Patrick Wimp
DC 250 – The Art of Screen Acting - Online

Summary Of Course

This course will examine the role of acting, actors, and actor-director collaboration in the development of narrative cinema. The screen demanded a new approach to acting that differed markedly from the theatrical traditions that preceded it. Major practitioners of actor training such as Constantin Stanislavski and his American interpreters Lee Strasberg, Sanford Meisner, and Stella Adler and their students (such as Brando, Pacino, DeNiro, Hoffman, and Duvall) have had an incalculable influence on how screen actors prepare for a role and work with directors. This course will survey the major acting techniques and approaches, examine major films as case studies, and explore contemporary approaches to screen acting and actor-director collaboration in the cinema. This course carries Liberal Studies Arts and Literature Domain Credit.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to explain, in well-written prose, variations in acting technique, approach and the influence the form has on the art of narrative cinema. Students will understand the psychological, physical, social factors that influence the practice of acting. Papers in the class focus on students' understanding of Acting Technique, Key Practitioners, and On-screen Performance.

Students will be able to comment directly on how the acting form relates to the content that appears on screen. They will learn the expectations of acting in film, explore what makes a "good or bad" acting performance, and examine how the acting choices influence audience interpretation of character and the character's intent. This framework will allow them to delve deeper into nuanced impact on character, tension, story, and theme. We will examine these relationships through in-class discussions, quizzes, short papers, and a longer final paper that explores the relationship between Actor and Director.

Students will be able to assess the formal aspects of their subject and put these qualities into words, using, when appropriate, specialized vocabulary employed in class and readings. To better equip them in their analysis of Acting on Screen students will learn a mix of common cinematic and literary language in addition to specialized filmmaking and acting vernacular. This language will be employed in class discussions, exams, and papers.

Where appropriate, students will be able to consider the original audience to witness a work of art and consider how their expectations differ from our own. This examination may include the elements of form, rhythm or style, the visual material and aesthetic of a piece. Students will be able to articulate a subject as well as write about it, explaining how narrative and aesthetic elements comprise a particular style of acting. Students will learn about the context in which each performance was crafted and how this context affected its original reception. Students will also learn about the craft of acting, and how it has evolved over time and the influences shaping the art form today.

Writing Expectations
There are two 2-3 page Papers and one 6-10 page Final Paper in this course. Papers are expected to be free of spelling and grammatical errors.

Online Course Management:
Desire2Learn (D2L) at http://d2l.depaul.edu will be the primary hub for accessing course materials including lectures, assignments and links to various episodes. All course work will be submitted via D2L.

Homework:
All course work will be submitted via D2L. **LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Prerequisites
There are no required pre-requisites for this course.

Technical Requirements

Students should have an understanding of basic computer functions such as email, word processing, and general web usage. Students will be required to capture video of themselves via computer, camera, or cell phone and upload this video to the web via YouTube or other video hosting client.

Grading Policy

Assignments and Grading Scale:

Additional information regarding assignment requirements and expectations will be provided in class and/or posted on D2L.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Short Essay Responses & Quizzes - 20%
Midterm - 20%
Acting Exercises - 20%
Final Paper - 20%
Participation, Attendance, and Preparation - 20%

Evalutation - Students work will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Participation and Acting Exercises
  - o Proper and timely completion of assignments, discussions, and exercises based on given instructions.
- Papers and Short Essays:
  - o Proper and timely completion based on given instructions.
  - o Proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
  - o Exhibited knowledge and research on assigned subject matter and material

- o   Fluidity and cohesive nature of writing
- Quizzes, Midterms and Exams:
  - o   Completion of quiz or exam during assigned timeframe
  - o   Correct responses to examination questions

A = 100-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-88, B = 87-83, B- = 82-80, C+ = 79-78, C = 77-73, C- = 72-70, D+ = 69-68, D = 67-63, D- = 62-60, F = 59-0.

A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D indicates unsatisfactory work, and F is a failure to demonstrate an understanding of course concepts.

