

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

**REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF A COURSE IN THE
GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM:
EDUCATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY**

DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL: COMMUNICATION & THEATRE ARTS COLLEGE: ARTS AND SCIENCES

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1. Subject Code, Number, and Title: CTAR 158: Fundamentals of Acting
2. Credit Hours three
3. Course Description: A study of the fundamental theories, craft, and discipline of acting technique. This performance-based class will investigate methodologies of master acting teachers of the twentieth century, working toward an applied comprehension both of acting as craft and the aesthetic role it plays within the performing art form of theatre.
4. This course is (check one):
 - an existing course with no revisions (need not go through the input system)
 - an existing course with revisions (attach this form to Request for Course Revision form)
 - a new course (attach this form to Request for New Course form)
5. Check the General Education requirement this course is intended to meet. If the course is to be proposed for more than one requirement, submit a separate form for each one.
 - Effective Communication**
 - Quantitative Reasoning (*QR designation*)**
 - Writing Intensive (*WI designation*)**
 - Perspectives on a Diverse World**
 - Global Awareness
 - U.S. Diversity
 - Knowledge of the Disciplines**
 - Arts Humanities
 - Science Social Science
 - Learning Beyond the Classroom (*LBC designation*)**

6. Rationale. Provide a concise, clear, jargon-free explanation of why this is a General Education course and how it fits into this specific requirement. This rationale should appear on the general course syllabus provided here and should be included in specific course syllabi given to students.

Theatre is central to reflecting and critiquing the human condition. Acting is a vital and core component of this discipline. This course enhances an appreciation of acting as art form, and develops fundamental knowledge and abilities necessary both to the craft of acting and other professions where proficiency in self-expression and clear communication are deemed valuable.

Students learn to analyze the physical, cultural and emotional lives of characters in order to create honest portrayals for both peers and audience. This examination and reflection of the human condition engenders enthusiasm for continued pursuit of knowledge and learning as well as an increased appreciation of the arts.

Fundamentals of Acting (CTAR 158) meets the general education requirement for Arts in the Knowledge of the Disciplines.

7. Clearly and concisely explain how this course meets each of the General Education outcomes for the requirement checked in number five (all outcomes should be addressed). To do this, (a) list the General Education outcomes for the requirement and explain how the course meets each outcome; and (b) explain, in general terms, the method(s) of evaluation to be used in the course and how these methods assess the degree to which students have met the General Education outcomes for this requirement.

A. Outcomes for Arts Course

In the Arts courses, students will...

The art of acting engages simultaneously the intellect, emotion, voice, and physicality of the human being. As such, CTAR 158: Fundamentals of Acting relies on a closely integrated and organic process for exploring and implementing outcomes. It should be noted that the pedagogical techniques listed within the following outcomes will reflect a distinct and consistent pattern of activities.

1. Acquire basic knowledge and skills in the use of vocabularies, materials, tools, techniques, and intellectual methods associated with the craft of acting.

In CTAR 158, students will acquire fundamental understanding and practical application of acting's working terminology, physical/vocal awareness, craft, as well as the intellectual and emotional sensitivity for embodying language in action. This will be accomplished through the participation in and discussion of sequential collaborative exercises, the rehearsal, performance and critique of scene work, journal entries, and written review of productions.

2. Examine the relationship between creative and critical thinking

In CTAR 158, students will learn the necessity of utilizing both the imaginative (creative) investigation of character as well as the detailed and critical investigation of written text in order to establish character.

This will be accomplished through the participation in and discussion of sequential collaborative exercises, the rehearsal, performance and critique of scene work, journal entries, and written review of productions.

3. Learn the relationship between form and content.

In CTAR 158, students will investigate the relationship between the external manifestations of action (form) and the internal realm of character motivation (content)—both aspects finding unity through confronting the playwright’s language. This will be accomplished through the participation in and discussion of sequential collaborative exercises, the rehearsal, performance and critique of scene work, journal entries, and written review of productions.

4. Begin to understand historical development in an arts discipline.

In CTAR 158, students will gain an understanding of how historically the conception of what constitutes “character” has both evolved from and fluctuated between literature-centered and performance-centered perspectives, with close attention to the 20th century trends. Students will participate in and discuss various collaborative exercises, rehearse, perform and critique scene work, and use journal entries to reflect their insights.

