"It's hard to lead a cavalry charge if you think you look funny on a horse." Adlai E. Stevenson II

“My biggest job in teaching you as actors is to bring you together with yourself. That is the root of creative acting.” Sanford Meisner

Instructor: Brenda Peyser
Office: Hamburg Hall Room 1119D
Phone: 412-268-7198
Email: peyser@andrew.cmu.edu
Class meetings: Section A1 - Monday, Wednesday 3:00 pm-4:20 pm, Room 1208

Office hours: I will hold office hours on Tuesday from 1:30-3:30. I am happy to set up an appointment with you for another time. Email me for an appointment.

Course Overview
Actors use “tools” (voice, body, focus) to convey emotion and tell stories to audiences. Acting for Management will help you utilize the actor’s tools to become a more powerful and persuasive presenter, to feel more confident when communicating with others, to understand your audience and to show the world the best and most authentic version of you. Through in-class exercises, scene work and discussion, you will practice the craft of acting and learn how it can enhance your abilities as a manager and leader.

Learning Outcomes
At the conclusion of this class, you should:

• Be able to define your strengths as a presenter and areas for continued work
• Use the actor’s tools to shape your performances and presentations
• Exhibit increased confidence in performing and presenting
• See an increase in your willingness to be spontaneous and take risks

Textbook
There is no textbook for this class. You will need scripts from plays or movies for your scene assignments. You can find play scripts at Hunt Library (for free) or you can purchase them on-line from a variety of sites. You can find film scripts (for free) at www.IMSDB.com.

If you are interested in learning more about the art of acting, there are many good books you can read. Here are a few:

“On Acting”, Meisner, Sanford and Longwell, Dennis; Vintage Books, August 1987
“An Actor Prepares”; Stanislavsky, Constantin, 1989 (reprint)

Class Policies
Acting requires a willingness to play, to imagine and to stretch yourself. It can be uncomfortable, which is why the classroom must be a place of support and encouragement for everyone and from everyone. Let’s embrace a willingness to take risks, to explore ourselves and to share the fun of acting.

Cell phones and computers will distract you and others from fully participating in the class. Leave them off and away unless I ask you to use them in an exercise.

Cheating and Plagiarism
It’s very hard to cheat or plagiarize in an acting class, but be clear that all your work must be your own. Any written assignments must be yours and yours alone. If you use sources, cite them. Violations of this policy will result in a minimum of failure for the assignment with the potential of failure for the course.

Attendance and Participation
This is an interactive class, with almost all of the work being done in class. You cannot learn if you are not present. Students who wish to earn an A in the class need to attend all classes and participate wholeheartedly in all in-class exercises. An important part of participating in this class is providing feedback to your peers and giving them your undivided attention during their performances. Since feedback is the mechanism by which we can improve, you will provide feedback to your classmates (and they to you) in a constructive and supportive manner. I will ask you to reflect on your own performances so you can see where you have developed your skills and where you might still need to develop them.

Wear comfortable clothing that you can move in. This class requires physical activity and your clothing should allow you to work without inhibition.

Be on time. Entering the class late disrupts everyone’s concentration. We will begin promptly at the class’s designated start time. Do not enter the classroom while another student is performing. Wait until the performance is over and then you can enter.

Assignments
Your assignments will be performances, either alone or with a teammate. You will need to memorize the lines for your final performance. You do not need to memorize lines for the other performances, but you should be very familiar with them. For performances, wear clothing appropriate to the scene (a costume) and bring any necessary props. You can choose any scene that fits the theme of the assignment. You do not need to adhere to age or gender in the script (e.g., a woman can play Hamlet and a man can play Blanche DuBois) as long as it fits the intent of the scene. Please be bold in your choices and find scenes that are meaningful to you and with which you can stretch yourself and have fun. I will post grades for your assignments in Canvas.

Grading
Course grades reflect your mastery of the material we cover, your commitment and willingness to take risks and your preparation of assignments.

Your participation grade is based on the quantity and quality of your contribution to class discussions, your commitment and willingness to undertake the in-class work, and your attention and feedback to your classmates.

