

# Theatre 3025, Sec. 1: Advance Acting Service-Learning Course, Spring 2005

MWF 12:30-1:30pm Tth 1:30-3pm (lab)

Louisiana State University- Baton Rouge

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**REQUIRED TEXTS:** A Complete Works of Shakespeare, clearly annotated,  
(I prefer the *The Riverside Edition*)  
*A Target for the Actor*, Declan Donnellan  
*Audition* by Michael Shurtleff  
*Backwards and Forwards* by David Ball

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This is a scene study class that will emphasize Shakespeare, dramatic action, structure and relationships as a way of continuing the exploration of text and the actor's craft begun in Thtr 2030. We will do scenes and monologues as well as improvisations and acting exercises. We will be working with both 20<sup>th</sup> century American scripts and doing a Service-Learning section in Shakespeare. The aim of the class is to create theatre artists who are citizens of the theatre, the university, and their larger community.

## **GOALS:**

In order to accomplish the emergence of character, we will have the following goals:

1. Using the dramatic text we will study the structure of the play, the language, images and rhythms and of the scene.
2. Discover the function of the people in the play and the textual clues to behavior and psychological make-up indicated in it.
3. Examine the world in which the play takes place and it's influence on the lives of the people in it.
4. Learn ways to make a bridge from the actor's personality to that of the character.
5. Begin a life long understanding and investigation of Shakespeare through both our own study and the practice of teaching and performing with and for our community partner.
6. Form an awareness of the role of theatre in the community.
7. Enhance our understanding of other cultures and ways of looking at life through both the Service-Learning experience and our reflection upon the experience.

## **SERVICE-LEARNING GOALS:**

In attempting to share and learn with the students at Tara High, the LSU theatre students will be accomplishing multiple learning goals.

1. Your understanding of the technical demands of Shakespearean verse will be enhanced by your their own need to teach it.
2. Performing for an audience of predominately inner-city secondary students will help you to understand the true mission of all theatre- to entertain and instruct.
3. You will learn to perform for a more diverse audience than is customary at LSU.
4. You will receive unbiased feedback on your work as actors.
5. You will learn to work with other actors as good citizens of the theatre.
6. You will acquire a general knowledge of Shakespeare that will contribute to your overall cultural education.

The Community Partners (Students at Tara High School) will benefit in the following ways:

1. Their understanding of Shakespeare and poetry will be introduced and will contribute to their overall cultural education.
2. They will be exposed to LSU and the possibility of theatre and acting as a course of study.
3. They will begin to understand that the theatre and the university are not elite and unapproachable.
4. In watching young actors perform, appreciation for the art of acting will be enhanced.
5. In providing feedback to the young actors, their understanding of the subject matter and feelings of mastery will be expanded.
6. Their general knowledge of Shakespeare

We hope to make five or six appearances at the school and engage the secondary students interactively through acting exercises for three or four of these visits. After each visit, I will talk with Ms Williamson about the effectiveness of the particular presentation and any adjustments that need to be made on future visits.

### **STUDENT REQUIREMENTS.**

1. Each actor in the class will perform one Shakespearean monologue and two scenes, one of which will be Shakespeare. Monologues may be no longer than ninety seconds and scenes no longer than seven minutes. Scenes and monologues will be assigned by the instructor. Everyone must do the appropriate written work, rehearsal and planning sessions or they will not be allowed to perform the scene or monologue for that assignment. Late papers, scene or monologues may be dropped one letter grade for each class period that they are late. We are trying to teach you to meet deadlines and to plan ahead!

2. For the Service-Learning project, you will be broken into three work groups, each covering one topic-- poetic rhythms, imagery, or sound. These work groups will meet outside of class to prepare presentations and then perform them for our class as a whole prior to going to Tara High School. This presentation in the LSU class will provide the opportunity for reflection, feedback, and adjustments from your peers and me. While at Tara High, You will videotape your presentations, and several 3025 class periods will be spent reviewing the tape in order to reflect on the experience.

After introducing the elements of rhythm, sound, and imagery, you will do two performances of the monologues at Tara High. The first performance will be a "dress rehearsal" of sorts and will elicit feedback from the Tara High students addressing the poetic elements discussed in the earlier presentations. The second performance will be a "final performance" at LSU and the Tara High students will be asked for responses concerning not only the technical elements but also the quality of the acting per se.

In addition to the on-going reflection during class both preceding and following the presentations and performances, each student will be asked to write a four page reflection paper at the end of each visit. You will attempt to answer such questions as "Is Shakespeare relevant to today's diverse society?" "What is the responsibility of actors to the larger community?" "How can we expand opportunities for diverse populations to attend and appreciate theatre?" "How can we keep theatre alive?" "Does an actor adjust his/her performance depending upon the audience?" as well as questions concerning the technical elements involved in Shakespeare's imagery, sound, and use of rhythm.

3. All students are required to attend all LSU productions, studio, main-stage and at the Swine Palace and to hand in ticket stubs or programs with the student's name on it and stamped or signed by the house management.

Students are invited to schedule a meeting with me for coffee or in my office during the semester to discuss progress, problems, or just to complain in general.

4. Students must have a three-ring binder in which to keep all handouts and work done including class notes, rehearsal logs and analyses. Students are expected to take notes in every class.

