

Beginning Acting/THS 201

3 Credits

Instructor: Marion McCorry/ email- mmccorry @cedarcrest.edu / x3442

Text : **A Challenge for the Actor** by Uta Hagen

Tuesday/ 1pm – 3:30pm

Office Hours/ 10AM – Noon/ Tues. / & by appointment

Description:

This acting class is a multi-tiered acting onstage experience that is designed to advance the student's self-knowledge both on and offstage as well as translate that knowledge into a vigorous stage life. The student will investigate contemporary as well as Modern Drama. The course focuses on exploring and developing the student's innate talent and ability. Relaxation techniques, improvisations, sensory work, physical and verbal games and specific object exercises from the Uta Hagen repertoire are used to open the actor to an examination of self and a study of that self in relationship to a stage life. The emphasis is on a defined, deep exploration of the physical and emotional components that make up a stage life, the student's increased awareness of those sources within himself that translate onstage and his ability to own, send and receive information and instincts in clear, forward moving actions. This information is quickly and non-competitively moved into specific scene and monologue work from a variety of plays to give the student further opportunity to creatively examine and define for himself the relationship between the inner and outer life.

Objectives:

- 1) to introduce the student to the great wealth of theatrical literature as well as the historical and contemporary growth of acting as an art and a craft.
- 2) To encourage and support risk-taking, chances, individual insights and perceptions and their translation onstage.
- 3) To introduce and explore all the elements of the Hagen technique and its relationship to "The Method" schools.
- 4) To lay the groundwork for the student's ability to access and define his own process and use the class as process of self-discovery.

Course Outcome:

- 1) The student will have an increased knowledge of her own values, ideas, perceptions and motivations and how to define and use them in the world.
- 2) The student will have an increased appreciation of the artist's role in our culture as well as the collaborative effort that is required to perform.
- 3) The student's intellectual exposure to and understanding of theatrical literature will be enriched and enlivened.
- 4) The student will be able to speak and perform before an audience.

Assignments:

Exercises from the Hagen series. Most exercises will be presented once unless I see a strong need to repeat it. Scenes and monologues as assigned. Each scene or monologue is presented two times.

First Showing: An investigated physical layout with beginning examination and investment of individual stakes. Further definition of character and relationship to partner and circumstance are examined and discussed in class and conference.

Second Showing: Character, circumstances and relationships fully explored and played. Emotional stakes clearly identified and owned.

Written Work:

Accompanies the final showing of scenes and monologues ONLY. The writing is solely subjective in nature and is a tool to support the actor's ongoing investigation of her stage life. It follows the form laid out in A Challenge for the Actor (p.134) answering the specific acting questions : Who am I?, Where am I?, What do I want?, What's in my way?, etc.....The writing is no way a term paper ; rather a personal study and opportunity to discuss difficult areas with me as well as discover for yourself where you are facing problems in your own acting score. It is a superb tool in helping the actor specifically define and commit to his stage life.

Grading and Evaluation:

Grading is based on Performance Work (65%) and the effort and preparation put into that work. Written work, responsibility to scene partners and to the class and demonstrated growth in process and form count for 35% of the total grade.

Make-Up Policy:

Students missing rehearsals and particularly, class performances without explanation and enough advance notice to make alternative arrangements are dropped one grade level.

Classroom Conduct:

Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest College Honor Code. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations and any other behaviors that might disrupt instruction and/or compromise students' access to their Cedar Crest College education.

Honor Code Pledge:

We who accept the honor of membership in the Cedar Crest College Community recognize our obligation to act and encourage others to act, with honor.

The Honor Philosophy exists to promote an atmosphere in which the individual makes her own decisions, develops a regard for the system under which she lives and achieves a sense of integrity and judgment in all aspects of her life.

It is with faith in such a system that I have accepted membership into this community. Representative of such, I hereby pledge to uphold the spirit and the letter of the Honor Philosophy.

Disabilities:

Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with me during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact the Advising Center.

Absences:

After two absences grade will be dropped one half level for each additional absence . (i.e. B to B-). Coming late counts as half an absence.

Schedule:

Tues. 8/26 - Introductions, Games, Discussion & Explanation of Syllabus,

Tues. 9/2 - Hagen Exercise # 1 – Physical Destination / Hagen Exercise #2 – Fourth Side

Tues. 9/9 - Hagen Exercise #3 –Changes of Self/ Hagen Exercise #4 – Moment to Moment

Assignment Scene #1

Tues. 9/16 - **Reading of First Scenes/ Improvisation of Scenes # 1**

Tues. 9/23 - First Showing of Scene #1

Tues. 9/30 - **First Showing of Scene # 1**

Tues. 10/7 - Final Showing of Scene #1

Tues. 10/14 - **FALL BREAK**

Tues. 10/21 - Final Showing Scene #1

Assignment Scene #2

(Written Homework Due – See p. 134 in Text)

Tues. 10/28 - **Read – thru / Second Scene / Improvisations of Scene #2**

Tues. 11/4 - First Showing of Scene #2

Tues. 11/11 - First Showing / Scene # 2

Tues. 11/18 - **Final Showing of Scene #2**

Tues. 11/25 - Final Showing/ Scene #2 (Written Homework Due)

Tues. 12/2 - **Monologue Read-Thru**

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