

**THEORY AND TECHNIQUE OF ACTING–THEA 20A**  
**Fall 2024**  
**De Anza College**

Instructor: Liz Stimson  
Email: [stimsonelizabeth@fhda.edu](mailto:stimsonelizabeth@fhda.edu) and via Canvas  
Class Meets: G-3 Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-12:15  
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:15-12:45  
Telephone: 650-949-7899 x3158

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** In this course the student will explore the basic theory and techniques of acting. The student will develop the actor’s sense of truth, imagination, concentration, spontaneity and energy.

*“Acting is behaving truthfully under imaginary circumstances.”*  
— Konstantin Stanislavsky

**Required Text:**

*The Laramie Project* by Moises Kaufman Dramatists Play Service (2001) ISBN: 0822217805  
The play is available through the bookstore and in the library (reserves and stacks).

**Recommended Text:**

*The Actor in You* (4th edition) by Robert Benedetti ISBN: 9780205542086  
Pearson

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Develop the voice and body as an instrument of expression while gaining confidence through the experience of interaction and audience performance.

Demonstrate ability to analyze text and performance content for self-advancement.

Develop critical thinking and interpersonal communication skills as well as diversity perspectives through collaborative projects.

**GOALS:**

1. To practice the principle that “acting is doing.”
2. To live truthfully under imaginary circumstances.
3. To develop the habit of working off the behavior of other actors.
4. To explore how onstage training can be applied to situations offstage.

**COURSE OBJECTIVE:** To introduce the basic vocabulary of theatre and acting; to introduce the concepts of the tools of the actor: voice, body, imagination; to develop and expand an appreciation for the performing arts.

Each student will be expected to:

- Participate in class actively and with focus.
- Complete the assignments on time.
- Have the discipline to work independently.

### **POLICIES:**

**LATENESS-** Acting involves both craft and discipline. Be in class on time.

- Email me before class has begun if you are going to be late.
- If you are more than ten minutes late (and you have not contacted me prior to the beginning of that day's class) you will observe class that day and not participate.
- This will become very challenging once we have begun rehearsing for the midterm and final. Plan accordingly.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

- First two absences (excused or unexcused) no points taken off from participation. As this is a performance class, participation is required. Points will be deducted after two absences. Participation points can be made up, if needed (illness, for example).
- You will **not** pass the class if you miss more than 6 class meetings (for ANY reason).

**LATE WORK** - Assignments are due on the date listed in the syllabus.

- Assignments will be locked after the due date has passed.
- It is the student's responsibility to reach out to the instructor, via email, if the assignment needs to be unlocked/an extension is needed.
- For late work: use the following format in an email to me:  
***"Please unlock [name of assignment]."*** No need to provide any other information. I will unlock the assignment and respond via email, letting you know the new due date for the assignment.
- Late assignments will **not** be accepted after midnight on December 5th (week 11). No exceptions.
- No character analysis completed=no rehearsal/no class participation. You may observe class only until the assignment has been completed.

**DROPPING** - It is the student's responsibility to add or drop the class. If you are a no show by the end of Week 2 you will be dropped from the class. [How to Drop a Class](#)

**DISABILITIES** - Students with disabilities, including invisible ones, are encouraged to communicate with the instructor their needs and appropriate accommodations. [De Anza Disability Support Services](#)

**STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES** - Please see [De Anza Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

**PARTICIPATION** - Please wear clothing which does not restrict movement. Expect to be physically active.

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

**October 6**

Last day to [add 12-week classes](#)

**October 6**

Last day to [drop classes](#) without a W

**November 11**

Veterans Day holiday – no classes; offices closed

**November 15**

Last day to [drop classes](#) with a W

**Nov 28-Dec 1**

Thanksgiving holiday – no classes; offices closed

**December 9-13**

[Final exams](#)

**HELPFUL SERVICES:**

De Anza College Library Website: [De Anza College Library](#)

Zoom tutoring and workshops at De Anza's Student Success Center:

[De Anza Student Success Center](#)

**PLAGIARISM:**

Students who present the work of others without giving proper credit (citation), will receive an “F” grade for that assignment which cannot be made up. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to Student Affairs. If you feel that you are having trouble with an assignment and require assistance please meet with me during my office hours or schedule an additional time to meet.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

Monologue performance (midterm)	50 points
Scene performance (final)	150 points
Character analyses–in class (2)	50 points total (25 points each)
Theatre Performance Review	50 points
Participation	100 points
Total Points	400

**GRADING:**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Numerical Equivalent</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>400-372</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>371-360</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>359-348</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>347-332</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>331-320</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>319-299</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>298-280</b>
<b>D+</b>	<b>279-268</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>267-252</b>
<b>D-</b>	<b>251-240</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>239-0</b>