Participation and in-class exercises = 30%
Giving and receiving feedback is an important skill, which is not often mastered. Because it is critical to your future success, we will give and receive feedback at almost every class to allow you to practice this skill in class. You will receive points for providing feedback to your peers, as follows: if you provide comprehensive, constructive, actionable feedback you will receive 1 point. If you provide no feedback or feedback that is vague, incomplete or cannot be acted on, you will receive 0 points.

You will also receive points for the in-class exercises. There are four rubrics for in-class work, each with a 2 point grading scale (you can find them at the end of this syllabus). We will use one of these rubrics for each in-class exercise. You will receive feedback from your peers to help you reflect on your performance. I will also provide you with feedback and ratings. My ratings will determine the points you receive for that day’s work. The rubrics are focused on four topic areas that are important to an actor’s work:
- Use of body and voice
- Commitment and risk taking
- Focus
- Spontaneity

You will be permitted to make up one in-class exercise in the case of an absence if, and only if, subsequent class time permits. Any written assignments are due on the date stated. If your assignment is turned in late, you will lose points. If you must miss class on the date of a prepared scene, you should contact me to discuss options for completing the assignment. In general, I will allow you to make up one prepared performance for illness or interviews. If you miss more than 2 classes, your grade will be lowered by one full grade. If you miss more than 3 classes, you will not be able to pass the class.

Presentations/scenes – 5 at 10% each = 50%
You will be rated on prepared scene work using a comprehensive rubric that includes the above four elements plus one more focused on your level of preparation. (Included at the end of this syllabus.) Your peers will provide feedback as will I. My ratings will determine the points you receive for the assignment. As part of this preparation, you will conduct a written analysis of your scene, due the day before your performance, and will receive additional points (up to 1.5 points) for each analysis.

Final scene presentation = 20%
Your final scene will be graded using the same rubric as for the prepared scene work above.

Your grade for the course will consist of your scores on the above elements converted to letter grades using the following scale:
A+  98% - 100%  Superior
A  94% - 97.99%  Outstanding
A-  90% - 93.99%  Excellent
B+  86% - 89.99%  Very Good
B  82% - 85.99%  Good
B-  78% - 81.99%  Acceptable
C+  74% - 77.99%  Poor
C  70% - 73.99%  Very Poor
C-  67% - 69.99%  Lowest passing
R  Below 67%  Failing

The grade you earn is the grade you will be assigned. Please do not ask me to increase your final grade so you can improve your qpa or to give you the opportunity to do an extra assignment to improve your final grade. I will not provide additional opportunities for grade improvement.

Course Outline

Week 1

August 28 – Introduction and class overview. The actor’s process.
Assignment to be completed: Bring an exercise mat or towel to class on August 30th. Wear loose, comfortable clothing that you can move in. An assignment will be made during class and due on September 6th.
Assignment to be completed: Due September 13th – Perform a 2-3 minute piece based on your observation and study of another person. The person should be someone you are able to observe in person (not a famous person or someone on tv). Note and recreate the person’s mannerisms, method of speaking and physicality. Consider his/her emotional state. Think about what that person is doing and wants in that moment. Try to be true to what you saw as you observed that person.

August 30 - Introduction to The Actor’s Tools: Body and Voice. In-class exercises and discussion.

Week 2

September 4 – Labor Day Holiday – No class

September 6 - Playing to the audience, using the stage. The actor’s use of focus. In-class exercises and discussion. In-class exercises will be rated using the Rubric for focus.
Assignment to be completed: Pick a partner and prepare a scene from a play or movie that focuses on teamwork. The scene should take place in a professional setting. You do not need to memorize your lines, but you should be very familiar with them. You will perform this scene on September 20th. Bring a printed copy of your scene to class on September 11th.
Week 3

**September 11** – Script Analysis. How actors understand the story, their characters and plan their performances through analyzing the text of the script.

*Assignment to be completed:* Analyze the script for your teamwork scene using the methodology learned in class. Submit this written analysis by 8 pm on September 19th.

