

THTR 390 Theatre in Production - Acting

UMBC Department of Theatre, Fall 2017

Mon – Friday 7:00 – 10:30 pm

Prof. Nyalls Hartman

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Office Hrs. T & R 11:00am – 2:00pm

Other Hrs. by Appointment

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Theatre in Production – Studio 3 **Suddenly Last Summer**

This course is designed to provide students with practical theatre production experience, rehearsing and presenting a fully-mounted theatrical production before a live audience as part of the UMBC Theatre Department's Production Season. Through practical experience students apply and clarify classroom studio actor/performance training techniques, and learn the additional expectations, dispositions, processes, and techniques of rehearsal and performance, modeling the professional theatre production process. This is an ensemble based course. Students will be trained and expected to work together in a positive, proactive, and professional disposition to create a unified, harmonious, experience culminating in a completed creative work of live theatre.

Our goals for the course are:

1. To provide students with practical application of classroom and studio actor/ performance training techniques;
2. To provide students with the opportunity to practice the development of character, character choices, emotional connections, risk taking, physical behaviors, and living honestly within given circumstances, while working with partners and a production team in the rehearsal and performance process.
3. To provide students with hands-on production experience wherein they will encounter and learn the expectations, dispositions, processes, and techniques of rehearsal and performance, modeling the professional theatre production process;
4. To empower students with the responsibility to positively affect the caliber of work undertaken by the Department of Theatre through their contributions to the performance company, as company members;
5. To learn, promote, and apply the mental, physical, and spiritual dispositions essential to working effectively as collaborative members of a professional performance ensemble.

As these are our goals, self-introspection, connection to dramatic action, and a professional disposition are the foundations on which this course is designed. As adult actors, you are expected to be open and willing to investigate the many sides of the self that naturally arise in the development and understanding of character and actions in the re-creation of life and life issues. Further, you are expected to respond, incorporate, and play upon the exploration of your fellow actors as they explore and develop their process and technique during the course. As this

exploration is a vital part of the rehearsal and production process, you will be graded on the level of your dedication to and depth within which you undertake this work; high-level performative energy, professionalism, focus and commitment are required throughout the duration of every class and performance.

THTR 390 is a studio/laboratory class and as such is designed to investigate the reproduction of life and diverse life issues. Acting students are reminded that actors do not live as themselves in a play or a scene, but rather portray characters that demonstrate a multitude of life behaviors. Since good acting requires an honest reflection of life (language, thought, and action), it is possible that material may arise in rehearsal that might approach your personal sensibilities, morals, or religious convictions. As acting students you are expected to actively undertake and engage in character behaviors, choices, actions, and language as required by the specific world, characters, or life contained in a play, scene, exercise, or rehearsal—even if contrary to your personal ethical, moral, gender, sexual, and/or religious convictions.

If for any reason a student believes that, as actors portraying characters, they will be unable to perform actions that conflict with their personal convictions, they should speak with the professor immediately so we can pursue alternatives—including, but not limited to, the possibility of taking the course at another time.

As a studio/laboratory class, Theatre in Production requires the utilization of the physical body and therefore body training. Techniques for learning the physical instrument as they are being taught may, at times, involve 'hands-on' guidance from the instructor. This physical contact is essential for proper training and will be undertaken only as needed for the growth of the student's learning and technique. Respect to and for the student's personal space will always be present and all contact will be undertaken with the utmost professional integrity.

UMBC's Department of Theatre's teaching philosophy follows the statement of the Department of Drama at University of California Irvine:

"In drama, the actor becomes a medium as well as a creator of art. Stage life, which may involve actions such as touching, laughing, crying, kissing, dancing, flirting, threatening, dueling, and/or fighting, is not something the actor merely mimics, but necessarily experiences in and with his or her own body and mind. The ancient maxim of Horace, 'in order to move the audience, the actor must first be moved himself,' is as valid today as when Horace stated it two thousand years ago: stage performance involves not only the externals of body and voice, but also the internals of longings and emotions.

Effective teaching in the drama disciplines, therefore, may often involve physical and/or emotional interventions that can be demonstrative, suggestive, and/or challenging. This has been true as long as theatre has existed."

