

Illinois Wesleyan University, School of Theater Arts
THEA 280 - Acting III
Fall 2023
Monday/Friday 11:00-12:15
Shaw 102

Instructor: Tom Quinn
Office: Presser 154
Office Hours: T 2-4:00, W 1-2:00, R 2-4:00
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Required Texts:

Available for purchase online:

- ***The Three Sisters***, by Anton Chekhov; Adapted by David Mamet
Available online at:
<https://bookshop.org/p/books/three-sisters-tcg-edition-revised-anton-chekhov/10483265?ean=9780802132765>
- ***Uncle Vanya***, by Anton Chekhov; Translated by Annie Baker
Available online at:
<https://bookshop.org/p/books/uncle-vanya-tcg-edition-anton-chekhov/593250?ean=9781559364478>

Important: You will be asked to procure other scripts (TBD) later in the semester.

Course Description: This course is designed to deepen and broaden the actors' skills through the study, rehearsal and presentation of increasingly advanced texts. By moving beyond the familiar and confronting significant material from/about other times and places, the student is challenged to develop a more universal view of the human experience, an ever-clearer understanding of the self in performance, and vocal/physical expression that is ever-more potent, nuanced, vital and honest.

Attendance Policy: Since tailored for the BFA, this course is a study of *professionalism in acting*. *Attendance* and *punctuality* are fundamental. You are allowed two absences without consequence. With every absence beyond the two allowed, your grade will be lowered by one full letter. With five absences the best possible grade is a "D." Six absences will result in a grade of "F" and you will be asked to withdraw from the course. Any exceptions to this policy will be at the discretion of the instructor, and will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

For an absence to be *excused*, the student must make arrangements with the instructor in advance. In the event of illness or emergency, the student must contact the instructor as soon as possible and provide any documentation requested by the instructor.

Lateness is unacceptable. Class begins promptly at 11:15am. Students arriving after attendance has been taken are “late.” Two late arrivals equal one absence. The professor reserves the right to close the door once class has begun.

Course Requirements:

Team Research: Students will be required to research several of our plays and playwrights. Teams will then present their findings to the class.

Acting Scenes: Each student will prepare and participate in the in-class rehearsal and performance of two, 5-8-minute acting scenes. The first scene will be taken from *The Three Sisters, or Uncle Vanya*. The second scenes will be from plays *TBD*. Partners and scenes will be assigned by the instructor.

Deadlines: All assignments are to be completed on time. Reading assignments must be read by the due date listed in the course outline.

Rescheduling: Performance assignments cannot be rescheduled. Assignment dates may be exchanged, but only by the agreement of all parties involved, and only with the approval of the instructor.

Participation: Everyone is expected to participate in discussion as well as performance, in periodic out-of-class rehearsals, and in the examination/critique of in-class exercises and performances. Everyone is further expected to fully engage, take risks, and consistently strive for compelling acting. This is most fully accomplished in a supportive environment and it is everyone’s responsibility to build and maintain that environment.

Grading Criteria:

- A-Excellent. Always well prepared; extensive outside preparation. Actively pursues improvement and is highly self-motivated. Student makes significant growth in skills and knowledge during semester. Active, positive contributor to class. Punctual, always present.
- B-Good to Excellent. Always prepared; notable outside preparation. Pursues improvement and is self-motivated. Notable growth in skills and knowledge during semester. Positive contributor to class. Punctual, always present.
- C-Acceptable to Good. Generally prepared; acceptable outside preparation. Interested in improvement and often self-motivated. Shows some growth in skills

- and knowledge during semester. Often contributes to class. Punctual, always present.
- D-(Failing for BFA students) Unacceptable to acceptable. Often not prepared; shows little outside preparation. Shows little interest in improvement and is rarely self-motivated. Very little skill and knowledge growth during semester. Seldom contributes to class and has negative attitude. Sometimes late; some absences.
 - F-Largely Unacceptable. Rarely prepared and lacks adequate outside preparation. No apparent interest in self-improvement and not self-motivated. No apparent growth in skills and knowledge. Does not contribute to class; negative attitude. Not punctual; several absences.

