

Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Acting I

Class Time: Tuesday, Thursday 2:00-3:25
Monday TBA

Instructor: Dawn Naser

Email: dlnaser@hotmail.com

Class Location: Studio A

Course Objectives and Description:

This course is an introduction to the principles, process and skill requirements of acting for the stage. Acting I will allow the students to explore the following concepts: imagination, spontaneity, basic vocal and movement awareness, improvisation, objectives, tactics, obstacles and truth in acting. Students will have the opportunity to explore these concepts in class and rehearsals through physical and vocal warm-ups, improvisations, journal writing, class discussions and monologue work.

Course Outcomes and Goals:

To gain self-knowledge through exploration and play

To craft realistic behavior on stage in imagined circumstances

To develop a greater awareness of the world, of others, and of self

To respond to the “truthfulness” of peer and professional performances

To develop commitment, trust, listening, and consistency in performance through group work

To understand and utilize basic theatre vocabulary

Required Text:

Respect for Acting by Uta Hagen

Course Requirements and Rules:

1. All classes are mandatory. Exercises, discussions, and performance work cannot be made up for the simple reason that they happen in class.
2. Don't be late! Tardiness is an unacceptable practice in this business and will severely affect your final grade.
3. All written assignments must be typed. Use a 1 inch margin and 12 point font. Staple papers that are more than one page.
4. Students are responsible for making up all work missed during an absence by the next class.
5. Late work will be accepted for half credit the day after an assignment is due. Work more than one day late will not be accepted.
6. Students are required to schedule and attend rehearsals when necessary.
7. Be prepared to move during every class. Students are required to change into their theatre uniform at lunch. For more information about the departmental dress code, see the Theatre Handbook.

8. Bring water in a closed container to every class. You will need it and will not be permitted to leave the classroom to get a drink.
9. Bring *Respect for Acting*, a journal, notebook and pen/pencil to every class.
10. Any student caught cheating on or plagiarizing will receive a failing grade for that assignment. Plagiarism includes pirating information from the Internet without proper documentation.

Physical Environment:

Due to the nature and content of this course the student must understand that s/he will be required to work in close physical proximity, often requiring contact, with instructor and fellow students. It is assumed that each student is comfortable with such contact unless stated otherwise.

Please inform the instructor if you have any physical problems, which may prevent you from fully participating in class work. If you believe you have a physical disability that may warrant accommodation in this class, speak with the instructor as soon as possible so that a method for addressing your needs can be developed.

Grading Scale:

100-90	A	(Excellent. Far above and beyond my expectations in both artistic and academic accomplishment).
89-80	B	(Above average. Superior achievement in both academic and artistic achievement).
79-70	C	(Average. a grade of "C" will put you on artistic probation).
69-60	D	(Below Average).
59 and Below	F	(Failure).

Students will receive grades for the following:

1. Written Assignments (journals, research projects, reflective papers, critical reviews)
2. Performances (scene/monologue, juries, pantomimes, improvisations, group projects)
3. Participation (attendance, risk taking/initiative, preparation, discipline, team work)

Definition of Assignments:

Written Assignments

Journals: Every student should buy a one-subject notebook and bring it to all theatre classes. In your journal enter your daily experiences. You might write about class exercises, new people you meet, a performance you saw, a performance you participated

in or an interaction with a teacher. The journal is for YOU, so be honest and explore your feelings, ideas, inspirations, questions and frustrations.

Critical Reviews: You will have the opportunity to see theatre by students at Duke Ellington and professional companies. After seeing these performances you will write a review. A review is “an evaluation of a performance by other people in the same field in order to maintain or enhance the quality of the work in that field.” Part of your journey at Duke Ellington is about developing what you like and don’t like about theatre so you can make career choices that you are right for you. Critical reviews are another way for you to explore your preferences, ideas, and inspirations.

Research Projects: You will be expected to work on research projects in order to learn more about the theatre. Some of these projects will be done independently and some will be a group effort. When doing research, you are expected to find a variety of sources from the internet, books, magazines, newspapers, personal interviews and encyclopedias. You will need to find these sources on your own time by visiting the library or using your home computer.

Reflective Papers: These are personal responses to an activity or experience. They can be written in the first person and are best when they are honest and personal. These papers are less formal than a critical review, but more formal than a journal.

Performance Assignments

Improvisation: An extempore performance with a set of simple rules, but no script.

Pantomime: The art of conveying character, actions, sense of place, etc without words.

Group Projects: This could be a project where a group collectively develops a scene based on a theme, story or poem. It could be a project that requires a group to teach a class or lead a warm-up based on a movement style you have learned in class. Creative projects are a way to apply what you have learned in a creative and fun way.

Juries: Students are expected to present their work in front of a faculty panel for feedback. For first year students this will occur at the end of the year. Students are evaluated on their ability to apply concepts learned in acting, speech and movement in their jury.

Scene/Monologue Work: Sometimes students will present scenes and monologues in class. They will be required to schedule and attend rehearsals without faculty supervision.

Participation

Preparation: Students should attend each class with their journal, book, notebook, and dressed in the theatre uniform. All theatre students are expected to change into their

theatre uniform during lunch. In addition, students should be prepared to present any work assigned.

Team Work/Cooperation: Learning to take care of the group is an important skill in an industry where so much depends on your relationships with others. Students will be assigned group projects and class assignments and assessed on their ability to recognize and respect the value each person brings to a project.

Attendance/Punctuality: All classes are mandatory. Exercises, discussions, and performance work cannot be made up for the simple reason that they happen in class. Don't be late! Tardiness is an unacceptable practice in this business and will severely affect your final grade.

Initiative/Risk-Taking: Samuel Beckett said "No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better." Jump into an exercise and try even though the outcome may not be what you hoped for. You'll learn a lot from your mistakes so take advantage of every opportunity to try something new.

Discipline: Students are required to mentally and physically prepare for class upon arrival. Students should quietly stretch and rehearse until class begins. The successful actor has the discipline to prepare for an audition, rehearsal or performance without prompting from a teacher or director.

Acting I will address the following DC Theatre Standards:

HSA.3.3 Document observations and perceptions of production elements of a play, noting mood, pacing, and use of space.

HSA.2.1 Create rehearsal schedules, set deadlines, organize priorities, and identify needs and resources when participating in the production of a play or scene.

HSA.2.4 Collaborate as directors and design team to research, develop, and convey unified production concepts for a performance.

HSA.1.6 Demonstrate concepts of space, time, and energy in group improvisations.