

DRAMA 10 Introduction to Acting

Fall 2021

Days: Tuesday/Thursday

Time: 8:00 AM - 9:50 AM

Location: Wyatt Theatre & Outdoors TBD

Lecturer: Danika Sudik

Email: dburmester@ucdavis.edu

Office Hours: Friday 10:00AM-12:00PM (virtually) and by appointment

<https://ucdavis.zoom.us/j/96820658787?pwd=L2NKU1hJY2M1Q0JLVWdjS3kydGpydz09>

Meeting ID: 968 2065 8787

Passcode: 006777

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to acting as a practical and academic discipline. We will be studying the style of acting known as psychological realism. Through the practice and study of various acting tools and strategies, this course aims to equip you with skills including creativity, spontaneity, listening, collaboration, presentation skills, emotional literacy, and perspectives on personal, social, and cultural identity—vital life skills inside and outside the theatre.

We will:

1. Explore bodymind relationship to give broader and deeper access to full physical, vocal, and emotional range.
2. Introduce and develop acting skills and techniques for performance. Leave the course with an expanded “actor’s toolkit” that can be used to further explore the craft of acting or any other creative endeavor (like life).
3. Explore cross-disciplinary connections to Acting.

A Note on *How*

I believe in practice. I believe in trial and error and then trying again armed with hard won knowledge. I believe that what we learn through our own experience is (often, not always) more valuable than what we learn from a lecture. I believe in effort. I believe in ‘done is better than perfect.’ I believe in striving towards following curiosity, creative risk taking, and practicing empathic kindness.

We have the unprecedented and unique opportunity of studying Acting in-person after experiencing 18 months of a global pandemic. This means that participation in this class is an exercise in creativity. There is tremendous possibility in how we approach this class and my intention is to empower you as co-creators.

To honor the flexibility of what it takes to make art as well as the current reality on the ground, the syllabus will be adjusted as necessary. Course adjustments will always favor the student experience.

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HEALTH & SAFETY

Required Daily Symptom Survey

<https://campusready.ucdavis.edu/symptom-survey>

Please do not attend class if you or someone in your home is ill.

Safety & University Resources: Acting as a craft can be both beautiful and frightening as you explore situational and emotional landscapes. It is each actor's responsibility to keep themselves emotionally and physically safe while they are working. While this is something that will be discussed in more depth throughout the course, it is imperative that you realize from day one that nobody else is able to have your best interests in mind in the same way you will. **Valuing, caring for, and protecting your instrument is your responsibility.** If you find yourself entering into territory that makes you feel unsafe STOP. Then communicate your feelings so we can find a safe way to proceed.

Student Health and Counseling Services is an extraordinary resource. You do not need to be "in crisis" to find value there. Please take time to explore what is available at: <https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/counseling-services>

SELF & COMMUNITY

Communication: This is the essential ingredient for successful acting. Honest expression and active listening are required both in your performance work and, most importantly, in your creative relationships. To be successful in this class, you will need to develop the skill of addressing issues head on with integrity, kindness, and humility. 10 weeks goes by fast; we cannot afford to lose time pretending things are working if they are not. Please discuss with me and physical or other considerations that may limit the extent of your full participation.

Email/Canvas Policy: Please check your UC Davis email daily while enrolled in this course and, if applicable, respond to messages within 24 hours. Any last minute updates will be posted to ~~Canvas~~ www.danikasudik.com/dra10

Personal Accountability: You can count on obstacles arising to thwart your success in this class. This is your education and your life; get positive and creative to find the win-win to every situation.

There will be small assignments, projects, and performances that will crop up over the course of the quarter. It is your responsibility to complete them on time and to the best of your ability. Many of the ancillary projects will only be described and assigned orally in class. Your success will depend on your active listening and attention.

Responsibility to Classmates: Assignments will be performed individually and in groups. Completion of all assignments will be necessary to support your classmates in successfully completing their work. If you don't "show up" for class it hurts your classmates experience as much as it is detrimental to your own.

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Privacy & Trust: While this is something that is built as a group; we will set it as an expectation from Day One. Acting requires personal risk taking—understanding that our first impulse might look foolish or be otherwise embarrassing. We can't do this if we're afraid of being cruelly judged or exposed. Recordings/photography are prohibited unless you receive written permission from the instructor. Violating this policy will result in an automatic and non-negotiable drop from the class and failing grade.

TECHNICAL/MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS

Materials: Yoga mat (indoor and outdoor use), pencils, pen, dedicated journal, refillable water bottle, soft hair ties (for long hair), extra socks or flip-flops.

Dress code: Physical, vocal, and imaginative warm-ups form a regular part of the curriculum; therefore, please wear loose-fitting clothing that allows you to run, jump, lie down, move and breathe easily. Gym wear and a refillable water bottle is required. Long hair must be pulled back with a soft tie (no claw clips). Please plan to work in socks or bare feet in the classroom.

Phone/Gadget Etiquette: We all have itty bitty attention spans. Help yourself by silencing your notifications during class time and use our meetings as an opportunity for being fully present.

Required readings: Most (if not all) readings can be found on ~~Canvas~~ www.danikasudik.com/dra10. I am hoping to keep additional expenses for this class at a minimum. You will be required to read one-full length play this quarter.

Required Viewing: Films and programs viewed for class will have various 'ratings' from no rating to G to R. If you are under 18 years old, please notify me immediately. Please use caution when watching these films in a public or family setting as some material might not be appropriate for all.

GRADING OVERVIEW/IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Grades, in the context of this class, are a tool to help you assess if you are “showing up” for your own learning experience and supporting your classmates. If it seems circumstances are not allowing for the personal discipline required for the class, I will suggest that you drop the course to preserve your GPA.

