THE 102: Introduction to Acting
TR 9:20 – 10:50 AM *** Beeghly Theater (PH BEEGH)

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TR 8:00 – 9:00 AM or by appointment

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**Subject to Change**

Course Description (from the department website)
Concentrates on approaches to acting and analysis of scenes from an actor’s point of view. The laboratory section concentrates on scene work, monologue exercises, and improvisation.

Westminster Student Outcomes
1) To reason logically and evaluate critically
2) To communicate effectively
3) To think creatively, and appreciate aesthetic expressions
4) To demonstrate intellectual curiosity
5) To acquire knowledge of self, society, human culture, the natural world, and human relationships to God
6) To apply our knowledge to contemporary issues
7) To demonstrate moral and ethical commitments to neighbor, society, and the natural world
8) To demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning and the acquisition of skills for careers and responsible service as world citizens

Course Objectives
1) To develop the confidence and preparation strategies needed to audition, improvise, rehearse, and/or perform in any setting. (5, 6, 8)
2) To equip oneself with the basic physical, psychological, and emotional resources an actor should have in their tool belt. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8)
3) To develop the ability to think and react truthfully and spontaneously. (2, 3, 4)
4) To develop an awareness and sensitivity in one’s role as an audience member in the theater. (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7)
5) To gain an appreciation for the craft of acting for the stage. (4, 5, 6, 8)
6) To utilize technology in documenting the process and product of acting (2, 3, 4, 5)
7) To recognize the difference between process and product, emphasizing process in all course work (3, 4, 8)
8) To develop an awareness of others’ identities and experiences in order to adequately create three-dimensional, believable characters (1, 3, 5, 7)
**Grading**

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<th>Grading</th>
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<td>5 Performances (Products)</td>
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<td>1 Live Production Response Paper (Product)</td>
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<td>Acting Journal (Process)</td>
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<td>Acting Work 1st &amp; 2nd Drafts (Process)</td>
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*Performance presentations will be graded on the student’s memorization, development and growth from the first rehearsal, as well as application and understanding of the exercises and notes brought up in class. Talent is not considered a factor in determining grades; commitment, preparation, and a willingness to try are!*

**Texts**

There is no required text to purchase for this course, though you will be assigned to read plays and excerpts made available online (D2L) or in class. For all monologue and scene assignments, you are expected to read the entire play your piece comes from. You may be quizzed on this material at any time, as it is vital for understanding your character.

**Course Requirements**

5 Performances (Products) – 350 points total (see below for details & point values)

**Personal Story Project (50 points):**

The personal story project gives an opportunity for the students to introduce themselves to the class beyond the ordinary first-day-of-class “hello, my name is”. Detailed assignment will be distributed separately.

**Open Scene (50 points):**

With a partner, ascribe context, characters, relationships, and consequences to a short scene with ambiguous dialogue. Work inside and outside of class to strengthen setting and raise stakes. Grades are based on character development, growth from first-read to final performance, memorization, and utilizing the arsenal of acting tools you acquire along the course of the semester; rubrics will be posted on D2L.

**2 Monologues (75 points each, 150 points total):**

Monologues serve as an entry way into memorization, character analysis, and physicality. Grades are based on character development, growth from first-read to final performance, memorization, and utilizing the arsenal of acting tools you acquire along the course of the semester; rubrics will be posted on D2L.

**Scene (100 points):**

Scenes provide a more expansive foray into scripted material, character work, relationship structure, and movement in the playing space. Grades are based on character development, growth from first-read to final performance, memorization, and utilizing the arsenal of acting tools you acquire along the course of the semester; rubrics will be posted on D2L.

1 Live Production Response Paper (Product) (50 points)

You are required to attend, or participate in, Westminster Theatre’s fall production and write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) analysis and response paper. Writing prompts will be available on D2L. These
assignments should be uploaded to D2L for plagiarism checks AND submitted in hard copy on the due date before the start of class. You may acquire on www.tickets.thtrwestminster.org/tickets. Make note in your planners: Eurydice shows November 30 – December 3 (paper due Dec 5th).

Acting Journal (Process) (150 points total)
You will keep a notebook for your class notes, in-class reflection free-writes, and both individual and partnered rehearsals. What you will turn in each week is a video journal, due every Monday at 5pm. They should be no longer than 2 minutes. Please start by stating the dates your video journal will be covering. Then, for the next two minutes (please set a timer as not to exceed the time limit), I want you to reflect on the work you have done that week, or anything in the work that you have done up to that point. Feel free to ask questions, rant and rave about how things are going for you, reflect, work something out loud, talk about your stumbling blocks or any light bulb moments, anything related to the work and your process in it. Entries should be honest, in-depth examinations of characters, of fellow performers, and of your own person. Try to discover what interests, inspires, provokes, intimidates, and entertains you about your own work and the work of your fellow students. Use your notebook regularly so that you have a record of how the work is going for you and so that you have something to reference when making your recordings.

