



**THE 445: PROJECTS IN ACTING
COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2015
MWF 12:00-12:50 p.m.
PERFORMING ARTS #126**

Instructor: Rebecca Worley, MFA, Assistant Professor of Theatre
Office Location: Performing Arts Center #105
Office Hours: M/W 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., T/R 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. or by appointment
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COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook:

Audition by Michael Shurtleff

Additional Readings:

Throughout the semester, there may also be materials on reserve that you will be required to copy and read. I will notify you in advance of the availability. Please plan accordingly for this expense. Additionally, I encourage you to put money aside to order new scripts. This will be a good opportunity for you to begin (or continue) building your own script library. Most scripts cost around \$7 a piece plus shipping. Since the book for this course costs very little, I would suggest putting some money aside for this expense now and begin budgeting that regularly in semesters to come. Searching for and buying new scripts will give you a leg up in auditions (you want to do something they have never seen if at all possible) and expand your personal repertoire.

Required Special Supplies:

In addition to standard classroom supplies (pens, pencils, paper for daily notes/assignments, a folder for those notes/assignments, computer paper, etc.), you will need the following supplies for this class.

- 1 hard-cover, three-ring binder with pockets
- dividers
- highlighters

- nice auditioning clothes (preferably several outfits that can be used as appropriate to the pieces you are performing)
- “TAMU-C Production Handbook”

Required Viewing:

Rabbit Hole

Directed by Dr. Carrie Klypchak

Produced in the Main Stage Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce

Feb. 24-28 at 8 p.m. and March 1 at 3 p.m.

The Further Adventures of Tom and Huck and Other Plays

Directed by the THE 497: Special Topics in Stage Direction students

Produced in the Studio Theatre by the University Playhouse at A&M Commerce

April 28-May 2 at 8 p.m. and May 3 at 3 p.m.

Tickets are available for a nominal fee from the University Playhouse Box Office (PAC 101) from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. Or, you may make advance reservations by phone at any time by calling 903-886-5900 or by email at playhouseboxoffice@tamuc.edu.

**Note: Please understand that viewing a performance of both of the University Playhouse shows listed above is an absolute requirement of the course. Part of becoming a skilled actor is viewing other actors’ successes and challenges. Clear your schedule now! If you cannot attend both of these events, for whatever reason, you must consult with the instructor in advance in order to receive an alternate written assignment for this portion of the participation grade in the course.*

Course Description:

For the intermediate or advanced student actor, this course is designed to hone skills in characterization, voice, and movement in order to produce effective performance practices. The course will consist of rehearsals, one-on-one acting coaching, audition preparations and executions, readings, discussions, and activities.

Prerequisite:

The 213 - Fundamentals of Acting or transfer equivalent.

Course Introduction:

Welcome! This course provides a practical introduction to auditioning techniques for the actor. This is a class that will be challenging, invigorating, and participatory. Please consider yourself to now be a part of a workshop rather than a classroom as it is usually understood.

Although there is a lecture/discussion component to this course, by nature actor training requires substantial studio work – both inside and outside of the classroom. Please consider yourself to be part of a learning community where members support one another with suggestions and constructive criticism. Learning, observing, and sharing are central to this course. *Attitudes of awareness and openness are essential to your development and your contribution to the development of the other members of this class.* Please leave your worries, frustrations, competitiveness, and negativity outside the classroom door as much as possible.

Active participation in discussion and presentation of projects within the class is not only welcome; it is an essential requirement. Positive, helpful and constructive attitudes are also required! Presentations must be well prepared and shared with the understanding that questions and discussion will follow. The ongoing critique of performance is crucial to everyone's learning process. You should be aware that the vast majority of class time is composed of activities in which you are REQUIRED to actively participate. *If you have no plans or interest in sincerely exploring auditioning techniques and accomplishing significant growth as a performer, this is not the class for you.*

In this course, I will serve as your teacher, acting coach, director, guide, and outside eyes/ears as we work very specifically on your individual performance efforts. I ask that you trust me and approach the work with an open mind, an open heart, discipline and commitment, and a willingness to try new things. Then, we can work through our artistic challenges together!

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. demonstrate understanding and practical proficiency in developing and executing professional and artistically effective individual acting auditions for theatrical productions.
2. display the acquisition of effective approaches and/or skills in working with a director/acting coach.
3. provide evidence of the essential knowledge needed, and ability to successfully develop and/or present, professional and artistically effective theatrical auditions with other actors.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments:

Participation and Growth (10 pts.): *Note that attendance alone does not constitute participation.* Participation and Growth is a large portion of your grade in this course – for good reason! As mentioned above, participation is vital in this class. This is an interactive environment and students must not only attend, but must also actively contribute to each class.