In the UMBC Department of Theatre we view theatre training as a collaborative process, involving shared responsibilities. The central role of the instructor is to support students in this work. The theatre faculty will always do their best to clarify the intention of the work. However, it must be understood that acting is a psychophysical process and that intellectual understanding is not always the key factor. Students have a responsibility to enter the training process with a spirit of spontaneity, inquiry and a sense of discovery. If a student is ever confused about the intention of an exercise or a direction, the faculty encourage her or him to bring that particular concern to their attention as soon as possible. Students will never be penalized for questioning the process. Open discussion is a vital component of life in a university; it strengthens the relationship between faculty and students, actor and director.

Course Requirements

Decorum – Professionalism is expected at all times. Respect the stage manager, the director, designers, crew, and your fellow actors in ALL situations. Easygoing friendliness and an upbeat attitude go a long way. Any report of insubordination, disrespectful attitudes, or slowness in response to stage manager or faculty instructions will not only result in a lower grade, but may also impact future casting assignments.

Cell phone use is not permitted in the rehearsal room or during any class activity. Phones and other electronic devices are to be turned off or silenced (no vibration) the moment you enter the studio and must remain off during the class period. Cell phones may be used only during breaks and only outside of the rehearsal room. Except during the research phase of the process, personal computers and text messaging are prohibited in the classroom or during any class activity. Only the stage managers, assistant director, or dramaturge will be allowed to utilize a computer and cell phone.

Beginning with tech and continuing through production, students should expect to have their cellphones collected or put away each evening at sign in by the stage management team for the run of the rehearsal or production. Cellphones will be returned following notes at the end of the evening.

Students are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to every class; no other food or drink is permitted. The rehearsal studio and the theatre are ‘carry-in, carry-out’ rooms! As it gets quite heated in the studio, students may find a small towel useful. Please treat the rehearsal room as a sacred space for disciplined work. Avoid distracting others; avoid unnecessary chatter. I tend to work with great focus and quiet. I expect the same. Leave the outside, outside and focus on the rehearsal.

Attendance – **Attendance is mandatory. Punctuality is also mandatory. Both are absolutely critical.** You are required to attend all class hours, unless otherwise specified in weekly call schedules. Rehearsals will be held during class times: Monday – Friday from 7:00 – 10:30 pm and will vary throughout the rehearsal process. Students should plan for additional evening and weekend rehearsals as we approach performance. Actors will receive a detailed rehearsal schedule on the 1st day of rehearsal. As per department policy, all actors must be available for all rehearsal hours. Students are expected to be properly dressed and ready to begin class at the top of the hour.

There are NO absences allowed. Period. **If you possess an attendance conflict you are to inform the stage manager before the start of the second rehearsal.** If you encounter an unforeseeable serious emergency that will impact your ability to attend rehearsal, you are responsible to contact the stage manager immediately. Do not have your message relayed. In the final weeks of rehearsal or production, NO absences of any kind will be excused.

Your presence will also be required at costume fittings, makeup calls, photo calls, and/or any other meetings scheduled by the director, costume shop, or stage manager. To expedite meetings, fittings, and scheduling, it is expected that you will have your personal calendars or daily planners at every rehearsal and on your person at all times.

Punctuality for all rehearsals and appointments is absolutely critical. More than one late arrival to any rehearsal or appointment will have a negative impact on your final grade.

Daily Calls – As this is an ensemble production and all company members are required to create the character and stage life of the play, you can assume that you are called for every rehearsal unless the daily schedule says otherwise. Students should refer to the rehearsal schedule for definite times. Stage Management will notify the company by email if there is a change in the daily call for rehearsal. Additionally, Stage Management will notify all actors of appointments, fittings, photo shoots, etc. It is expected that you will check your UMBC email twice daily, minimum. It is expected that you will make all calls and that you will remain informed and up-to-date.

Prior to Tech week, we will usually take one 10 – minute break during nightly rehearsal.

