

Days: Monday & Wednesday

Time: 8:00 AM - 9:50 AM

Location: Wright Hall 101 (Lab A) & Outdoors TBD

Lecturer: Danika Sudik

Email: dburmester@ucdavis.edu

Virtual Office Hours: Thursdays 2:00 PM-4:00 PM and by appointment

<https://ucdavis.zoom.us/j/96589755612?pwd=TIVGZzczcFQrc1ZwT0QvMms3c0FMZz09>

Meeting ID: 965 8975 5612

Passcode: 034900

****This link will also be used for class if we are meeting online.**

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

This course will introduce you to Acting as a practical and academic discipline. Through the practice and study of various acting tools, this course aims to equip you with skills including listening, collaboration, presentation skills, creativity, spontaneity, 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 communicative range.
2. Introduce and develop acting skills and techniques for performance.
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 following curiosity, creative risk-taking, and practicing empathic kindness.

We have the unique opportunity to study Acting in-person after/while experiencing 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 I intend to empower you as co-creators.

I will adjust the syllabus as needed to honor the flexibility required to make art in the midst of the ongoing pandemic. Course adjustments will always favor the student experience.

SAFETY & WELLNESS

Safety & University Resources: The craft of Acting requires individuals to explore multitudes of relational, situational, and emotional landscapes. While we strive to build community, it is each actor’s responsibility to keep themselves emotionally and physically safe while working.

We will discuss this process repeatedly and in-depth throughout the course, however it is imperative that you are empowered from day one to protect yourself physically, psychologically, and emotionally. STOP if you find yourself entering into territory that makes you feel unsafe. Then communicate your experience so we can find a safe way to proceed. **Valuing, caring for, and protecting your instrument is your responsibility.**

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 the resources available on campus: <https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/counseling-services>

GRADING OVERVIEW/IMPORTANT DEADLINES

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

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, attention, and communication with classmates.

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

PARTICIPATION (40%)

You cannot act without being actively present. Participation includes **preparation** (wearing a mask over nose and mouth at all times, appropriate dress, journal, independent rehearsal of scenes, memorizing text, having read or viewed assigned materials, water bottle, pencil, props, etc.); **commitment** (to warm-ups, improvisations, in-class rehearsal of scenes, contribution to discussions, and adjustments to feedback, and **timekeeping** (arriving on time and staying until the end of class).

Preparation

Please do not attend class if you or someone in your home is ill. Before coming to class, fill out the **Required Daily Symptom Survey here:** <https://campusready.ucdavis.edu/symptom-survey>

Masks: You must wear a face mask that covers your nose and mouth at all times while in class. Please step outside to drink from your refillable water bottle.

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 without restriction or inhibition. Shorts/skirts, buckles, buttons, and zippers are not

advised. 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.

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.

Commitment

Daily Classwork & Assignments: In general, if you bring your full creativity and effort to each task, you should expect an “A” grade. “C” grades are awarded if you fulfill the minimum requirements of the assignment.

Phone/Gadget Etiquette: Silence your notifications during class time and use our meetings as an opportunity for being fully present. Expensive gadgets will not be safe stored in your pockets during physical warm ups and class activities.

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

Label each entry with the class date and session #. Your journal will also be where you record copywork, and responses to freewrites. I also recommend you use it to record your observations and reflections outside of class.

Required Readings/Viewings

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

Readings: Most (if not all) readings can be found on Canvas. 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.

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

Timekeeping

Punctuality: Classes begin promptly at 8:00 AM. Punctuality is vital as the ensemble warms up and members engage with each other immediately. If you are late (and within the first 15 minutes of class), you will be marked down two 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 for copywork, writing prompts, in-class exercises, and homework assigned during the missed class. If you are absent, you are still expected to journal on the readings, homework, rehearsal, or other class processes. **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.

Excused absences: You are allowed two excused absences with a medical note. This should cover absences necessary due to quarantine. Do not schedule elective appointments/procedures during class time. You are 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.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are absent four times, you will be required to drop the class.

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

MINI-ASSIGNMENTS (30%)

In creative work, you can have a lousy final product but still have an interesting and valuable 'failure.' **This is a process-oriented class—take care in your process, and the product will take care of itself.**

Each assignment will have its own rubric. All submitted work on Canvas should be double spaced, in 12-point font, and paginated, with name, date, and a title. In the event Canvas is unavailable, email a PDF to dburmester@ucdavis.edu.

MIDTERM PERFORMANCE (15%)

Your midterm will be a performance of a neutral scene. 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. We will discuss and prepare for the exercise thoroughly during Week 3 and 4. Please note: you will be graded individually.

FINAL REFLECTIVE PAPER (15%)

Due during the scheduled final exam period. *Please note: We do not meet during the scheduled exam time in finals week. 1000 words minimum-1500 words max. An in-depth prompt will be posted on Canvas near the end of the quarter.

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.

Although this is not primarily a writing class, as university students, you are expected to write well. I strongly suggest you read your essay aloud before turning it in to catch grammatical mistakes and ensure your writing reflects your thinking.

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

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 2-3 hours of rehearsal per week ahead of your mid-term and final performance. Please note that rehearsal hours are in addition to your individual class preparation time. If you cannot make this weekly time commitment, please do not take this class.

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 announcements; please adjust your settings to receive them immediately. I suggest checking your email/announcements, then completing your Daily Symptom Survey before traveling to campus.

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.

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.

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.

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.**

Daily Participation Self-Check

Objective

- Present and ready to work at 8:00am
- Mask covering nose and mouth at all times
- Dedicated journal
- Writing utensils
- Mat
- Refillable water bottle
- Visibly following directions
- Giving quiet attention to instructor or classmates
- Assignments turned in by due date/time
- All directions followed on assignments
- * Contributing to class discussions
- * Volunteering for exercises

Subjective

- Giving full effort in class
- Challenging yourself
- * Volunteering for exercises
- * Contributing to class discussions

Journal Self-Check

- Date
- Session #
- Copywork
- Freewrite response
- Name and description of warm up activities
- Names and description of class activities
- Observations/reflections on your daily work
- Observations of your classmates work
- Outside of class/life observations as applicable