Furthermore, the completion of miscellaneous homework assignments will also be considered part of your participation grade. There will be quite a few of these short assignments and they are all important in the development of your skills as an actor. Further, as also mentioned above, each student is required to attend both of the University Playhouse's productions this semester as part of this grade.

Positive, respectful and helpful attitudes are mandatory. *I would like to make this very clear: I will make every effort to treat you with the respect that I believe you deserve. You are also expected to treat your peers and myself with that same respectful attitude.* If I believe that a student is disrespectful, I will ask that person to leave the classroom. In this event, the student will receive a zero for any activities conducted that day in class and receive a zero for his/her participation grade for the day (no matter how long you have been in class). Disrespect, rudeness, disruptive behavior, or negative attitudes will **NOT BE TOLERATED**. It should go without saying that refusal to participate in any activity or part of an activity during class will result in a substantial and appropriate loss of participation points for the student.

Previous acting experience will not guarantee you a good grade in this course. Significant growth and a genuine attempt within the class will. This is a class that regards self-competition as a goal. You and your peers will arrive at various levels, and you will leave at different levels. However, growth from the beginning to the end of the semester can be evaluated. I challenge you to push yourself to grow and succeed. This class is concerned with developing *your* skills to the best of *your* ability. The community in the class is here to help all of us grow and expand our abilities.

Participation and Growth grades will be calculated daily and reflected upon/tabulated at the end of the semester. *Each student will begin with a mid-passing Participation and Growth grade of an 8.* Strong effort or lack of effort during each class and over the course of the semester as a whole will either raise or lower that grade.

Note: Each student will receive one "pass" regarding participation in warm-up activities. This pass is intended to be used on a day that the student may not feel up to extreme physical exertion. Please be advised: the "pass" does not include the day's activities beyond the warm-up period, and once the "pass" has been used – it is gone folks!

Working Sessions (3 @ 5 pts. each): Each student will participate in three formally graded 15-20 minute working sessions with me. The Working Sessions will take place prior to Audition Presentations #2 - #4 in which the student must present a fully memorized and developed audition, which consists of two contrasting two-minute pieces. The student will be graded on the level of artistic quality presented, the professionalism of the preparation, and the effectiveness of his/her ability to work with a director/acting coach in achieving growth during the determined time period. More in-depth expectations will be discussed in class at a later date.

Audition Presentations (4 @ a progressing 5, 5, 10, 15 pts. each over the semester): Each student will perform four preliminary individual auditions. The first will consist of Cold and/or Prepared Readings. The second, third, and fourth will consist of two, two-minute contrasting pieces (#2 will be contemporary, #3 will be classical, & #4 will be your choice: contemporary, classical, or musical theatre) that you have not worked on in the past. You will select, memorize, work, and rehearse, the pieces prior to performances. You will work on a total of six pieces in all over the course of the semester. You are required to receive approval of your selected pieces from the instructor prior to working on them. The goal is to gather and develop a wide variety of exceptionally strong, engaging, moving, and effective audition pieces for you to include in a Working Audition Portfolio that you may build upon in the future. So, the more varied your pieces over the course of the semester, the better! The student will be graded on the level of artistic quality presented, the professionalism of the preparation, and displayed improvement from the Working Session. Expectations of quality will become more rigorous as the auditions progress (as evidenced in the enhanced grading weight from audition to audition in this class). More in-depth expectations will be discussed in class at a later date.

Script Work (3 submissions @ 5pts. each): Each student will be required to submit three formal sets of script work (one per developed audition, beyond the final audition). Script work will minimally include cutting, effective scoring, and formal determination/writing of the basic given circumstances of each character portrayed in the audition. The script work will ultimately be included in your own Working Audition Portfolio. Students will be graded on both content (70%) and construction (30%). More in-depth expectations will be discussed in class at a later date.

Final Audition (25 pts.): You will participate in one final audition in this class. The audition will consist of two of the monologues with which you have worked earlier in the semester. You will re-cut and develop the two selected monologues from two minutes a piece to one minute a piece for this audition. You will receive an “audition notice” approximately a week and a half before your audition date (which is your final exam time slot). Given the dynamics of the audition notice, you will decide which monologues are most appropriate to use for the audition, re-work those pieces, and present them in as professional a manner as possible. *Remember: You will not know which monologues will be appropriate to present until the audition notice is posted – so you must continue working all pieces throughout the semester. I should see significant artistic improvement in the pieces during the final audition since the first time that you presented them for a grade!* You should also be prepared for the possibility that I may embark on a working session with you during your audition. Additionally, the student must bring a formal acting resume (**worth 5 pts. of the grade**) to this audition which s/he has developed per the format and requirements provided by the instructor. Professionalism, quality, and improvement will be taken into consideration in grading of all of the above elements. More in-depth expectations will be discussed in class at a later date.