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE: THEA 20A – Fall 2024

In class	To Do
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### Week 1 (9/24, 26)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the Actor's Job and Tradition</li> <li>• Discovering Action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get a copy of <i>The Laramie Project</i></li> </ul>
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### Week 2 (10/1, 3)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiencing Internal and External Action</li> <li>• Understanding Emotion and Character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <i>The Laramie Project</i> and choose a monologue (Due 10/8)</li> </ul>
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### Week 3 (10/8, 10)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relaxing and Centering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monologue selection (<b>Due 10/8</b>)</li> <li>• <b>Please bring TWO hard copies to class on 10/8</b></li> <li>• Character analysis monologue (<b>Due 10/10</b>)--<b>In class assignment</b></li> </ul>
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### Week 4 (10/15, 17)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monologue Essentials</li> <li>• Breathing, Sounding and Moving from Center</li> <li>• Entering the Actor's State of Mind</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monologue Rehearsals (10/15, 17)</li> <li>• Off book/memorized (10/22)</li> </ul>
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### Week 5 (10/22, 24)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding Your Lines</li> <li>• Experiencing the Character's Function and Given Circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monologue off book rehearsal (<b>10/22</b>)</li> <li>• Monologue Performance (Midterm) (<b>10/24</b>)</li> </ul>
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**Week 6 (10/29, 31)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvisation (PEEVS) and spontaneity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenes assigned and cold readings of scenes</li> </ul>
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**Week 7 (11/5, 7)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalizing</li> <li>• Exploring Inner Action</li> <li>• Defining Objectives and Actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scene rehearsal #1–hard copy of scene required</li> <li>• Character analysis scene <b>(Due 11/7)--In class assignment</b></li> <li>• <b>Reminder:</b> Get tickets for <i>The Laramie Project</i> at WVC (opens 11/15)</li> </ul>
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**Week 8 (11/12, 14)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground plan, design, blocking, stage business</li> <li>• Costumes, props</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scene rehearsal #2–hard copy of scene required</li> <li>• <b>Reminder:</b> Get tickets for <i>The Laramie Project</i> at WVC (opens 11/15)</li> <li>• Theatre Performance Review of <i>The Laramie Project</i> <b>(Due 11/26)--Canvas Assignment</b> <i>See Syllabus p. 7 Guidelines Theatre Performance Review</i></li> </ul>
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**Week 9 (11/19, 21)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Character work: physical and vocal</li> <li>• Preparing for Performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scene Rehearsal #3–hard copy of scene required</li> <li>• <b>Reminder:</b> Theatre Performance Review of <i>The Laramie Project</i> <b>(Due 11/26)--Canvas Assignment</b> <i>See Syllabus p. 7 Guidelines Theatre Performance Review</i></li> </ul>
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**Week 10 (11/26 only--No Thursday class=Thanksgiving)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical and vocal work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scene Rehearsal #4--hard copy of scene required</li> <li>• Off book by 12/3</li> <li>• <b>Reminder:</b> Theatre Performance Review of <i>The Laramie Project</i> <b>(Due 11/26)--Canvas Assignment</b> <i>See Syllabus p. 7 Guidelines Theatre Performance Review</i></li> </ul>
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**Week 11 (12/3, 5)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Off book</li> <li>• Physical and vocal warm up</li> <li>• Beats</li> </ul>	<p><b>12/3:</b> Rehearsal #5 (Dress rehearsal and off book) <b>12/5: Final Scene Performances Day 1</b></p>
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**Week 12--Finals Week Class Meets Tuesday 12/10 from 9:15-11:15 (NO class on 12/12)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation during final is required</li> </ul>	<p><b>Final Scene Performances Day 2</b> <b>12/10 9:15-11:15</b></p>
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**THEA 20A: GUIDELINES FOR THEATRE PERFORMANCE REVIEW of *The Laramie Project* at West Valley College (50 points)**

**DUE TUESDAY 11/26–This assignment will be available in Canvas and should be submitted via Canvas.**

1. **You are required to attend the West Valley College production of *The Laramie Project* and write a review.** *The Laramie Project* will be playing at the West Valley College theatre--November 15, 16, 21, 22, and 23 at 8:00 PM and November 17 & 24 at 2:00 PM

2. Reviews will be two to three pages typed, double-spaced using standard academic formatting and presentation. Papers handed in with grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors will be returned for rewrites.

Your review will include three sections:

**A. Introduction (one paragraph)**

The introduction will contain the title of the production (*italicized*), playwright, producing organization (usually the name of the theatre or group), and the director. This information is also found in the program issued by the theatre. Also include a title for your review as well as a brief summary of the plot. I do mean brief.

**B. Body**

**Discuss two performers/actors in the show.** Mention the performers by their name and the character they portrayed when evaluating their performances.

--Discuss the following for each actor: **super objective** (what the character is pursuing/wants overall in the play). Discuss 1-2 examples (**per actor**) of **blocking and stage business**. How did these examples of blocking and stage business help to convey what the character was needing to express.

--How did each of these two actors use their actor's tools (voice, body, imagination) in order to create believable, entertaining characters?

--What did you learn, as an actor, by witnessing these two actors in the performance?

**Discuss the story and purpose of the show.** A play should make you understand something new. If it tells you what you already know, you leave it as ignorant as when you went in. What was the purpose of this particular story as a theatrical event?

**C. Conclusion (one paragraph)**

How did this performance make you feel? What did you learn, as an actor, by experiencing this performance? Would you recommend this show to others? Why or why not?