**September 13** – Observation Presentations. You will be rated using the Prepared Scene Work Rubric.

*Assignment to be completed:* Find a monologue that deals with power. You do not need to memorize your lines, but you should be very familiar with them. You will perform the monologue on September 27th. Analyze the script for your power monologue using the methodology learned in class. Submit this written analysis by 8 pm on September 26th.

Week 4

**September 18** - Teamwork. In-class exercises and discussion. In-class exercises will be rated using the Rubric for Spontaneity.

**September 20** – Teamwork presentations

*Assignment to be completed:* Pick a partner and prepare a scene from a play or movie that takes place in a professional setting and focuses on conflict. You do not need to memorize your lines, but you should be very familiar with them. You will perform this scene on October 4th. Analyze the script for your conflict scene using the methodology learned in class. Submit this written analysis by 8 pm on October 3rd.

Week 5

**September 25** – Power. In-class exercises and discussion. In-class exercises will be rated using the Rubric for Body and Voice.

**September 27** - Performances of monologues on power. Monologues will be rated using the Prepared Scene Work Rubric.

*Assignment to be completed:* Prepare a rap song for performance on October 11. It should not be original! Bring the music with you. Use the instrumental or karaoke version of the song. Remember: everybody is equally bad at rap. It’s about attitude.

Week 6

**October 2** – Conflict. In-class exercises and discussion. In-class exercises will be rated using the Rubric for Commitment and Risk taking.

*Assignment to be completed:* Pick a partner and prepare a scene of your choosing from a play or movie. Your lines must be memorized. You will perform the scene on October 16th. Analyze the script for your final scene using the methodology learned in class. Submit this written analysis by 8 pm on October 15th. You can choose any scene on any topic—no restrictions!
**October 4** – Performances of scenes on conflict. Performances will be rated using the Prepared Scene Work Rubric.

**Week 6**

**October 9** – **Attitude.** In-class exercises and discussion. In-class exercises will be rated using the Body & Voice Rubric.

**October 11** - Performances of rap songs. Performances will be rated using the Prepared Scene Work Rubric.

*Assignment to be completed:* Review the paper on your personal learning goals for this class (you submitted it on September 6th). With those in mind, write a one-page paper describing what you have accomplished in this class. Consider the feedback you have received from your classmates and me and identify the areas in which you have improved and those you would like to continue to develop. How will you use what you have learned going forward? Assignment is due on October 17th by 8 pm.

**Week 7**

**October 16** – Performance of final scenes. Last day of class. Performances will be rated using the Prepared Scene Work Rubric.

**Summary of Assignments:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date Performed</th>
<th>Alone or with partner?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation Performance</td>
<td>Wed., Sept. 13</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Goals*</td>
<td>Wed. Sept. 6 by 8 pm</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork Scene Script Analysis*</td>
<td>Tues., Sept. 19 by 8 pm</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork Performance</td>
<td>Wed., Sept. 20</td>
<td>With partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Monologue Script Analysis*</td>
<td>Tues., Sept. 26 by 8 pm</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Monologue</td>
<td>Wed., Sept. 27</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Performance Script Analysis*</td>
<td>Tues., Oct 3 by 8 pm</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Performance</td>
<td>Wed., Oct. 4</td>
<td>With partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rap Performance</td>
<td>Wed., Oct. 11</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Scene Performance Script Analysis*</td>
<td>Sun., Oct. 15 by 8 pm</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Scene</td>
<td>Mon., Oct. 16</td>
<td>With Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Goals Reflection*</td>
<td>Tues., Oct. 17 by 8 pm</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Asterisked items are written assignments to be submitted through Canvas.*

**CMU Resources for Students**
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Available to all Carnegie Mellon students. If you feel stressed, overwhelmed or wish to talk with a trained counselor, please contact CAPS. Call 412-268-2922. Website: http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/

Global Communication Center (GCC). Provides workshops and individual sessions for written, verbal or visual work. http://www.cmu.edu/gcc/