Grading:

The following grading scale will be used to determine all individual grades as well as the student's overall grade in the course:

90-100 =	A
80-89=	B
70-79=	C
60-69=	D
59 and below=	F

Please note: A grade of "A" will not be assigned to an individual who has not completed ALL outside of class assignments, regardless of average.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

WORKING EMAIL REQUIREMENT: It is a course expectation that you have a working email address that you check daily. If you have not already acquired an email address through the university or otherwise, please make arrangements to do so before the next class meeting. There WILL be times that I need to contact you with important information and email is often the speediest and easiest way of doing so. Additionally, I WILL provide electronic copies of the plays and supplemental reading through email.

WRITTEN WORK: Unfortunately, papers/projects do occasionally get lost. Please, for your sanity, save your work on a disc or thumb drive, etc. Do not depend on your paper staying on the hard drive of any university computer, as it will be deleted, altered, or worse – turned in by someone else as their work! Be aware that it is a course expectation that you keep copies of your assignments until you receive your final grade for the semester.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Contacting Me:

Please feel free to visit me during my office hours at any time during the semester. I am here to help! If you can't make my office hours due to a scheduling conflict, please set up an appointment with me. It is not an imposition. Communicate, communicate, communicate! If something is occurring that is presenting you with difficulties in this class, let me know. I cannot help you if I don't know what is going on. The easiest and most reliable way to contact me is **via email**. I check it almost constantly. Please do not leave a message for me in the main department office.

Student Resources:**Department of Theatre**

Performing Arts Center (PAC) #101

Phone: 903-886-5346 (Main Office)

<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/mmct/default.asp>**Communication Skills Center**

Hall of Languages #103

<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/litlang/CSC/index.htm>**COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES****Course Specific Procedures:****Attendance Policy:**

Attendance is mandatory and grades will be lowered ½ letter grade per absence. That being said, I do understand that there are unavoidable, *emergency* situations in life. You are allowed two *emergency* absences in this course with no attendance grading penalty (although you are still responsible for all work during said absences).

Late Arrivals:

To further foster a high level of commitment—and because the work we will be doing this semester will involve intensive focus—the class will adopt the following late entry policy. Students must be on time for every class. Entering a class late or leaving early is disruptive to the flow of the class and indicative of a less than disciplined/committed artist. Please be on time out of consideration to your learning process and the processes of others. If you are late for class, your participation grade will reflect this. The class will begin promptly at 12 p.m.! If you arrive after 12:10 p.m., please do not enter the classroom (you will be marked absent regardless). If you arrive within the ten minute grace period, please do so discretely in order to avoid disrupting the class activities/discussions. *It is your responsibility to make sure that you find me after class and document your late attendance for the day—otherwise, your initial marked absence documented during roll will remain.* Also, you are expected to stay until you are dismissed from class. An early departure will significantly reduce your participation grade as well. **Two late arrivals (within the ten-minute grace period) or early departures (or any combination of the two) may be counted as one absence in the class.**

Cell Phones and Laptops:

Please turn off all cell phones upon entering the classroom. Please do not check messages or engage in text messaging during class. This is disruptive to the flow of the course. Further, you are welcome to take class notes on a laptop or other electronic device. However, these devices should only be used for taking notes over the current discussions/activities – and you must type

very quietly and turn off all sound so as not to disturb other class members. If I suspect that laptops are being used for other purposes, I will ban them from the classroom.

Late Work:

Working Sessions and Presentations – Under normal circumstances, a missed Working Session or Audition Presentation may not be made up.

Late Written Work – Late written work will be deducted a full letter grade each weekday after the assigned due date. This means that if you have to be absent for some reason on the day a written assignment is due, you must **email** your assignment to me prior to the beginning of class. All assignments are due within the first ten minutes of the class period unless I specify otherwise. No late assignments will be accepted after one week past the original due date.

Please note that failure to present any part of a Working Session or Audition Presentation may result in administrative dropping or an automatic failure in this upper-level performance course.

Extra Credit:

As a general rule, there is no extra credit offered in this class – please, do not even ask.

