Course: THEA 1338 Core Ensemble

University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance
Instructor: Jackie deMontmollin -- office hours by appointment
Preferred Contact: jdemontmollin@uh.edu

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Course Description
The Core Ensemble Student will be able to:

- Practice preparatory exercises for rehearsal and performance
- Develop and practice a fitness routine
- Practice rehearsal and audience etiquette
- Develop a duet scene
- Organize an audition binder with ten monologues & two songs that you could perform
- Create/maintain a resume
- Develop two contrasting, age appropriate monologues
- Write, develop and apply varied character objectives, obstacles and tactics
- Apply elements of action to monologue/scene work
- Notate blocking
- Self evaluate scene work and monologues
- Create truthful characters and relationships for rehearsal and performance
- Identify areas of the stage and body positions immediately, notate all blocking properly
- Respond to direction based on specific vocabulary and concepts covered in class and in readings
- Constructively evaluate elements of a production as an audience member

Course Requirements:
Materials Needed:
- Proper Attire (outlined below)
- Sign in on time every day (you must sign yourself in).
- Script at every class
- Two sharpened pencils
- Two- two inch binders with dividers for script, notes and analysis & for your Monologue Book.
- Paper for notes
- Bottle of water

Required Texts:
The Stanislavsky System by Sonia Moore
Moore, Sonia The Stanislavsky System Penguin Books, NY
Amazon.com Link to this text:
http://www.amazon.com/Stanislavski-Professional-Training-Handbooks/dp/0140466606/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1243884440&sr=8-1

“Up” by Bridget Carpenter
Samuel French link to purchase this script:

Amazon.com link to this text:
It is highly recommended that you purchase the following books now and use them as a reference throughout your four years here at The University of Houston:

**Caldarone, Marina (2004) Actions, The Actor’s Thesaurus** Drama Publishers, CA

**Phillips, Bill (1999) Body for Life**
Amazon link: [http://www.amazon.com/Body-Life-Mental-Physical-Strength/dp/0060193395/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1249942728&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Body-Life-Mental-Physical-Strength/dp/0060193395/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1249942728&sr=1-1)

**Participation:**

Clothing for classes and rehearsal:

- You need to be dressed out in “neutral” work out clothing and ready to work at the top of class (prior to roll) – you must wear clothing that covers your torso and at least 3/4 length “sweats” or tights and no shorts—
  - Comfortable clothing to move in no fabrics that make *swooshy* sounds as you move please (such as wind material)
  - Sweats, not too baggy (need to be able to see subtle body movements) or Leggings- avoid flared pants please (tripping hazard)
  - Dressing in layers is helpful as room temperature varies
  - No jewelry
  - Hair off face (Hair tie or tight fitting cap/scarf that will not fall off)
  - We will work barefoot at times– you must have clean feet before you enter the room. If we are working in shoes, wear only tennis shoes, sports shoes or dance shoes (character or jazz). No street shoes, sandals, clogs, flip flops, etc. should be worn to class/rehearsal.
  - Bring capped bottle of water to every class.

**Begin getting your *rehearsal wardrobe* in place:**

**Women:**

- Rehearsal skirt: in making the rehearsal skirt, look for a fabric with solid weight for a floor length skirt (leave extra room in the hem so you can adjust for different heel height), on a drawstring, with a panel you can add for a train or to go over a bustle or other period additions.
- Character shoes with 1" heel (other shoes with heels of varying heights would be good too).
- *For the future:* look for corsets, hats, gloves, ballet slippers, black tights/leotards, accessories (compact, lorgnette, cig holder etc).

**Gentlemen:**

- Black leather dress shoes (with real soles—not rubber).
- Dark, well-fitting suit
- White dress shirt (with a neck size that is truly
comfortable for you!) This suit is one you won't mind getting sweaty in, or working through the fight scene where the lapels get grabbed again and again in rehearsal.

- Tie
- For the future: look for are ballet shoes, boots with a decent heel (cowboy boots are ok, but you could use a square-toed pair that might serve any number of periods), other suit coats (dbl breasted, 3/4/5 button, etc.) hats, gloves, canes, bowties, cummerbund, poet shirt, accessories (flask, cig case, etc).

Note: We are NOT ADVOCATING BUYING ANY OF THIS NEW; thrift stores are a good place to begin your collection.