Dress – Acting majors are required to own rehearsal shoes, gender-character specific clothing for rehearsal purposes, and a makeup kit for theatre. You are expected to bring appropriate rehearsal clothing every day beginning at the top of the second week of rehearsals. Makeup kits will be required for the first makeup call (see production calendar). I recommend that you dress as you would for an acting class – prepared to move and appropriately covered. Absolutely no sandals, flip-flops or unsupported shoes are allowed in a rehearsal. Sneakers will only be permitted during exploration of certain characters—you will know which ones they are. As you get to know your character and the show’s design, it is expected that you will add your rehearsal shoes (utilizing what you learned from your other footwear), costume pieces, and personal props. No watches or jewelry will be worn unless they are a personal character prop decided upon in consultation with the director and costume designer. See the stage manager for information on storing your rehearsal clothes in a locker.

Preparation – Your daily assignment is to *prepare for rehearsal*. An actor must not rely solely on the director’s imagination to flesh out a role and discover bold, interesting choices. Preparation for rehearsal means not only memorizing lines, blocking, and incorporating the director’s notes, but also generating discoveries, ideas and choices *and bringing them* into rehearsal. It is expected that you will develop your character(s), and apply movement and vocal techniques you have learned in studio courses or have developed for the production. This may require meeting with your scene partner/s outside of rehearsals or significant time practicing alone.

The production may also require significant character research and you may be required to fulfill assignments connected to this research as the rehearsals proceed. These assignments may take the form of written work, oral reports, or something less formal.

Every actor is expected to be prepared for every rehearsal. **Preparation includes having on your person, a number of sharp pencils with erasers, a notepad for taking notes on scene work, and notebook of sorts that contains a well-organized system for production-related paperwork: your syllabus, contact sheets, production calendar, character notes, discoveries, ideas and images, line notes, notes from the director and/or the stage managers, designers, production team, or shops. It is expected that these will be reviewed daily prior to and following each rehearsal.**

The notebook will be turned in for grading following the last performance. This will factor in the “preparation” portion of your final grade.

Students are expected to be warmed-up and ready to go at the top of rehearsal when the director is ready for staging rehearsal. Actors are expected to arrive prior to their call time to change clothes, warm up, run notes, speak to the director or stage manager, and help set up the rehearsal room. Warm-ups should be focused and centering and prepare your voice, body, and mind for

your work. **There should be no talking during the warm-up portion of your daily preparation.**

Lines – It is expected that you will learn your lines & blocking as we go along. After we work a section, it is expected that you should start learning and go over your lines and blocking so that the next time we cover the scene you are off-book and know the shape of what you are doing. This is a regular, professional practice. And it is expected that you follow it. For rehearsal process clarity, you will also be given a final drop-dead off-book deadline. Don't wait for it. You will be wasting everyone's valuable rehearsal time if you do. You should note that I do not appreciate my time being wasted.

Rehearsal Process – Students are expected to sign-in daily. That means you are here & ready to go. This also means you are accessible and preparing to start. If you leave the immediate area, inform the stage manager. Don't wander so far away that they can't find you after you sign in.

When not on stage it is expected that you will be seated in a chair, getting ready for your entrance, actively listening to discoveries happening on the stage, or for longer durations, learning your lines, going over your blocking and actions, and/or practicing your character movement, vocal quality and/or your breathing. When appropriate, you are welcome to work quietly in the lobby/hallway during rehearsal down-time. It is your responsibility to inform the stage manager where you are so that you can be reached easily and immediately.

Generally, while Stage management is responsible for setting up and striking the room at the start and end of each class, they may ask for your help. Always help when called on. Stage management calls are to be heeded and repeated back to them as a confirmation of understanding of the call. Stage managers are not your secretaries, psychiatrists, maids, mothers or jailors. Stage managers are your colleagues and are responsible for operation of the production. You are expected to be responsible to them and for your own appointments, trash, calls, and problems.

For safety, no one is to walk to their car or dorm alone following rehearsal. Please create a 'buddy' system to reduce risk. As it will be dark as we move through the rehearsal process, please arrange to 'arrive' with company as well. Do not take this for granted.

Production Process – During performance, you are expected to play the play as rehearsed. Although we expect growth and excitement during the performance run, you wear your costumes & make-up as designed and perform your role & offstage responsibilities as mutually agreed upon prior to opening.

