

**New York University
Tisch School of the Arts**

Department of Drama

at

PLAYWRIGHTS HORIZONS THEATER SCHOOL

**Curriculum
Acting Musical Theatre 2010-2011
Semester 1**

Instructor

Theresa McCarthy
440 Lafayette 4th floor
New York, NY 10003
718-309-1618
theresa@theresamccarthy.com
<http://www.theresamccarthy.com/teaching/actingmusicaltheatre/>

Course Descriptions/Objectives

This two semester advanced acting class explores the history of actor process through study of techniques that include mask, ancient Greek theatre, commedia dell'arte, classical performance traditions, 19th and 20th century naturalism, and the innovations of 20th and 21st century theatre artists. We investigate processes that energize performance from the outside in as well as from the inside out. Students practice multiple approaches for creating a role, devising staging, deepening emotional connection within the context of monologue and scene study.

First semester is devoted to processes rooted in the ancient and classical traditions. Second semester continues with the study of 19th and 20th century acting processes. Texts studied include ancient, classic and modern drama and musical theatre scripts and scores and selected scholarly readings. Goals of this class are to impart a thorough understanding of the actor's process and responsibilities; to deepen knowledge of the applicability of historical theatrical practices in today's work; to craft roles that are multileveled, detailed and well researched; to build performances that are unselfconscious and fully rooted in the individual artist's personal truth.

Week 1

- I. Introductions and goals
- II. Personal preparation ritual
- III. Ensemble exercises
- IV. Mask Making

Assignment: Choose for next week a monologue from the following Greek dramas: Euripides' Orestes, The Trojan Women, Iphigenia, The Bacchae, Aeschylus' Agamemnon. Any translation. Find the corresponding passage in Charles Mee's version of the play here:

<http://www.panix.com/userdirs/meejr/html/plays.html>

Bring both versions of the monologue to class.

Reading: <http://www.theresamccarthy.com/files/reading1/>

Week 2

- I. Read Monologues
- II Finishing masks
- III. Mask exercises
 - A. Meeting the mask in the mirror
 - B. Waiting-watch and be watched
 - C. Time limit activity
- IV. Shapes of emotion-movement study

Assignment:

Character study 1—Observe one of your classmates and create a movement study with mask. Include a segment that shows the character's walk, a moment of reflection, and a simple activity that is rehearsed and set.

Character study 2: Find a stranger whose behavior/movement feels connected to the role you are playing in your monologue. Study the stranger's physicality and create a portrait of this person in movement that shows the character's walk, a moment of reflection and a simple activity that is rehearsed and set (choose the same as that performed in the classmate study)

Week 3

- I. Character study presentations
- II. Monologue work with masks—incorporate shape of emotion movement study and character study.

Assignment:

Practice monologue at home daily with movement.

Week 4

- I. Monologue work session and presentations
- II. Greek chorus composition

Assignment: Research European medieval drama, Kabuki and Noh drama for reports and demonstrations to be given in groups. Each group will create a lesson plan and a short performance to teach/direct their classmates.

Reading: <http://www.theresamccarthy.com/files/reading2/>

Week 5

- I. Work sessions Medieval drama-group research and collaboration, lesson building.

Week 6

- I. Medieval drama presentations-teaching sessions

Assignment:

Brush up on Greek monologue at home daily with movement for upcoming presentation.

Week 7

- I. Rehearse Kabuki, Noh and Medieval works
- II. Revisit Greek monologues

Assignment:

Brush up on Greek monologue at home daily with movement for upcoming presentation.

Week 8

- I. Short Individual conferences
- II. Perform scenes and monologues

Assignment: With partner choose Shakespeare scenes-an age appropriate role that is well suited to the individual actors. Choose also a monologue from a drama of Elizabethan era (can be Shakespeare).

Readings: <http://www.theresamccarthy.com/files/reading3/>

Week 9

- I. Intro to Shakespeare work, scoring, research
- II. Scene rehearsal

Assignment: Rehearse monologue daily with movement. Run through scene with partner daily. This can be a simple run through lasting 15 minutes or so (of course you may choose to work for longer than this too). Make time for this in your daily practice and you will see results in your performance in class.

Week 10

- I. Scene/monologue rehearsal
- II. Score check in

Assignment: Rehearse monologue daily with movement. Run through scene with partner daily.

Week 11

- I. Monologue presentations
- II Monologue score turn in
- II. Shakespeare scene rehearsal in class

Assignment: Run through scene with partner daily.

Week 12

- I. Shakespeare scene rehearsal in class

Assignment: Run through scene with partner daily.

Week 13

- I. Scene presentations
- II. Scene scores turn in