Other Important Notes:
- Be Prompt (to class on time – you must be in the room while roll is being taken – you are “late” to class if you show up after roll call). Be sure to sign in upon arrival; do not disrupt the work. Tardiness for two classes is considered an absence and can impact your grade and the jury process.
- Do not bring food into the theatre.
- Fully commit. Watch, listen, and fully contribute in all exercises and discussions. Come to class every day with an open heart and an open mind.
- Make a habit of checking the callboard and TD Net twice daily
- Participate in required departmental Casting Assessments (August and November)
  - Prepare and perform two contrasting monologues and song if required
  - Dress in appropriate audition attire
  - Arrive on time and display a professional and friendly demeanor
  - Complete all necessary paperwork on time, accurately and legibly
  - Schedule a meeting following each casting assessment with your assigned mentor. It is your responsibility to meet with your mentor.
- Be sure your resume and headshot are updated and placed in the book in the administrative offices each semester.
- You will be required to attend every main stage production in The School of Theatre & Dance and write a review. You will also be required to attend strike for every mainstage show.
  - Required strike attire includes:
    - Closed toe work shoes (no heels)
    - Pants
    - No jewelry
    - Hair tied back
    - Fitted work clothes that can accept some “wear and tear”
    - Have a “can-do” attitude at strike. We do not appreciate “helpless actors” in this program.

Class/Rehearsal Environment/Expectations:
Be attentive and respectful toward your classmates and director at all times.
- Arrive on time ready to work
- Silence cell phones during class
- Have a pencil, script and paper for notes at all rehearsals/classes

deMontmollin 1338/1111
o Notate all blocking, write down all notes
o Stay focused on the work; Refrain from side conversations
o Take all direction the first time it is given; listen to all direction as other’s notes can impact you and you can learn from them. Good actors are good listeners.
o Refrain from “directing” your peers unless asked by the instructor to do so.
o Keep outside material stored away including material from other classes, ipods, etc.
o Leave “personal baggage” at the door
o Exhibit an “attitude of gratitude.”
o Represent yourself and The School of Theatre & Dance well at all times
o Respect this space and leave it better than you found it

Absence and Lateeness: This course follows the UH School of Theatre & Dance policy regarding absence and lateness.

Three absences = one full letter grade deduction (i.e. a "B" becomes a "C").
Four absences = two full letters grade deduction.
Five absences = automatic "F" grade for the course.
Entering class after the roll has been called constitutes lateness.
Lateness for two classes = one absence.

Rehearsal: You will need rehearse and prepare outside of class, individually and with your performance partners.

Assignments/Deadlines: Performance assignments must be fully rehearsed and ready to present. Written assignments must be turned in on the due date. “The Show Must Go On” is an Ethic that we adhere to in The School of Theatre & Dance and in this course.

You will Perform:
• Two contrasting contemporary monologues
• One duet scene from the play “Up”

You will Create:
• A personal audition source book in a three ring binder containing ten monologues and two 16 bar segments of music from songs within your range; one from a contemporary musical, one from a classic musical.

You will Write:
o Six two page, double spaced, reflection papers
o Three two page, double spaced, play reviews (Earnest, Rocky and either Hedda, Landscape, Emerging Choreographer’s Showcase or Pageant)
o One Final Exam

You will Read & analyze:
• At least three full length plays (Up, plus the plays your monologues are from).

You will Attend:
• The Rec Center once per week for thirty minutes
• All Mainstage productions at UH
• Strike for all UH productions

Guidelines for monologue assignment:
Locate and Xerox TEN monologues from a variety of plays that you will assemble into a book. The monologues must meet these requirements:
Monologues should be cut to a maximum of 60 seconds each. Monologues less than 45 seconds will not be accepted.
• Don’t use pieces that require an accent.
• Avoid monologues with telephone calls.
• Choose contemporary pieces from plays published after 1910.
• No movie monologues or original pieces please.
• Pick audition pieces appropriate to your age and emotional range.
- Choose pieces that contrast and show your range.
- Avoid overacting and/or overly dramatic material.
- Remember that sexually explicit or socially offensive material usually works against an auditioner.
- Avoid Shakespeare for this assignment.
- Keep your audition simple and honest.
- Avoid elaborate staging; you can plan for one chair to be provided.
- Know the titles, authors, and characters in your audition pieces and read the entire play so that you know the context of the piece.

On the top of the monologue, legibly write the title, author, character name, publishing company, publishing date, act and scene number of the piece.

**Critiques:** You will have two written critiques that will be in conjunction with attending specific theatrical productions.

**Note:** *Heading for all submissions for Core Ensemble Acting 1338 should be in this format at the top of every page submitted:*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last name, first name</th>
<th>The University of Houston</th>
<th>Assignment Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MM/DD/YY</td>
<td></td>
<td>Acting 1338 deMontmollin</td>
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**No late assignments:** No late assignments (written or performance) will be accepted.

