conflict with class attendance this semester.

Any student that acquires three (3) absences (either excused or unexcused) will be required to meet with this course's instructor and/or area faculty to discuss the student's continued participation in the course.

Failure to attend this meeting will result in Artistic Probation.

Due to the participatory nature of the course that includes in-class collaboration along with partner and ensemble work, if a student acquires more than two (2) unexcused absences, the student may be prohibited from participation in partner/group exercises which will affect the student's final grade.

In the same way, tardiness will also be penalized. It has no place in rehearsal, at auditions, at your early morning call on set for a shoot or at half-hour in the theatre, and it has no place in the classroom. I will excuse one (1) late arrival to class. Each additional late shows will result in a 5% deduction from your final score. Simply put, do the math, show up for class, and develop a discipline that will keep you working in the profession.

POLICIES REGARDING MAKE-UP WORK AND LATE WORK:

Absences do not make one exempt from class obligations. Work must be made up in a timely fashion, at the discretion of the instructor, typically in the week follow the student's return to class. Unexcused late work will be penalized with penalties increasing relative to lateness; anything past deadline is at least 1 day late:

<u>Days</u>	<u>Penalty</u>
1	3 points
2	5 points
3	7 points
4	10 points
5	12 points
6	15 points
7	20 points
8 +	40 points

CANVAS AND ZOOM: Much of the administration of this course will be done via Canvas unless specified otherwise. Course delivery is subject to change as the semester demands. If COVID-19 concerns escalate, more of this course's class meetings may be held online via Zoom. Consult Canvas for date-specific meeting information throughout the semester.

MFA Acting 1 (TPP6115)—Altmeyer, Fall 2021

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/98903466408>

Meeting ID: 989 0346 6408
One tap mobile
+13017158592,,98903466408# US (Washington DC)
+13126266799,,98903466408# US (Chicago)

UF HONESTY POLICY: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold both ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: ***On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.***

UNAUTHORIZED PUBLICATION OF RECORDINGS: A recording of a class lecture may not be published by a student without the consent of the lecturer. "Publish" is defined as sharing, transmitting, circulating, distributing, or providing access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. A recording, or transcript of the recording, is considered to be published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper or leaflet.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING SERVICES:

UF Counseling Center

3190 Radio Rd.
P.O. Box 112662, University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611-2662
352-392-1575
www.counsel.ufl.edu