5. When scene work begins, it is required that scene partners will meet outside of class time to rehearse. The actor's growth is accomplished in these rehearsals. If you fail to do this, your grade will be severely affected.

6. Students are expected to meet and contribute to their Service-Learning teams.

**GRADING::**

<p><u>Performance</u></p> <p>Grades are as follows:</p> <p>90-100- A – Artistically stirring, textually clear , meaningful personalization, expressive vocally and physically, strong image work.</p> <p>80-90 B- Technically very proficient, strong personalization.</p> <p>70-80- C- Technically or personally adequate work</p> <p>60-70- D- Inadequate personal or technical work.</p> <p>60 and under- F- Irredeemable and under worked</p>	<p>Scenes-10% per scene Each scene will be graded twice. The first scene will account for 10% of the grade (5% each time) and the second scene will count for 15% of the scene grade (7.5% each time).</p> <p>Monologue- graded twice, before each appearance at Tara High</p> <p>1st grade occurrence 5% 2nd grade occurrence 5%</p> <p>Final scene presentation</p> <p>Service-Learning discussion participation, theatre attendance, attitude.</p>	<p>25%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>10%</p>
<p><u>Written work and presentations</u></p> <p>The grades for written work will be given not only for content but also for <u>basic writing skills</u>. Theatre is about precise communication and a good command of language is necessary!</p> <p>The reflection papers will be graded based on depth of reflection as well as basic writing skills.</p>	<p>Reflection Papers (2) First paper 10% Second paper 10%</p> <p>Monologue analysis For Service-Learning module</p> <p>Scene analyses 7.5% each</p>	<p>20%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>15%</p>

Because this is a performance class, each student is allowed two absences. Your final grade may be dropped one letter grade for every day that you miss after two. If you miss a day when you are to perform a scene it will count as the two allowable absences. Too many absences may result in your being asked to drop the class.

EXAMPLE: 3 absences = highest possible grade is "B."  
4 absences = highest possible grade is "C."

Medical emergencies are of course allowable (with a doctor's excuse), but do not abuse this!!!!

In the same vein, do not be late! If there is some real reason why you can't get to class on time, let me know.

**INTERACTIONS:**

Physical touch by acting teachers is very common; often it is the only way to communicate needed information to the student actor. Physical contact, some of it intense, is usually required between student actors in scenes and exercises. If you are uncomfortable within the work for any reason, please meet with me at once

**STUDENT/TEACHER AND STUDENT/STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS:**

We must all strive to speak respectfully and lovingly to each other in a spirit of helpfulness and cooperation. You are required to participate verbally in class and to be ready to speak about any topic we are discussing. If at any time, you feel uncomfortable with your relationships either with me or with your classmates, please do not suffer in silence! You owe it to yourself to address such problems and my door is always open.

**PROFANITY/ADULT SITUATIONS:**

Harsh language and/or adult situations are prevalent in contemporary drama. If you are uncomfortable with any material within the work for any reason, please meet with me to address the problem. **NO STUDENT ACTOR WILL BE REQUIRED TO PERFORM MATERIAL THAT HE OR SHE FEELS UNCOMFORTABLE PERFORMING.** You are, however, required to watch all work and comment as requested.

Necessary Phone #s	The Drama book Shop	800 322 0595 <sub>(PREFERRED)</sub>
	Dramatists Play Service	212 683 8960
	Samuel French Bookstore	818 762 0535

**VERY TENTATIVE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE- SYLLABUS**

<b>Wk</b>	<b>Work Covered</b>	<b>Assignments and Notes</b>
<b>1</b>	Cold Readings Exercises- voice, movement, personalization Textual work	All scenes & monologues assigned
<b>2</b>	Decoding Shakespeare	Service-Learning Teams assigned
<b>3</b>	Shakespeare Monologues rehearsed	
<b>4</b>	Shakespeare Scenes Rehearsals  Team #1 monologues rehearsed	
<b>5</b>	Service-Learning presentation, team#1  <b>First visit to school: Team #1- responsible for scansion &amp; history</b>	Team #1 Scansion and history Team #2 Sound and language Team #3 Image
<b>6</b>	Shakespeare Scenes Rehearsals  Review the team #1 tape And discuss.  Team #2 monologues rehearsed & Service-Learning presentation	Reflection papers team #1 due and graded.
<b>7</b>	Shakespeare Scenes Rehearsals  <b>Second visit to school: Team #2- responsible for sound and language.</b>  Review the team #2 tape And discuss.	Reflection papers team #2 visit due and graded.
<b>8</b>	Shakespeare Scenes  Team #3 monologues rehearsed& Service-Learning presentation	
<b>9</b>	Service-Learning presentations  <b>Third visit to school: Team #3- responsible for images</b>  Review the team #3 tape And discuss	

<b>10</b>	Shakespeare Scenes  Rehearse final Service-Learning presentation	Reflection papers from team #3 due and graded.
<b>11</b>	Service-Learning Performance at school  Review the Service-Learning Performance tape And discuss	
<b>12</b>	Shakespeare- Monologues  Scene # 2	Graded  Rehearsal
<b>13</b>	Scenes #2	Rehearsal  Over-all Service-Learning Reflection Paper due.
<b>14</b>	Scenes #2	Graded
<b>15</b>	Scenes #2	Graded