*You will need to make a free account with vimeo (www.vimeo.com). You can also download the free app. You can either record on your phone/tablet and upload to the app, or you can record on a computer and upload to the website. You will send it only to me. I am registered as Karen Dabney and my account is linked to my email, dabneykm@westminster.edu.

*Please note, when you send this video to me, I will be the only one who will be able to see it.

Acting Work 1st & 2nd Drafts (Process) (150 points total, see below for details & point values)
Part of the Acting Laboratory experience is workshopping/rehearsing the material in class in front of your peers. You gain useful feedback from the instructor and your peer group who serve as observers to your process. Also, as observers, you gain insight into how your own acting work may be perceived or be enhanced by input from the instructor and your peers. To emphasize the importance of this work “in process”, each “work day” for a particular assigned performance will be considered a 1st or 2nd draft of the ultimate graded performance, and will be scored accordingly.
(Open Scene 1st Draft = 15, 1st Draft Monologue #1 = 20, 2nd Draft Monologue #1 = 20, 1st Draft Monologue #2 = 20, 2nd Draft Monologue #2 = 20, 1st Draft Scene = 25, 2nd Draft Scene = 30)

Quizzes (Process) (50 points)
Throughout the semester you will be learning lots of new terms and techniques. You will be quizzed occasionally to make sure you understand the terminology and application of the techniques. These quizzes may be announced or unannounced.

Personal Performance Self-Reflections (Process) (20 points each for 100 points total)
Due within 24 hours after each of your 5 performances (the final reflection is due 24 hours prior to the class Final), you must type up and submit to D2L a 1-2 page(s) double-spaced reflection on your experience performing in relation to rehearsing. How did you develop your character over the rehearsal period? How much time did you invest? What made this process rewarding and/or challenging? What would you have done differently? Don’t stop there – reflect in a multitude of ways on your performance experience. This reflection must also include observations of at least two other classmates and their growth, or lack thereof, in performance quality. You should also include goals for future class performances. The final reflection will be in response to a prompt to be posted on D2L later in the semester.
**Attendance/ Participation (Process) (150 points)**
You should be ready to work every day - meaning being physically, mentally, and emotionally ready to jump in. While some people are natural performers and others are battling stage fright, the participation portion of this grade is based on a student’s effort and willingness to push themselves outside of their usual patterns. Participation also relates to students’ attentiveness, effective and constructive feedback in-class, and reliability and accountability to their peers for rehearsing projects outside the classroom (7-10 hours per week on average).

Being present is of the utmost importance, even when your scene/monologue is not being “worked”: you learn just as much, if not more, by watching than by doing (what works, what doesn’t, etc.). Beyond mere attendance, punctuality is vital to the creative process. Respect your fellow classmates by showing up on time and not disturbing any work that might be going up (wait until there’s a pause between performances where you can enter/exit).

You are allowed two absences (excused or unexcused) before your final grade will be affected. For every absence thereafter, your final grade will be reduced by 50 points. For every tardy, your final grade will be reduced by 25 points. If you are coming straight from another class and fear being tardy on a regular basis, please inform the instructor. After 5 absences (or combination of tardies and absences equal to the point value outlined above), the instructor reserves the right to drop a student with an F. If a student has an excused absence it is the student’s responsibility to schedule any and all makeup work within one week of returning to school if they wish to receive (possibly partial) credit for the assignment. The instructor reserves the right to reject late assignments; grade deductions will be assigned to any late work that the instructor decides to accept.

**Classroom Etiquette**
This is an acting laboratory, which means you will be trying new things each and every class. You must wear comfortable clothes and sneakers (no sandals or flip flops) in which you can move freely and don’t mind getting dirty (there might be exercises where you’re on the floor). This space is our lab and we should treat it with respect – please help the instructor return the room to its original condition at the end of every class.

No food or drink (except water) is allowed in the acting space. Additionally, please silence or turn off cell phones and put them away. It is extremely impolite to be on a device while someone is working, being vulnerable in front of their classmates. If it becomes a recurring issue, you will be asked to hand over your phone at the start of class to avoid further distractions. While this is a creative, explorative environment, please be mindful of your fellow students – safety comes first. If you plan on doing any major physical stunts or stage combat, please inform the instructor beforehand.

**Extra Credit**
Students are eligible to attend a live theatrical performance off campus (with instructor approval) and write a 2-page response paper for 25 points. Additionally, should students audition and be cast in any Theatre Westminster or student theater production, they will receive 40 points upon the show's closing.
Mature and Controversial Subject Matter
Theatre is about depicting and exploring human experiences. The breadth of performance material available and the intimacy of the acting lab setting might bring about situations where controversial subject matter such as offensive language, sexual situations, and/or discriminatory viewpoints comes up. Content and characters may conflict with the opinions and beliefs of certain individuals. Remaining enrolled in this course means that you understand that you may encounter what you consider mature and/or controversial subject matter, and that you agree to be civil and professional in discussions and assignments involving such material. If you encounter material which makes you personally uncomfortable to the extent that you do not feel you can adequately engage with this material, you should discuss this with the instructor.