Adaptation of Assignments:

Due to the fluid nature of this performance-based class, some assignments/scheduling may need to be adapted. All changes will be announced prior to implementation.

Food, Drink, Gum, and Smoking:

Please do not bring food or drinks into the classroom at any time (exception: you may bring bottled water with you to class). As this is a course focusing on practical performance, chewing gum is not allowed at any time during class. Smoking during class time (even when in individual rehearsals outside of the building) is never allowed.

Clothing:

Dress for maximum freedom and movement. You may occasionally be lying and rolling on the ground. Fair warning: the floor may or may not be spotless. Wear comfortable shoes that you can move around in or bring other shoes. Heels, boots, short skirts, tight jeans, and low-cut shirts will all restrict movement (and consequently restrict your ability to participate in class). Do not wear jewelry that will affect your freedom of movement or speech. No hats are allowed to be worn during warm-ups, activities, performances, etc. Also, please keep your hair securely away from your face during all exercises, working sessions, and performances in class. (It is essential that I be able to see your face during all practical acting work.) *No one will be excused from a class activity because of clothing concerns; you are required to wear clothing that will not inhibit participation in class activities.*

Incompletes:

Under normal circumstances, an Incomplete (I or X) will NOT be given for a final grade in this course.

Artistic Content:

Writers and performers have explored a wide range of themes and viewpoints, using a variety of artistic approaches. Pieces will be selected by the students in order to aid their accomplishments in relation to the course learning outcomes. The pieces chosen and presented may contain ideas, language, or depictions of behaviors/images that you personally find offensive or otherwise disturbing. Try to concentrate on the performance rather than your opinion about the material in such an instance. However, there is a policy in this class that a performer is required to inform his/her classroom audience that the performance piece may be deemed offensive. Any class member is always welcome to leave the classroom for that particular performance and return afterward in this case.

Performance Material:

All performance material will come from play scripts and must be approved by the instructor in advance. Please understand that I will not approve monologues/pieces that are over-used in auditions. You will need to search for and find new or lesser known scripts. *Also, no film scripts will be used in this class for performance purposes.* This is a course in acting for the stage – not film. Although there is significant crossover, these two art forms are different in a number of ways. Further, when choosing material, a piece found on the Internet or that is not part of an actual play script will not be acceptable. In order to work on selections in this class, you must have read the entire plays from which the pieces derive.

University Specific Policies and Procedures:**Academic Dishonesty:**

This course adheres strictly to the college's guidelines for Academic Dishonesty printed in the *Student's Guide Handbook*. Plagiarism, cheating, or otherwise representing another's work or ideas as your own without proper attribution will not be tolerated. All work must be new and created for this class during this semester by you. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand the definition of Academic Dishonesty at Texas A&M-Commerce. If such an instance occurs, the student will receive an automatic zero for the work in question, and I will immediately report the incident to the Head of the Department. *(You should be aware that this could result in dismissal from school without credit for the semester.)*

Students with a Disability:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that

provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

Student Conduct:

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Reading and Assignments are due on the days on which they are listed below.

WEEK ONE

- W Jan 21 Introduction to Course
Types of Auditions
- F Jan 23 **Reading:** "Production Handbook" Audition Appendix and Shurtfleff – Forward
and Ch. 1 "Practical Aspects of the Audition"
Warm-up Exercises
Cold/Prepared Reads

WEEK TWO

- M Jan 26 Cold/Prepared Reads
- W Jan 28 **Audition #1 DUE:** Cold/Prepared Readings
- F Jan 30 **NO CLASS - TETA**

(TETA Convention 1/29-2/1)

WEEK THREE

- M Feb 2 Warm-up Exercises
Overview of Script Work: Selecting and Cutting an Audition Piece
- W Feb 4 Selecting and Cutting an Audition Piece (cont.)
- F Feb 6 **Due:** Selection(s) for Audition #2
Scoring an Audition Piece: Method of Physical Actions
Audition #2: Rehearsals

Thurs, Feb. 5th – Last day to drop course with 100% refund

WEEK FOUR

- M Feb 9 Warm-up Exercises
Scoring an Audition Piece: Method of Physical Actions (cont.)
Audition #2: Rehearsals

W Feb 11 Warm-up Exercises
 Overview of Script Work: Determining and Documenting Given Circumstances
 Audition #2 Rehearsals

F Feb 13 **Reading:** Ch. 2 “The Twelve Guideposts” – (Guidepost 1 “Relationship” and
 Guidepost 2 “What are You Fighting For? Conflict”)
 Warm-up Exercises
 Audition #2 Rehearsals - Relationship