Intercultural Communication Center (ICC). Provides support through workshops and individual sessions to non-native speakers of English. http://www.cmu.edu/icc/

Disability Resources. Works with students with disabilities to provide accommodations and ensure access to education. http://www.cmu.edu/hr/eos/disability/index.html
Rubric for Body & Voice
91-801 Acting for Management

Circle the level of mastery that best describes the actor's work. Then provide three comments for the actor at the bottom of the page. Discuss areas in which the actor is strong and areas for development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body and Voice</th>
<th>The actor has not yet mastered this. .5</th>
<th>The actor has mastered about half of this. 1</th>
<th>The actor has mostly mastered this. 1.5</th>
<th>The actor has fully mastered this. 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The actor controls body and voice and makes conscious decisions about how to use them.</td>
<td>The actor does not have control of body and/or voice.</td>
<td>The actor's body and/or voice are tight and not put to use to further the character. The actor is too aware of his/her physical self.</td>
<td>The actor has good control of body and voice, but occasionally is stiff or unsure about what to do physically. The actor sometimes may forget the physical choices he/she made for the character.</td>
<td>The actor’s body and voice are relaxed and put to use as the character. The actor makes choices about gestures and vocal quality to convey the character.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Actor Name: ____________________________________________

Assignment & Date: _______________________________________

Feedback provided by: ________________________________
94-801 Acting for Management  
Commitment and Risk Taking Rubric

Circle the level of mastery that best describes the actor’s work. Then provide three comments for the actor at the bottom of the page. Discuss both areas in which the actor is strong and areas for development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.5</td>
<td>The actor has not yet mastered this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The actor has mastered about half of this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>The actor has mostly mastered this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The actor has fully mastered this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Commitment**  
The actor takes risks, is not self-conscious and is willing to engage in the exercise.

- The actor is not able to embrace the character and unable to make choices. The actor is overly concerned about appearing foolish.
- The actor will make an attempt at a big choice, but then pull back out of self-consciousness. The actor does not "let go".
- The actor may hold back on occasion or be concerned about looking silly.
- The actor is willing to make a big choice, is unconcerned about looking foolish and is fully willing to "play".

Actor Name: __________________________________________

Assignment & Date: _____________________________________

Feedback provided by: ___________________________________
94-801 Acting for Management

Focus Rubric

Circle the level of mastery that best describes the actor’s work. Then provide three comments for the actor at the bottom of the page. Discuss areas in which the actor is strong and areas for development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>The actor has not yet mastered this.</th>
<th>The actor has mastered about half of this.</th>
<th>The actor has mostly mastered this.</th>
<th>The actor has fully mastered this.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The actor pays attention to scene partner, listens and thinks only about what is happening in the scene.</td>
<td>The actor does not listen or respond to the partner. The actor has not found the character.</td>
<td>The actor has numerous lapses in listening and responding to the partner. The actor &quot;breaks character&quot; more often than not.</td>
<td>The actor is mostly attentive to the scene and scene partner, but on occasion doesn't listen or respond in character. The actor doesn't make the situation real.</td>
<td>The actor is fully attentive to the actions of the scene and to the scene partner. The actor listens, responds and acts as if the situation were real.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Actor Name: __________________________________________
Assignment & Date: ______________________________________
Feedback provided by: ___________________________________
94-801 Acting for Management  
**Spontaneity Rubric**  

Circle the level of mastery that best describes the actor’s work and provide three comments for the actor at the bottom of the page. Discuss areas in which the actor is strong and areas for development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spontaneity</th>
<th>The actor has not yet mastered this.</th>
<th>The actor has mastered about half of this.</th>
<th>The actor has mostly mastered this.</th>
<th>The actor has fully mastered this.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The actor is loose and open to the experience.</strong></td>
<td>The actor freezes or does not allow the scene to proceed.</td>
<td>About half the time, the actor is thinking about what to do next and not allowing the scene to proceed naturally.</td>
<td>The actor allows the exercise to unfold, but occasionally tightens up or tries to control the outcome when that is not the objective of the scene.</td>
<td>The actor is in the moment and allowing the scene to go where it will.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The actor adapts to changes in the scene.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Actor Name: ___________________________________________________________

