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

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Office: PH 312
Office Hours: MWF 1-2pm, TR 1:30pm-2:30pm
Office Phone: 724-946-6238
or by appointment **Subject to Change**

Course Description (from the course catalog)
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Performances (Products)</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>A: 930-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Live Production Response Paper (Products)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>A+: 895-929</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video Acting Journal (Process)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>B+: 865-894</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acting Work 1st &amp; 2nd Drafts (Process)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>B: 830-864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Performance Self-Reflections (Process)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>B+: 795-829</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/ Participation (Process)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>C+: 765-794</td>
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<td>1000</td>
<td>C: 730-764</td>
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Grading Scale

A: 930-1000
A+: 895-929
B+: 865-894
B: 830-864
B+: 795-829
C+: 765-794
C: 730-764
C+: 695-729
D+: 665-694
D: 630-664
F: 0-594
*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.

2 Live Production Response Papers (Products) (50 points each for 100 points total)
You are required to attend, or participate in, Theatre Westminster’s fall production and senior capstone production and write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) analysis and response paper on each. Writing prompts will be available on D2L. These assignments should be uploaded to D2L for plagiarism checks before the start of class on its due date. Make note in your planners: Love’s Labour’s Lost shows October 11-14 (due Oct 16) and Hamlet shows December 6-9 (due Dec 9, 11:59pm). Tickets are free with Titan ID (more info on reserving them in advance to shared on D2L).

**Video Acting Journal (Process) (150 points total)**
You will keep a notebook for your class notes, in-class reflection free-writes, and rehearsals. What you will turn in each week is a video journal, uploaded to the designated D2L dropboxes every Monday at 5pm. They should be between 1 and 2 minutes. Please start by stating the dates your video journal will be covering. Then, for the next 1-2 minutes, 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.

**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)

**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 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 first.

**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**

**Week One** – Objective: Building the Ensemble  
Tuesday, August 28 - Introduction to the course/syllabus/ first PS assignment, improv games  
Thursday, August 30 – Movement exercises, relaxation exercises

**Week Two** – Objective: Communication and Reflection  
**Monday, September 3 by 5pm – Video Journal due**  
Tuesday, September 4 - **Perform Personal Stories**  
**Wednesday, September 5 by 11am – Self-reflection due**  
Thursday, September 6 – improv games, movement exercises

**Subject to change***Keep checking D2L regularly for updates on assignments, reading material, etc.**
Week Three – Objective: Tools of Acting
**Monday, September 10 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, September 11 – Read Cohen Excerpts (D2L); Explain GOTE, text & character analysis
Thursday, September 13 – 1st Draft Monologue #1

Week Four – Objective: Understanding the Elements of Performing
**Monday, September 17 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, September 18 – 1st Draft Monologue #1
Thursday, September 20 – Character Party

Week Five – Objective: Strengthening Relationships
**Monday, September 24 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, September 25 – 2nd Draft Monologue #1
Thursday, September 27 – 2nd Draft Monologue #1

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

Week Seven – Objective: Exploring Character
**Monday, October 8 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, October 9 – 1st Draft Open Scenes,
Thursday, October 11 – Perform Open Scenes, Start Monologue #2
**Friday, October 12 by 11am – Self-reflection due**

Week Eight – Objective: Personalizing Text
**Monday, October 15 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, October 16 – 1st Draft Monologue #2, Love’s Labour’s Lost paper due
Thursday, October 18 – 1st Draft Monologue #2

Week Nine – Objective: The Real World of Acting
**Monday, October 22 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, October 23 – 2nd Draft Monologue #2
Thursday, October 25 – 2nd Draft Monologue #2

Week Ten – Objective: Working with Obstacles
**Monday, October 29 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, October 30 – ***NO CLASS*** FALL BREAK***
Thursday, November 1 – Character Party

Week Eleven – Objective: Introduction to Staging
**Monday, November 5 by 5pm – Video Journal due**
Tuesday, November 6 – Final Monologue #2 Performances, Assign Scenes
**Wednesday, November 7 by 11am – Self-reflection due**
Thursday, November 8 – 1st Draft Scene
Week Twelve – Objective: Tactics & Expectations
**Monday, November 12 by 5pm – **Video Journal due
Tuesday, November 13 – 1st Draft Scene
Thursday, November 15 – 1st Draft Scene

Week Thirteen – Objective: Raising the Stakes
**Monday, November 19 by 5pm – **Video Journal due
Tuesday, November 20 – Audition/ Callback unit
Thursday, November 22 – *** NO CLASS TODAY *** THANKSGIVING BREAK ***

Week Fourteen – Objective: Listening & Reacting
**Monday, November 26 by 5pm – **Video Journal due
Tuesday, November 27 – Private Scene Coaching
Thursday, November 29 – Private Scene Coaching

Week Fifteen – Objective: Refining Staging & Clarifying Goals
**Monday, December 3 by 5pm – **Video Journal due
Tuesday, December 4 – 2nd Draft Scene
Thursday, December 6 – 2nd Draft Scene

Week Sixteen – Finals
**Sunday, December 9 by 11:59pm – Hamlet paper due
**Monday, December 10 by 5pm – **Video Journal due
**Tuesday, December 11 by 11am – Self-reflection due
Wednesday, December 12: 8:00 – 10:30 AM – FINAL EXAM Final Scene Performances

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 actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students who require access solutions for environmental or curricular barriers should contact Faith Craig, Director of Disability Support Services, in 209 Thompson-Clark (x7192, craigfa@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.