

## Introduction to Acting

Fall 2017 M/W 9:30-11:45am

**Instructor:** Maurice Emmanuel Parent

**Location:**

**Email:** Maurice.Parent@tufts.edu

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

*Introduction to Acting* is a course designed to enhance self-confidence, oral expression, and creativity. The actors' tools are rooted in an awareness of your self in relation to the world around you, and encourage free, open responses to external stimuli. Over the semester, instruction will range from solo work, in-class lectures, course readings, papers, journals, and group activities both in and out of the classroom, all emphasizing *process over product*. Course work is designed to access the tools of the actor (Voice, Body and Imagination) to acquire skills that will prove beneficial in all academic and professional fields. The course will hopefully instill a respect for the craft of acting.

Course Objectives:

- To increase self-awareness and critical thinking
- To embrace risk-taking and problem-solving
- To develop creativity and nurture imagination
- To develop flexible mindsets and adaptability
- To increase confidence in public speaking
- To foster empathy and observation skills
- To exercise the body and voice as expressive instruments
- To encourage collaboration and ensemble building

### COURSE POLICIES

#### ABSENCES

- Excused absences are allowed for medical reasons with a signed slip from a doctor or religious holidays. For religious holidays, the student *must* notify the instructor **IN ADVANCE** (during the first week of classes) and make arrangements for making up the work.
- Only **ONE** unexcused absence is allowed. If you must miss a class, let me know as soon as possible.
- Every absence without a valid excuse lowers the participation grade by half a grade (e.g. from A- to B+ or from B to B-.)
- A student who has more than **THREE ABSENCES**, excused or unexcused, will be advised to drop the course.
- Absolute punctuality is required. Arrive early, so that we can start on time at 9:30. Please arrive early to help set up the room. Repeated tardies will result in a deduction of your participation grade. Arriving more than 15 minutes after the start of class will be marked as an unexcused absence. If you incur an injury, a chronic illness, or a family emergency that will result in frequent absences or an

inability to complete your assignments, you should contact Student Accessibility Services immediately (<https://students.tufts.edu/student-accessibilityservices>).

## **ATTIRE**

- Clothing should be loose and comfortable—appropriate for somewhat physical exercise and for lying/sitting on the floor. Tight pants, flip flops, jewelry that inhibits movement, and high heels should not be worn.

## **ADDITIONAL RULES**

- No food or drink allowed in the classroom. Except water which is encouraged!
- Notify me immediately of any new or ongoing accommodation or physical safety issues.
- Use of phones and computers are prohibited unless I give specific permission.
- I expect you to treat your fellow students with respect at all times. In order to create a collaborative space, critiques must come from a place of empathy. Several of the exercises will foster self-consciousness and push you out of your comfort zone. The classroom should be a safe space for exploration at all times. Endangering that safety is unacceptable. Please speak with me privately regarding any exercise that makes you feel uncomfortable.

## **GRADING**

Please note that NO incomplete grades are allowed

### **General criteria for grades:**

- A Achievement beyond the expectation of the assignment  
Outstanding, truly superior work  
Special/extra contributions to the assignment
- B Some level of excellence  
Thorough completion of ALL of the work at a high level of quality  
Maintenance of a good standard of work
- C Satisfactory completion of MOST of the work  
Acceptable (yet mediocre) quality of the work
- D Spotty completion of assignment  
Unsatisfactory quality of work

## **COMMUNICATION**

- It is important that you check your e-mail and Trunk regularly. If you do not use your Tufts e-mail account, please make sure that you have your Tufts e-mails forwarded to your personal account.
- Email is the best way to contact me regarding any questions or concerns you may have about the course; however, as a general practice, I will not respond to emails after 8:00pm at night.
- Preparedness, plan ahead and keep tabs on course deadlines! For every day your work is late, I will reduce the grade on the assignment by 20%.
- Being prepared includes reading all assigned material, being dressed appropriately for rehearsal, regularly meeting with scene partners outside of class, and leaving all outside concerns outside the door.

## **PARTICIPATION**

- You should approach class with a “Yes, and” attitude. Dive-in all activities with a willingness to explore. Give 100% commitment and attention when working with or watching your colleagues. You will be required to give constructive feedback to your peers after in-class presentations.
- Use of phones and computers are prohibited unless I give specific permission.
- Please do not leave class unless it is absolutely necessary. If you have an emergency situation and are waiting for a call, inform me before class and sit near the door so that you can exit as quietly as possible.
- Please help to keep our classroom a productive learning environment. Clean and organize the space after each class. Treat your colleagues with kindness, generosity, and respect.

## **ACADEMY INTEGRITY**

Tufts’ booklet entitled “Academic Integrity” outlines the university’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work and explains the importance of academic honesty. Please note:

- All work done in this class must be your own original work.
- Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be reported to the university.
- Written work submitted in this class will be screened by plagiarism detection software.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments are due on the date and time stated. Written work should be printed, double spaced, and formatted according to MLA guidelines, or submitted electronically.

### **Attendance & Participation (100 points)**

A perfect score for participation requires perfect attendance, punctuality, preparedness for class discussion, presentations and exercises, and willingness to engage in all activities. You will be required to give constructive, well thought out feedback to peers after in-class presentations. I will expect everyone to give make at least two comments on presentation days.

### **Leading a Warmup (50 points)**

Each student will lead one Warm-Up. This is an exercise in leadership. I will demonstrate . A Good Warm-Up includes:

- **Physicalization** (which could include some form of Stretching, Relaxation and Energizing)
- **Vocalization** (Including vowels, consonants and Tongue Twisters)
- **Ensemble Building** (A short game to help develop concentration and connection among the class): You can find many examples on of “Ensemble-Building Acting Games” online at sites such as

<https://dramateachersnetwork.wordpress.com/warm-up-games/>. However, whatever game you choose, make sure you rehearse your instructions. Your warm-Ups should only take about ten minutes. Part of this grade rests in your ability to manage this time effectively.