Outline of Presentations and Assignments:

Warning: Adjustments to this schedule may be necessary.

WEEK 1

- M 8/28
- Introduction to course. Go over syllabus.
 - Discuss: *Playing an Action*
 - Opening Discussion: *Anton Chekhov*
- F 9/1
- Opening Discussion: *The Three Sisters* and *Uncle Vanya*
 - Assignment: Scenes and Partners for Scene #1
 - Assignment: Research Teams, covering several topics, which may include:
 - Anton Chekhov
 - *The Three Sisters*: Production History
 - *Uncle Vanya*: Production History
 - Relevant History of Chekhov's time, including:
 - Politics
 - Religion
 - Social Classes (Aristocracy -vs- Serfdom)
 - Sexual/Marital Mores
 - The Military
 - Research teams meet to set up meetings for planning and work time. You have one week to prepare your presentations. We will have six, two-person teams. Each team will present for no more than ten minutes. Make your time count.

WEEK 2

- M 9/4
- **LABOR DAY – NO CLASS**
- F 9/8

- **Present Team Research**

WEEK 3

M 9/11

- Scene #1: A, B TABLE WORK

F 9/15

- Scene #1: C, D, E TABLE WORK

WEEK 4

M 9/18

- Work Scene #1: A – ON BOOK
- Set up outside-of-class times to Work Scenes: B, C, D–ON BOOK, before Friday
- Assignment: Read TBA Script 1 for Scene #2

F/9/22

- Work Scene #1: E – ON BOOK

WEEK 5

M 9/25

- Work Scene #1: B – OFF BOOK
- Set up outside-of-class times to Work Scene #1: A, D, E – OFF BOOK, before Friday

F 9/29

- Work Scene #1: C – OFF BOOK
- Assignment: Read TBA Script 2 for Scene #2

WEEK 6

M 10/2

- Work Scene #1: D – OFF BOOK
- Set up outside-of-class times to Work Scene #1: A, C, E – OFF BOOK, before Friday

F 10/6

- Work Scene #1: B – OFF BOOK

WEEK 7

M 10/9

- Work Scene #1: A
- Set up outside-of-class times to Work Scene #1: B, C, D, E – OFF BOOK, before Friday

- F 10/13
- Opening Discussion: Scene #2: TBA Scripts 1 and 2
 - Assign: Scenes and Partners for Scene #2
 - Assign: Research Teams: Playwrights, Production History, and Given Circumstances for Scene #2 plays
 - Research teams meet: Organization, planning and work time.

WEEK 8

- M 10/16
- Scene #1: PRESENT ALL SCENES
 - Discuss Scene #1 process and presentation
- F 10/20
- **FALL BREAK DAY: NO CLASS**

WEEK 9

- M 10/23
- Present Team Research on TBD Plays for Scene #2
- F 10/27
- Scene #2: A, B TABLE WORK

WEEK 10

- M 10/30
- Scene #2: C, D, E TABLE WORK
- F 11/3
- Work Scene #2: A – ON BOOK
 - Set up outside-of-class times to Work Scene #2: B, C, D – ON BOOK, before Friday

WEEK 11

- M 11/6
- Work Scene #2: E – ON BOOK
- F 11/10
- Work Scene #2: B – OFF BOOK
 - Set up outside-of-class times to Work Scene #2: A, D, E – OFF BOOK, before Friday

WEEK 12

- M 11/13
- Work Scene #2: C – OFF BOOK

- F 11/17
- Work Scene #2: D – OFF BOOK
 - Set up outside-of-class times to Work Scene #2: A, C, E – OFF BOOK, before Friday

WEEK 13

- M 11/20
- Work Scene #2: B – OFF BOOK
- F 11/24
- **THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS**

WEEK 14

- M 11/27
- Work Scene #2: A
 - Set up outside-of-class times (1-hour sessions) to Work Scene #2: B, C, D, E – OFF BOOK, before Friday
- F 12/1
- TBD

WEEK 15

- M 12/4
- TBD
- F 12/8
- TBD

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, 12/12, 1:15-3:15

- **SCENE #2: PRESENT ALL SCENES**
- Discuss Scene #2
- Discuss course and processes