5. Develop ability to evaluate work in an arts discipline

In CTAR 158, students will refine their ability to evaluate the legitimacy of acting choices and the authenticity of performance. Students will apply these skills both through participating in acting exercises as well as critically informed written responses. This will be accomplished by participation in the rehearsal, performance and critique of scene work, journal entries, and written review of productions.

6. Learn to define and solve artistic problems.

In CTAR 158, students will gain fundamental knowledge of theatre’s collaborative components (script, actor, director, audience) and their interdependent relationship. They will investigate and identify challenges confronting the actor of text in order to make informed decisions throughout the artistic process. Students will participate in and discuss various collaborative exercises, rehearse, perform and critique scene work, and use journal entries to reflect their insights.

B. Methods of Evaluation

The attached syllabus provides greater detail regarding students’ ability to demonstrate outcomes for this course. Please consult these supporting materials which provide further detail concerning the course’s developmental structure.

1. Collaborative Exercises. Students will participate in numerous improvisationally based exercises which serve to introduce, demonstrate, and practice foundational concepts and vocabulary based in the methodologies and practices of Master acting teachers of the 20th century. Assessment is based on in-class discussion, enthusiastic participation, and synthesis via journal follow-up. Addresses Outcomes 1,2,3,4 and 6.

Methods of Evaluation two, three and four work in tandem to create a process which addresses outcomes 1,2,3,4,5 and 6.

2. *Rehearsal & Performance. Students will rehearse and perform three scenes (each progressing in difficulty) which concentrate on fundamentals of scene and character construction, which culminate with the final performance project. The first will address issues of essential plot, action, and character composition. The second focuses attention on psychological/emotional complications and imaginative creation when accessing character. The third, being excerpted from modern dramatic literature, demonstrates increased facility with language, physicality, and text based decision making. All three performances are assessed according to specificity, thoroughness, honesty, and the ability to implement acting techniques addressed throughout the term. All presentations are discussed in class.*

3. *Scene Work Analyses. In conjunction with scene rehearsal and performance, students will compose three “progressive” analyses, each concentrating on fundamentals of scene and character construction, which culminate at the final performance project. The first will address issues of essential plot, action, and character composition. The second focuses attention on formal script analysis. The third demonstrates intensive character investigation. All three written projects are assessed according to specificity, thoroughness, justification, and honesty. All analyses are discussed in class as well as in private consultation with the instructor.*

4. *Journal Entries. Each student must log 12+ entries throughout the semester for the purpose of deepening their personal connection and investment to the concepts addressed and applied within individual class sessions. Journals are evaluated according to thoroughness of discussion and the facility with which they articulate key concepts.*

5. *Written Reviews. Students will complete two high-quality personal reflection papers addressing theatre productions attended during each respective semester. Papers will reflect a pre-assigned format designed to enlist each student’s critical assessment, both as audience member and actor, of the success and/or failure of the acting within theatre production. Papers will be assessed based upon writing skill, knowledge, synthesis and critical application of acting theory. Addresses Outcomes 1,2,3 and 5.*

8. Attach a syllabus (1-inch margins and 10-12 pt. font). The syllabus must include the rationale from #6 above and clearly reflect the outcomes and methods detailed in #7 above.

CTAR 158: FUNDAMENTALS OF ACTING **Course Syllabus**

Course Description: A study of the fundamental theories, craft, and discipline of acting technique. This performance-based class will investigate methodologies of master acting teachers of the twentieth century, working toward an applied comprehension both of acting as craft and the aesthetic role it plays within the performing art form of theatre. Students will function critically as both actor and audience member.

General Education Rationale: Theatre is central to reflecting and critiquing the human condition. Acting is a vital and core component of this discipline. This course enhances an appreciation of acting as art form, and develops fundamental knowledge and abilities necessary both to the craft of acting and other professions where proficiency in self-expression and clear communication are deemed valuable.

Students learn to analyze the physical, cultural and emotional lives of characters in order to create honest portrayals for both peers and audience. This examination and reflection of the human condition engenders enthusiasm for continued pursuit of knowledge and learning as well as an increased appreciation of the arts.

Fundamentals of Acting (CTAR 158) meets the general education requirement for Arts in the Knowledge of the Disciplines.

Assignments:

Collaborative Exercises. Student will participate in improvisational scenes, games, and activities designed to illuminate various facets of the acting process.