**Conferences:** You are welcome to schedule meetings with the instructor during the course of the semester. This will be an opportunity to discuss your progress and current standing for the class.

**Grading 1338:**
50% - Performance Assignments (including written work related to the performance & monologue book)
30% - Participation (promptness, preparation, participation, focus, commitment, reflection papers, weekly workouts)
10% - Critiques
10% - Final Exam

**Final Grading Scale:**

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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We will follow the School of Theatre & Dance Absence and Late Policy, and the Min. Grade and Min. GPA Protocols. All students are responsible to understand and abide by these policies. This course is intended to prepare you to be successful as a core ensemble member in a juried University level acting program.

**Tentative Schedule for 1338 (Subject to additions and changes)**
- **Mon. 8/24**
  9am-11am Syllabus Overview, program expectations, Read through
  - Begin search for TEN one-minute monologues that you could perform; be off book for two of them; due Monday 10/26.
  - Write a two page, double spaced reflection on what you believe are your strengths and weaknesses as an actor. Due Wednesday 8/26.
5pm Mandatory Department Event

Wed. 8/26  9am-11am Warm up, Areas of stage, Body Positions, Notation Expectations

Reading assignment: Sonia Moore’s Elements of Action

Write a two paged, double spaced reflection on your application of two of the elements of action to your past work due Monday 8/31.

Sun. 8/30   Houston Theatre District Open House 12-4 (Optional)
Mon. 8/31   Begin New Schedule: 8am-9:30am or 9:30am-11am

Objective, Obstacle Tactics (neutral scene work)

Wed. 9/2   Neutral Scene Work

Reading Assignment “Up”

Write a two page double spaced reflection about a situation or character you can relate to in “Up” Due Monday 9/14.

Mon. 9/7   NO CLASS Labor Day
Wed. 9/9   Elements of Action exercises
Mon. 9/14  “Up”
Wed. 9/16  Analysis of “Up”

SEPTEMBER 18-19 HEDDA GABBLER

Mon. 9/21  Analysis of “Up” Select 3 minute Scenes from “Up”

Reading Assignment Shurtleff GP 1-3

Write a two page, double spaced reflection, topic to be announced. due Monday 9/28.

Wed. 9/23  Shurtleff Analysis of “Up”
Mon. 9/28  Objective Review, personalization, memorization

Write a two page double spaced reflection on your personal health and fitness and how it relates to your work as an artist Due Monday 10/5.

Wed. 9/30  Relationship, Verbs
Mon. 10/5  Conflict
Wed. 10/7  Moment Before

OCTOBER 9 Earnest Opens

Mon. 10/12 Duet Scene Performance with critique
Wed. 10/14 Duet Scene Performance with critique

OCTOBER 16-17 LANDSCAPE OF THE BODY

OCTOBER 18 Earnest Closes
Mon. 10/19  Guest speaker on fitness and nutrition


Wed. 10/21 Bring TEN contemporary 60 second monologues and two 16 bar segments of songs from musicals to class assembled in a binder. (Know which two you want to work on for this Casting Assessment)

Monologue Workbook

OCTOBER 23 ROCKY OPENS

Mon. 10/26 OFF BOOK for Monologues

Objective Review, Shurtleff Analysis

Wed. 10/28 Monologue Rehearsal

NOVEMBER 1 ROCKY CLOSES

Mon. 11/2 Resume and Headshots

Wed. 11/4 Review of Rocky Due.

Monologue #1 first showing

Mon. 11/9 Monologue #2 first showing

Wed. 11/11 Monologue work day

Mon. 11/16 Monologue second showing
**Mandatory Spring Casting Assessment 6-11pm**

Wed. 11/18  Review Objective, Obstacle, Tactic

**Write a two page, double spaced reflection on your improvement to date and your goals as a performer for the remainder of the semester. Due 11/23.**

NOVEMBER 19-21 EMERGING CHOREOGRAPHER’S SHOWCASE

NOVEMBER 20 PAGEANT OPENS

Mon. 11/23  Review Areas/Body Positions

Stage Pictures

**FINAL PLAY REVIEW DUE**

Wed. 11/25  OFF for Thanksgiving

Mon. 11/30  Relationship/Conflict/Moment Before with Stage Pictures

Wed. 12/2  **Review for Final**

**DECEMBER 4 PAGEANT CLOSES**

Dec. 7-18 Final Exams