Textbooks and Printed Resources

Required Text:

Acting:The Basics by Bella Merlin

Course Requirements and Policies

This will be a challenging and intensive course. If you give it your full commitment you will learn a great deal about acting, directing, cinema, and the creative potential of cinematic storytelling and also have fun in the process. Here is what I will expect from you:

1. Check in on D2L at the top of the week.
2. Complete Readings in advance or concurrent to the lecture.
3. Participate in all activities and discussions.
4. Use respectful language.
5. Be open to challenging and different ideas and points of view.
6. Share your honest opinions but also be prepared to justify and analyze them.
7. Commit yourself fully to the projects and assignments.
8. Learn the art of collaboration with your peers.
9. Keep tabs on all due dates and assignments.
10. In cases of emergency, follow up with me as soon as possible.

STRUCTURE AND PARTICIPATION

The course will be broken into weekly online Modules. Each module will have a variety of content released at the beginning of that week. Materials and assignments can be completed at your discretion but must be delivered by the assigned date.

Each "Discussion" within a module has given number of participation points associated with the prompt. Complete them on time and you will receive the points, fail to do so and you will not have the opportunity to recoup those points.

Assignments and Exercises: Assignments must be completed by the date they are due.

Consequently, late work will not be accepted without prior consent of the instructor. Late work, if accepted, will be marked down significantly and under no circumstances will late work ever be accepted more than one week past due.

Examinations: Students will be given a ten-day time period to register for and take the Midterm Exam. Students who do not take exams during the regularly scheduled time will receive a failing grade for exams unless they have contacted the instructor in advance to arrange for a make-up exam.

Brief Overview of Major Assignments

Note: Additional information regarding assignment requirements and expectations will be provided in class and/or posted on D2L.

Discussion Responses - These will be short discussion prompts that relate to our lecture reading materials. They will stand in as the virtual classroom for our course and should exhibit some critical thinking in regards to course materials. Please note: These assignments will by due online at 11:59pm on the Tuesday and Thursday of each week/module.

Midterm Exam - A Written Exam testing your grasp of concepts and materials covered during the first half of the quarter.

Reflections and Short Essays – There will be two reflections, 2-3 pages in length, These will require your analysis of a film, performance, or other acting work based on guidelines provided for the specific assignment.

Final Paper – Students will be responsible for a final paper thoroughly examining the body of work and artistic technique of an established Actor, Director or Actor-Director collaboration.

The paper will analyze multiple works of the selected practitioner, the training and techniques utilized in their creation and the evolution of the artist's skillset over the course of their career. Students are expected to comment on what makes these practitioner's exemplary in their field and how their techniques enrich the final product on screen. For example, what does the actor use to bring the character to life beyond just reading the line and performing the required action? What limitations or restrictions may have driven or hindered the actor/director from achieving a particular performance? Analysis should be based on course readings, in class discussions and personal insights.

The paper must be between 6 - 10 pages double-spaced. You should prepare a bibliography of at least 5 text sources. In addition, online video interviews with your subjects may be important sources for your research. Your paper should have a clear thesis that is supported by your research. Choose one of the major citation styles (MLA, APA, Harvard, or Chicago) and remain consistent throughout your paper.

Participation - A large portion of this class will be a collaborative exploration of what it means to be an actor through interactive exercises and games. Similarly, we will spend a significant

amount of time watching and analyzing films in order to discuss the acting and directing techniques used. As such, active participation in our discussions and forums is necessary. Active participation means talking, interacting, collaboration and providing input.

Response Time – Instructor will respond to email within no longer than a 24-hour period. Instructor will respond to discussion posts and threads within a 48-hour period. Feedback on exercises, discussion prompts and short assignments will occur within a 48-hour period. Grades and assignment feedback on Papers and Exams will be completed within 1-2 weeks of submission.

Online Teaching Evaluation

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to continue to provide you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is completely separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in CampusConnect at http://campusconnect.depaul.edu

Email

Email is the primary means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. Students should be sure their email listed under "demographic information" at http://campusconnect.depaul.edu is correct.

Academic Integrity Policy

This course will be subject to the faculty council rules on the   Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course, as well as all other courses in which independent research or writing play a vital part in the course requirements, should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report, or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

Incomplete

An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family, a serious illness, etc. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final, and approved by the Dean of the College of Computing and Digital Media. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.

University Support and Resources

DePaul University provides a variety of resources for students to succeed in coursework. These resources can be found in the CONTENT section of our D2L page under STUDENT RESOURCES.

Resources for Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at:

Student Center, LPC, Suite #370
Phone number: (773)325.1677
Fax: (773)325.3720
TTY: (773)325.7296