Assignment & Date: ___________________________________________________

Feedback provided by: _________________________________________________
### Rubric for Prepared Scene work

**Actor Name:**

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**91-801 Acting for Management**

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**Assignment & Date:**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spontaneity</th>
<th>Not yet mastered .5</th>
<th>Somewhat mastered 1</th>
<th>Mostly mastered 1.5</th>
<th>Fully mastered 2</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>The actor is loose and open to the experience. The actor adapts to changes in the scene.</td>
<td>The actor freezes or does not allow the scene to proceed.</td>
<td>About half the time, the actor is thinking about what to do next and not allowing the scene to proceed naturally.</td>
<td>The actor allows the exercise to unfold, but occasionally tightens up or tries to control the outcome when that is not the objective of the scene.</td>
<td>The actor is in the moment and allowing the scene to go where it will.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Body and Voice**
The actor controls body & voice and makes conscious decisions about how to use them.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Not yet mastered .5</th>
<th>Somewhat mastered 1</th>
<th>Mostly mastered 1.5</th>
<th>Fully mastered 2</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The actor does not have control of body and/or voice.</td>
<td>The actor's body and/or voice are tight and not put to use to further the character. The actor is too aware of his/her physical self.</td>
<td>The actor has good control of body and voice, but occasionally is stiff or unsure about what to do physically. The actor sometimes may forget the physical choices he/she made for the character.</td>
<td>The actor's body and voice are relaxed and put to use as the character. The actor makes choices about gestures and vocal quality to convey the character.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Focus**
The actor pays attention to scene partner, listens and thinks only about what is happening in the scene.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not yet mastered .5</th>
<th>Somewhat mastered 1</th>
<th>Mostly mastered 1.5</th>
<th>Fully mastered 2</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tr>
<td>The actor does not listen or respond to the partner. The actor has not found the character.</td>
<td>The actor has numerous lapses in listening and responding to the partner. The actor &quot;breaks character&quot; more often than not.</td>
<td>The actor is mostly attentive to the scene and scene partner, but on occasion doesn't listen or respond in character. The actor doesn't make the situation real.</td>
<td>The actor is fully attentive to the actions of the scene and to the scene partner. The actor listens, responds and acts as if the situation were real.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Commitment**
The actor takes risks, is not self-conscious and is willing to engage in the exercise.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Not yet mastered .5</th>
<th>Somewhat mastered 1</th>
<th>Mostly mastered 1.5</th>
<th>Fully mastered 2</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tr>
<td>The actor is not able to embrace the character and unable to make choices. The actor is overly concerned about appearing foolish.</td>
<td>The actor will make an attempt at a big choice, but then pull back out of self-consciousness. The actor does not &quot;let go&quot;.</td>
<td>The actor may hold back on occasion or be concerned about looking foolish.</td>
<td>The actor is willing to make a big choice, is unconcerned about looking foolish and is fully willing to &quot;play&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Preparation**
The actor has analyzed the character and scene, made choices about the character and rehearsed the scene.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not yet mastered .5</th>
<th>Somewhat mastered 1</th>
<th>Mostly mastered 1.5</th>
<th>Fully mastered 2</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The actor does not know the character or scene, the lines, or the action to make the scene believable.</td>
<td>The actor needs to better understand the scene and character. The actor often loses direction in delivering lines and building the scene's momentum.</td>
<td>The actor generally understands the actions of the scene and the character's objectives, but may have moments when actions are unclear. The actor is mostly prepared, but may have lapses in delivering lines and actions.</td>
<td>The actor understands the actions of the scene, the character's objectives and made choices that affect his/her behavior and physicality. The actor is prepared by knowing the lines and actions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rater Name:**

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For each category, rate the actor’s level of mastery and write three comments for the actor. Include both areas in which the actor is strong and areas for development.