WEEK FIVE

M Feb 16 Warm-up Exercises
 Audition #2 Rehearsals - Conflict

W Feb 18 **Reading:** Ch. 2 “The Twelve Guideposts” – (Guidepost 3 “The Moment Before”
 and Guidepost 4 “Humor”)
 Warm-up Exercises
 Audition #2 Rehearsals: The Moment Before

F Feb 20 Warm-up Exercises
 Audition #2 Rehearsals: Humor

WEEK SIX

M Feb 23 **Reading:** Ch. 2 “The Twelve Guideposts” – (Guidepost 5 “Opposites” and
 Guidepost 6 “Discoveries”)
 Warm-up Exercises
 Audition #2 Rehearsals: Opposites

W Feb 25 Warm-up Exercises
 Audition #2 Rehearsals: Discoveries

F Feb 27 Warm-up Exercises
 AUDITION #2 WORKING SESSION 1

(Rabbit Hole 2/24-3/1)

WEEK SEVEN

M Mar 2 Warm-up Exercises
 AUDITION #2 WORKING SESSION 2

W Mar 4 Warm-up Exercises
AUDITION #2 WORKING SESSION 3

F Mar 6 **Audition #2 DUE & Script Work DUE**

WEEK EIGHT

M Mar 9 **Audition #2 (cont)**
University Playhouse Acting Observation Activities

W Mar 11 **Due:** Selection(s) for Audition #3
Warm-up Exercises
Professional Development – Resumes
Audition #3 Rehearsals

F Mar 13 **NO CLASS – UIL OAP CLINIC**

(UIL OAP Clinic 3/12-13)

*****Spring Break March 16-20*****

WEEK NINE

M Mar 23 **Reading:** Ch. 2 “The Twelve Guideposts” – (Guidepost 7 “Communication and Competition” and Guidepost 8 “Importance”)
Warm-up Exercises
Audition #3 Rehearsals: Communication and Competition

W Mar 25 Warm-up Exercises
Audition #3 Rehearsals: Importance

F Mar 27 **Reading:** Ch. 2 “The Twelve Guideposts” – (Guidepost 9 “Find the Events” and Guidepost 10 “Place”)
Warm-up Exercises
Audition #3 Rehearsals: Find the Events

WEEK TEN

M Mar 30 Warm-up Exercises
Audition #3 Rehearsals: Place

W Apr 1 **Reading:** Ch. 2 “The Twelve Guideposts” – (Guidepost 11 “Game Playing and Role Playing” and Guidepost 12 “Mystery and Secret”)
 Warm-up Exercises
 Audition #3 Rehearsals: Game Playing and Role Playing

F Apr 3 Warm-up Exercises
 Audition #3 Rehearsals: Mystery and Secret

WEEK ELEVEN

M Apr 6 Warm-up Exercises
 AUDITION #3 WORKING SESSIONS 1

W Apr 8 Warm-up Exercises
 AUDITION #3 WORKING SESSIONS 2

F Apr 10 AUDITION #3 WORKING SESSIONS 3

WEEK TWELVE

M Apr 13 **Audition #3 & Script Work DUE**

W Apr 15 **Audition #3 (cont**

F Apr 17 **Reading:** Ch. 4 “Some Things an Actor Needs to Know”
 Warm-up Exercises

WEEK THIRTEEN

M Apr 20 Warm-up Exercises
 Discussion/Activity
 Professional Development – MFA Programs/Internships

W Apr 22 Warm-up Exercises
 Audition #4 Rehearsals

F Apr 24 Warm-up Exercises
 Audition #4 Rehearsals

WEEK FOURTEEN

M Apr 27 Warm-up Exercises
 Audition #4 Rehearsals

W Apr 29 Warm-up Exercises
AUDITION #4 WORKING SESSIONS 1

F May 1 Warm-up Exercises
AUDITION #4 WORKING SESSIONS 2

(Further Adventures of Tom and Huck and Other Plays 4/28-5/3)

WEEK FIFTEEN

M May 4 *Final Audition Notice Posting*
University Playhouse Acting Observation Activities
Warm-up Exercises
AUDITION #4 WORKING SESSIONS 3

W Apr 6 **Audition #4 Presentations**

F May 8 **Audition #4 (cont) and Script Work DUE**
Course Evaluations

WEEK SIXTEEN – FINALS WEEK – May 11-15

FINAL EXAM: FRIDAY, May 15th, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.