Course Schedule

**Subject to change based on the progression of course objectives**

***Keep checking D2L regularly for updates on assignments, reading material, work orders, etc.***

Week One – Objective: Building the Ensemble
Tuesday, August 29 - Introduction to the course/syllabus/ first PS assignment, improv games Thursday, August 31 – Movement exercises, relaxation exercises

Week Two – Objective: Communication and Reflection
**Monday, September 4 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, September 5 - Perform Personal Stories
**Wednesday, September 6 by 11am – Self-reflection due**
Thursday, September 7 – improv games, movement exercises

Week Three – Objective: Tools of Acting
**Monday, September 11 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, September 12 – Read Cohen Excerpts (D2L); Explain GOTE, text & character analysis
Thursday, September 14 – 1st Draft Monologue #1

Week Four – Objective: Understanding the Elements of Performing
**Monday, September 18 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, September 19 – 1st Draft Monologue #1
Thursday, September 21 – Character Party

Week Five – Objective: Strengthening Relationships
**Monday, September 25 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, September 26 – 2nd Draft Monologue #1
Thursday, September 28 – 2nd Draft Monologue #1

Week Six – Objective: Acting Truthfully
**Monday, October 2 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, October 3 – Final Monologue #1 Performances
**Wednesday, October 4 by 11am – Self-reflection due**
Thursday, October 5 – Start Open Scenes

Week Seven – Objective: Exploring Character
**Monday, October 9 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, October 10 – 1st Draft Open Scenes,
Thursday, October 12 – Perform Open Scenes, Start Monologue #2
**Friday, October 13 by 11am – Self-reflection due

**Week Eight – Objective: Personalizing Text
**Monday, October 16 by 5pm – Video Journal due
Tuesday, October 17 – 1st Draft Monologue #2
Thursday, October 19 – 1st Draft Monologue #2

**Week Nine – Objective: The Real World of Acting
**Monday, October 23 by 5pm – Video Journal due
Tuesday, October 24 – ***NO CLASS*** FALL BREAK***
Thursday, October 26 – Character Party

**Week Ten – Objective: Working with Obstacles
**Monday, October 30 by 5pm – Video Journal due
Tuesday, October 31 – 2nd Draft Monologue #2
Thursday, November 2 – 2nd Draft Monologue #2

**Week Eleven – Objective: Introduction to Staging
**Monday, November 6 by 5pm – Video Journal due
Tuesday, November 7 – Final Monologue #2 Performances, Assign Scenes
**Wednesday, November 8 by 11am – Self-reflection due
Thursday, November 9 – 1st Draft Scene

**Week Twelve – Objective: Tactics & Expectations
**Monday, November 13 by 5pm – Video Journal due
Tuesday, November 14 – 1st Draft Scene
Thursday, November 16 – 1st Draft Scene

**Week Thirteen – Objective: Raising the Stakes
**Monday, November 20 by 5pm – Video Journal due
Tuesday, November 21 – Audition/ Callback unit
Thursday, November 23 – *** NO CLASS TODAY *** THANKSGIVING BREAK ***

**Week Fourteen – Objective: Listening & Reacting
**Monday, November 27 by 5pm – Video Journal due
Tuesday, November 28 – 2nd Draft Scene (private coaching with Kyle)
Thursday, November 30 – 2nd Draft Scene (private coaching with Kyle)

**Week Fifteen – Objective: Refining Staging & Clarifying Goals
**Monday, December 4 by 5pm – Video Journal due
Tuesday, December 5 – Private Scene Coaching (with Karen) Eurydice paper due
Thursday, December 7 – Private Scene Coaching (with Karen)

**Week Sixteen – Finals
**Monday, December 11 by 5pm – Video Journal due
**Tuesday, December 12 by 11am – Self-reflection due
Wednesday, December 13: 8:00 – 10:30 AM – FINAL EXAM Final Scene Performances
Note: I will keep papers/projects not picked up at the end of the semester for 45 days, at which point they will be destroyed. Any grade disputes must be initiated by that time.

Other important policies:
Submission Format Policy: You may not submit a paper for a grade in this class that already has been (or will be) submitted for a grade in another course, unless you obtain the explicit written permission of me and the other instructor involved in advance.

Accessibility Statement: Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students with disabilities who require access solutions for environmental or curricular barriers should contact Corey Shaw, Director of Disability Support Services, located in 209 Thompson-Clark Hall (724-946-7192, shwcj@westminster.edu). If you have a condition that qualifies you for reasonable accommodation under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), you must have ADA documentation on file with the Student Affairs Office to receive that accommodation.

Safe Zone Statement: The professor considers this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect as a human being - regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is the professor's expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

***By accepting this syllabus, you are indicating that you understand and accept all the professor's policies listed herein.