Please sign up at the end of the second class.

### **Bi-Weekly Journal (75 points)**

Every other week, you will write a brief (100-200 word) entry. Questions to consider: What have I learned these past two weeks? What am I proud of? What do I want to continue working on, experimenting with? Did you admire or learn anything from your colleagues? What are my goals for out of class rehearsals?

DUE 6:00pm every other Sunday on Trunk.

### **3 Character Preparations (25 points each)**

For each character you play over the course of the semester, you will submit a character analysis paper discussing objectives, actions, wants, character arch, etc. More specifics will be given in class.

### **Monologue Performance (100 points)**

You will select, memorize, and perform a contemporary monologue (I must approve of the selection) from a stage play that is 3-5 minutes in length.

### **Scene Performance (100 points)**

You will select, memorize, and perform a scene from a contemporary stage play consisting of 2 characters with one of your colleagues that is between 7-10 minutes in length.

### **Group Presentation (100 points)**

In groups of 4-5 students, you will be assigned a play to analyze and present to the class. The presentation should be 15-20min long. As a group you will decide which parts of the play to present in order to expose the central theme of the piece.

### **Performance Critiques (50 points each)**

You are required to attend (1) the Tufts Department of Drama and Dance production and Dance; and (2) a professional production in Boston (I must approve the selection). Using what you've learned in this class, write an insightful critique (500 words) evaluating one actor's successes or failures at creating a character. What were the objectives of the character and why do you think the actor's chose those objectives? What were the choices they made? Were these choices successful? Why or why not? Also think about how the actors approached Voice, Gesture and Movement. These critiques should NOT be summaries of the plays. Rather, they should be thoughtful reflections on one actor's success and failure from having seen the **entire** production. Specific attention paid to how the character developed over the course of the play, including their final moments. **TICKETS must be turned in with your assignment.**

**University Policies**

You are expected to be familiar with all of the University's policies governing student conduct. Website links are below. If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact your professor or the appropriate resource in Student Affairs.

**Academic Integrity:**

<http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/publicationsandwebsites/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

**Sexual Harassment:** <http://oeo.tufts.edu/policies-and-procedures/sexual-harassment-policy/>

Sexual harassment violates the dignity of individuals. It is a form of discrimination that violates federal and state laws and is prohibited at Tufts University. Sexual Misconduct also violates the dignity of individuals and may be a form of discrimination based on sex or gender pursuant to federal Title IX regulations. Sexual misconduct includes stalking, sexual education and work environment that is free from sexual misconduct including sexual harassment. The University works to prevent and address sexual harassment and sexual misconduct through educational programs, training, and complaint resolution. Tufts encourages all members of the University community to report any concerns or complaints of sexual harassment and/or sexual misconduct. Managers, supervisors and other agents of the University are required to respond promptly and appropriately to allegations of sexual misconduct including sexual harassment that are brought to their attention.

**ADA:** <http://oeo.tufts.edu/policies-and-procedures/americans-with-disabilities-act/>

**Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities and/or Medical Emergencies:**

<http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/codeofconduct/healthaccommodations.asp>

The goal of this program is to enable the full integration of students with documented physical or learning or emotional disabilities into the life of the university. Support services are provided for both temporary (i.e. due to an accident, surgery, hospitalization) and permanent disabilities. The Academic Resource Center provides students with disabilities support so that they may achieve their academic potential. Students with documented learning disabilities or other special needs receive specific accommodations (such as extended time on tests), as needed. Students are required to submit their documentation, including test results, from a qualified professional, to the Coordinator of Undergraduate Education for Students with Disabilities, for review. Upon approval, the Coordinator will be available to arrange the appropriate accommodations and offer assistance in strengthening study skills and developing compensatory strategies. For more information, please visit the Academic Resource Center or contact Linda Sullivan, Director of Disability Services, Dowling Hall at (617) 627-2000, [disability.services@ase.tufts.edu](mailto:disability.services@ase.tufts.edu).

**Religious Observance:** <http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/handbook/campus/religious.asp>

Students are encouraged to observe their religious holy days, and instructors and coaches are asked to facilitate observance by allowing absence from classes, practices, and competitions for this purpose. Instructors and coaches should avoid scheduling exams, oral reports, or other mandatory class participation, practices, and competitions on university-recognized holy days. Some departments have established policies to address this issue. Check your syllabus or consult your professors or coaches about conflicts. Note: This listing reflects major holy days that occur only when Tufts has regularly scheduled classes for the day during the academic semester. For all other holy days, please refer to <http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/index.htm>.

**Writing Center:** Please take advantage of Graduate Writing Consultants through the Online Tutor Finder or visit the Tisch Library during drop-in hours:

[http://uss.tufts.edu/arc/writingtuthttps://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0CAcQjRxqFQoTCK65gYqS8sgCFcF5PgodyL8JGw&url=http%3A%2F%2Fmyjobimages.tk%2Fcalendar-2016-2%2F&psig=AFQjCNFKmhJxJ5XwM11\\_bp5QhStD1o1QA&ust=1446567517560147](http://uss.tufts.edu/arc/writingtuthttps://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=0CAcQjRxqFQoTCK65gYqS8sgCFcF5PgodyL8JGw&url=http%3A%2F%2Fmyjobimages.tk%2Fcalendar-2016-2%2F&psig=AFQjCNFKmhJxJ5XwM11_bp5QhStD1o1QA&ust=1446567517560147)