Process Paper – An additional assignment will need to be completed after the production closes in which you will be asked to reflect on your process and accomplishments. You will be given detailed guidelines and the due date later in the semester. This will factor in to the "artistic growth portion of your final grade.

Additional Course & Student Information

Student Services – Students who experience stress or other difficulties and find themselves in need of talking with someone regarding personal issues, trouble adjusting to the challenges of college life, anxiety, depression, or concerns about course work, social life, or the everyday pressures of being a college student are encouraged to contact University Counseling Services located in the Student Development & Success Center or online at www.umbc.edu/counseling or over the wires at (410) 455-2472.

Academic Honesty – Students are expected to abide by all policies of conduct as specified within University policy.

UMBC Honor Code statement:

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC’s scholarly community in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include suspension or dismissal. To read the full policy on academic integrity, consult the UMBC Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, or the UMBC Policies section of the UMBC directory.

Grading Policy

Since this a major studio class, I will be assessing your progress frequently and rigorously. You should note that I have high expectations and am a hard grader. Your final grade will be based on your commitment to the process, how well you meet the course goals and expectations, your cooperative participation and artistic growth in the rehearsal & performance process, your attitude & professional behavior, your process notebook, and your end-of-semester process paper.

Always feel free to talk with the director about the process, how you are doing, and what you need from the director and other team members. Open communication and trust are keys to a successful actor/director relationship.

Here is a breakdown of the major areas of evaluation.

25% Attitude	Grading scale:	90-100	A
25% Preparation		80-89	B
25% Artistic Growth		70-79	C
		65-70	D
25% Final Performance		0-64	F

A = Consistently exceptional work. Student meets requirements of rehearsal task, performance or assignment, understands concepts and applies them to the text; makes constant demands on themselves to risk the unknown. Takes responsibility for his/her process. Rehearses/performs with discipline, spontaneity, nuance, and joy. Faces obstacles and transcends them. Responds immediately to coaching, and is able to self-coach. Easily takes & yields leadership in the ensemble; pays conscientious and generous attention to other members of the company; gives detailed & involved feedback to others when asked. Process paper is very well-written—articulate, specific, honest, rigorous. Demonstrates supportive attitude, maintains focus and scrupulous professional behavior at all times.

B = Superior work. Student meets requirements of rehearsal task, performance or assignment, understands concepts and applies them to the text. Takes responsibility for his/her process. Rehearses/performs with some discipline, spontaneity and joy. Faces obstacles and has occasional breakthroughs. Responds well to coaching. Pays conscientious and generous attention to the ensemble; gives detailed feedback when asked. Process paper is well-written—

articulate, specific, honest. Demonstrates supportive attitude, maintains focus and scrupulous professional behavior at all times.

C = Satisfactory work. Student meets requirements of rehearsal task, performance or assignment, understands concepts and applies them to the text. Responds to coaching and gives feedback. Demonstrates supportive attitude, professional behavior. Process paper is articulate & honest.

D = Less-than-satisfactory work. Student fails to meet the standards of a “C” grade in one or more aspects. Requires frequent outside help, extra coaching, or disciplinary action.

F = Consistent failure to meet requirements of rehearsal tasks, performance or assignment, and/or consistently fails to meet any of the standards of a “C” grade.

CRITICAL DATES:

Design Presentation	January 30, 2017 (1 st Day of Classes)
1st Rehearsal:	January 31, 2017
Rehearsal Schedule:	M – F 7:00pm – 10:30pm
Designer Run:	March 6, 2017
Extended Rehearsals:	March 6, 2017 *7:00pm – 11:00pm
Rehearsals on Stage:	March 10, 2017
Tech Week:	March 14 – 17, 2017 (Friday March 17 th 3:00pm – 7:00pm)
Spring Break:	March 18 – 26, 2017
Pick-up Rehearsal:	March 27, 2017 *3:00pm– 5:00pm
Dress/Tech:	March 27, 2017
Dress:	March 28 & 29, 2017
Performances (5):	March 30 – April 2, 2017 (Matinee Saturday & Sunday 2:00pm)
Strike:	March 25 – 26, 2017