Rehearsal & Performance. Students will rehearse and perform three scenes (each progressing in difficulty) which concentrate on fundamentals of scene and character construction, which culminate with the final performance project. The first will address issues of essential plot, action, and character composition. The second focuses attention on psychological/emotional complications and imaginative creation when accessing character. The third, being excerpted from modern dramatic literature, demonstrates increased facility with language, physicality, and text based decision making. All three performances are assessed according to specificity, thoroughness, honesty, and the ability to implement acting techniques addressed throughout the term. All presentations are discussed in class.

Scene Work Analyses. Students will compose three “progressive” analyses, each concentrating on fundamentals of scene and character construction, which culminate at the final performance project. The first will address issues of essential plot, action, and character composition. The second focuses attention on formal script analysis. The third demonstrates intensive character investigation. All three written projects are assessed according to specificity, thoroughness, justification, and honesty. All analyses are discussed in class as well as in private consultation with the instructor.

Journal Entries. Each student must log 12-15 entries throughout the semester for the purpose of deepening their personal connection and investment to the concepts addressed and applied within individual class sessions. Journals are evaluated according to thoroughness of discussion and the facility with which they articulate key concepts.

Written Reviews. Students will complete two high-quality personal reflection papers addressing theatre productions attended during each respective semester. Papers will reflect a pre-assigned format designed to enlist each student’s critical assessment, both as audience member and actor, of the success and/or failure of the acting within theatre production. Papers will be assessed based upon writing skill, knowledge, synthesis and critical application of acting theory.

Required Texts and Instructional Materials: Students will be responsible for accessing selected textbook and play readings provided via classroom handouts or e-reserve.

Outline of content to be covered:

Foundation work

- Introduction to warm-ups (vocal and physical).
- Introduction to craft of acting and the language or vocabulary specific to the art form.
- Discussion of history of acting and integrated exercises.
- Journal entry content discussed and begun (Journal reflects student's integration of acting process as discussed and worked on in class).
- Improvisational exercises designed to introduce acting process begun (Continue integration of working vocabulary).
- Solo object exercises (basic technique). Students will learn the components of re-creating human behavior realistically for a short period of time.

Characterization & Analysis

- Introductory work on scene and character analysis (form and content) through group exercises.
- Introduction to learning the principles which build a scene (work with conflict, relationship, primary and secondary activity, intensifier exercises).
 - First check on journal work.
 - First play must be attended by this time (critique due/play discussed in class).
- Introduction to contentless scene work—a “contentless scene” involves a sequence of dialogue attributed to no specific context). Contentless scene work enables students to apply the aforementioned principles of scene construction. Students will learn that in a contentless scene it is necessary to create relationship, conflict, intention, obstacle and action.
- Introduction to scoring a scene. Students will learn the basic components of analyzing a scene.
- First contentless scene rehearsed and performed.
 - Written scene analysis due.
- Second contentless scene rehearsed and performed.
 - Written scene analysis due.
- Final scenes assigned / written character and scene analysis discussed and begun.
- Rehearsal and instructor coaching.
- Final Performances/ character analysis and scored text analysis due.
 - Final journal check/ final play critiques due (may be handed in earlier).

Course Policies:

- Due to participatory nature of class, physical and mental attendance is essential. More than two unexcused absences will result in a lower grade. If a student has more than three unexcused absences prior to performance of the final presentation, the instructor reserves the right to assign a monologue in lieu of a scene due to concerns of student reliability. In such cases, the monologue will receive half credit.
- It is expected that all written work be proofread and of expert quality.
- Because time is tight, time for make-up performances is rare. If an emergency arises, or if you know that you will be absent on a particular day, please contact the instructor in advance so arrangements can be made.
- As this is a performance class, please be courteous and turn off cell phones.

Grading Scale:

Attendance and enthusiastic participation in group activities	75 points
Two Written play Critiques (out of four attended)	50 points
1 st scene with written scene analysis	25 points
2 nd scene or monologue w/ written scene analysis	25 points
Final in-class scene rehearsal	25 points
Written Character Analysis	25 points
Scored Scene Analysis	25 points
Final Scene Presentation	<u>50 points</u>
Total points possible	300 points

270-300=A
 240-269=B
 210-268=C
 180-209=D
 Below 179=F

Please submit all materials in electronic form.

Action of the Department/College

1. Department

Vote of department faculty: For **22** Against **0** Abstentions **0**

Dennis Beagen
Department Head

12/06/05
Date

2. College

College Dean

Date

Action of General Education Advisory Committee

Vote of General Education Committee: For _____ Against _____ Abstentions _____

Chairperson, General Education Advisory Committee

Date

Approval

Associate Vice-President for Undergraduate Studies and Curriculum

Date