Each assignment will have its own rubric. In general, if you bring your full creativity and effort to each assignment, you should expect an “A” grade. “C” grades are awarded if you fulfill the minimum requirements of the assignment. In creative work, you can have a lousy final product but still have an interesting ‘failure.’ This is a process oriented class—take care in your process and the product will take care of itself.

PARTICIPATION (40%)

You cannot act without being actively present. Participation includes: preparation (wearing appropriate dress, journal, independent rehearsal of scenes, memorizing text, having read material, water bottle, pencil, props, etc.); commitment (to warm-ups, improvisations, in-class

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rehearsal of scenes, contribution to discussions, and adjustments to feedback, and timekeeping (arriving on time and staying until the end of class).

Punctuality: Classes begin promptly at 8:00 AM. The ensemble begins to warm-up and members engage with each other immediately, so punctuality is vital. If you are late (and within the first 15 minutes of class) you will be marked down 2 letter grades for the day. For example: If you get an A for the day, you will be marked down to a C for lateness.

NOTE: IF YOU KNOW THAT YOU ARE LIKELY TO BE PERSISTENTLY LATE FOR A PRACTICAL, HANDS-ON CLASS BEGINNING AT 8:00 AM, PLEASE SERIOUSLY CONSIDER WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS AN APPROPRIATE COURSE FOR YOU.

Missed Classes: Because this class is experiential, it is impossible to truly make up missed class work. Any unexcused absences result in a zero for that day's participation grade. It is your responsibility to ask your classmates about any homework assigned during the missed class. PLEASE NOTE: If you are absent four times, you will be required to drop the class.

Acting, at its core, is about community and communication. Please exchange your contact information with 2-3 of your classmates. Please contact these classmates before emailing me with any clarifying questions regarding what you have missed.

If you are absent, you are still expected to journal on the readings, homework, rehearsal, or other class processes.

Excused absences: You are allowed one excused absence with a medical note. You are still responsible for homework assigned or due on the day you are absent (including journaling); any work submitted after the start of the next class period will not be accepted.

If you are a **university athlete whose sport is in season while taking this course, please talk to me before the course begins or during the first week of class: you may want to consider a different course if your season schedule has conflicts.

READING AND REQUIRED PERFORMANCE

We will discuss readings frequently and in detail; please come prepared with your thoughts and questions.

JOURNAL & MINI-ASSIGNMENTS (30%)

Actors observe the world and combine what they see around them with their own personal experiences to create characters and environments they inhabit. The more you observe yourself and your surroundings, the better your acting will be. To support your observational skills, a dedicated acting journal will be part of your journey through DRA 10 this quarter. Please bring it with you to all classes along with writing utensils and a highlighter. **You will use this journal every class.**

Each entry should be clearly labeled with the Session # and the class date. I also recommend you use it to record your observations and reflections outside of class. If you turn to it frequently,

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your acting journal can be a deep resource for your growth as a performer, as well as for interpersonal, daily life.

Your journal will also be where you record responses to prompts, performance critiques, and other mini-assignments.

If a prompt is given through ~~Canvas~~ www.danikasudik.com/dra10 (mini-assignment), all submitted work should be double spaced, in 12-point font, and paginated, with name, date, and a title. In the event ~~Canvas~~ www.danikasudik.com/dra10 is unavailable, email a PDF to dburmester@ucdavis.edu.

MIDTERM PERFORMANCE (15%)

Your midterm will be a performance of a neutral scene. We will discuss and prepare for the exercise thoroughly in class during Week 3 and 4. In short, you will pursue objectives, create and explore the given circumstances of a dramatic situation, create a unique character, and behave truthfully and honestly in a performance environment. Please note: you will be graded individually.

FINAL REFLECTIVE PAPER (15%) Due During Scheduled Final Exam Time.

1000 words minimum-1500 words max.

*Please note: We do not meet during the scheduled exam time in finals week.

Your goal for the Reflective Paper is to communicate the inner work you've done in class, painting a clear picture for me about what you have learned. This essay is your opportunity to express your ability to self-reflect, analyze, and practice your writing skills. An in-depth prompt will be posted on ~~Canvas~~ www.danikasudik.com/dra10.

Although this is not primarily a writing class, as university students, there is an expectation you write well, and I grade with excellence as the A standard. I strongly suggest you read your essay out loud before turning it in, to catch grammatical mistakes and ensure your writing reflects your thinking.

For assistance with grammar, punctuation, essay organization and writing processes I suggest utilizing the Academic Assistance and Tutoring Center. <https://tutoring.ucdavis.edu/writing>

Original work, Academic Integrity & Honesty. Plagiarism of any kind can result in failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Promote a good learning environment. Students are expected to know and follow the [Code of Academic Conduct](#).

WORKLOAD

Per University policy, students should spend 3 hours weekly per unit of course work, including class time. Much of the work will involve collaborating with partners, and you will be required to conduct rehearsals outside of class which will necessitate coordinating your schedule with classmates. A certain amount of analysis and embodiment/memorization of text will be required. You should anticipate at least 1-2 hours of rehearsal per week ahead of your mid-term and 2-3 hours of rehearsal per week in preparation for your final performance. Please note that rehearsal

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hours are in addition to your individual class preparation time. If you cannot make this weekly time commitment, please do not take this class.

EXTRA CREDIT POLICY

There are rare occasions when extra credit may be granted. Please do not assume that extra credit assignments can be sought to elevate low grades. In this class, extra credit is generally given to students who are earning a strong 'B' and wish to be earning an 'A' grade.

Your grade is your responsibility.