

THS 303 ACTING METHODS: PLAYING CHEKHOV

3 credits

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

**Text: Stella Adler on Ibsen, Strindberg and Chekhov
Chekhov's plays/ "The Three Sisters", "Uncle Vanya",
"The Cherry Orchard" & "The Marriage Proposal"**

Monday: 1pm – 3:30pm

Office Hours/ 10am – Noon / Tues. /And by Appt.

Description:

The course is an advanced level acting seminar. Participants have all taken previous levels of Acting and/or performed in Departmental productions. The class explores and examines in depth the development of "The Method" in late 19th Century Russia, and the emergence of its first playwright, Anton Chekhov. Exercises, improvisation, research, discussion and scene work are the elemental components of this experiential, in-depth seminar.

Objectives:

- 1) To directly influence and change the individual student's relationship with themselves, their talents, their commitment, their knowledge and understanding of the acting process and their personal methodology.
- 2) To explore, define and establish the role of research in the actor's homework, rehearsal and performance.
- 3) to investigate Chekhov, his role in history and his contribution to theatrical literature.

Course Outcome:

- 1) The student will have a deeper, experiential knowledge of the acting process and a clearer, more personal approach to the creation of a stage life.
- 2) The student will develop an increased appreciation for the role of the artist in our culture and the power of the actor's contribution to the collaborative theatrical process.
- 3) The student will gain an in depth experience of Chekhov's contribution to the great roles of modern dramatic literature.

Suggested Reading:

Sanford Meisner , On Acting.
Lee Strasbourg, A Dream of Passion. The Development of the Method.

Assignments:

Exercises – both individual and group - from the Hagen, Strasburg and Meisner series. Scenes and monologues from Chekhov's great plays 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 circumstances 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 in 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 her stage life.

Grading and Evaluation:

Grading is based on Performance Work (65% - 75%) and Written Work (30% - 35%). It includes effort and preparation put into the work, responsibility to scene partners and to the class and demonstrated growth in process and form.

Absences:

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

Make-Up Policy:

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

Classroom Protocol:

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 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.

Tentative Schedule:

- Mon. 8/25 - Introduction, Exercises, Discussion & Explanation of Syllabus
Assignment/ Hagen exercises – “Waiting” & “Outdoors”
Read Chekhov’s “The Three Sisters”**
- Mon. 9/1 - Labor Day/ No Classes**
- Mon. 9/8 - Performance / Hagen Exercises / Read-thru “Three Sisters”**
- Mon. 9/15 -**
- Mon. 9/22 - Exercises from Strasburg and Meisner**
- Mon. 9/29 - Table Work/ Research/ Improvisation**
- Mon. 10/6 -**
- Mon. 10/13 - Fall Break**
- Mon. 10/20 -**
- Mon. 10/27 -**
- Mon. 11/3 - Rehearsal / First & Second Showing /**
- Mon. 11/10 - Performance**
- Mon. 11/17 -**
- Mon. 12/1 -**
- Mon. 12/8 -**