

Performing Arts Department, Naropa University			
PFAR 210 4 Credit Hours		PFAR x-list: N/A	FALL 2006
BFA Module Course Numbers:		475/480/485/490	
Class Title:		Acting, Production and Project development. (In 4 units)	
BFA Module Component:		C	
Dates of class:		8/28/06 – 12/14/06 (12/15 make-up day for Thanksgiving)	
Faculty Name:		Lead Instructor- Joan Bruemmer , Gleason Bauer, Randolph Curtis Rand, guest artist Peggy Pettit,	
Class Time:		Location:	Nalanda Campus (NAL) Classroom 9175
Office Hours:		Location:	TBA
Phone/Fax:		e-mail:	See individual units below

Course Requirements, Grading, Attendance Policy:

Attendance and Class Participation - 80%

There are NO excused absences. Classroom work is crucial to understanding. In addition, the work in these classes is an interdependent endeavor and absences from one student affect the entire process. Two absences during the semester will result in the lowering of the student's grade by a 1/2 letter. Lateness (including returning from breaks) affects your grade. Coming late/leaving early two times will be considered an absence. Students are expected to commit fully and fearlessly in class. This includes participation in exercises and discussions, and in incorporating critique and feedback from the instructor into their work. Students are expected to refrain from use of cell phones, and consumption of food during class. It is expected that interruptions and coming and going will not occur, especially due to the nature of the class. If you have a specific need, please talk to your instructor.

Requirements

Students are expected to dress appropriately for class – loose fitting clothing that allows for fluid movement and can be worn to work on the floor. Because of the explorative nature (personal and physical) as well as for safety reasons, students are discouraged from wearing jewelry, and other personal enhancements. Students will be asked to keep a journal. This needs to be particularly for the

class, so should be kept separate from a “personal” journal, or other non-class related writing.

Written Work- 20%

Students are asked to keep a journal that is brought to class every day. Students will be asked to write, and share about their experiences of the work **IN CLASS**. In addition, there will be an ongoing reading list. Students will be asked to write a response paper each week. Finally, the students will be required to see one performance during the semester, and asked to write a response paper to that.

Course description:

Unit 1: *Viewpoints and Composition.*

Instructor: Joan Bruemmer BFA theatre NYU/TISCH School of the Arts, Experimental Theatre Wing. MFA Contemporary Performance, Naropa University.

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An exploration of Viewpoints: **Viewpoints are a movement-based technique that addresses awareness of the body in space and time.** It helps actors develop "the ability to listen with the entire body," to take in and use everything around them. Viewpoints awaken your awareness as an actor. It challenges the actor to be conscious, and open to visceral contact with one's surroundings at all times and to be ready to respond to those surroundings - to speak, to move to act, to change - in an instant, allowing a group of actors to function together spontaneously and intuitively to generate bold, theatrical work. In this class I set up structured improvisations that allow the students to explore the elements of space, shape, time, emotion, movement and story. We then take these elements in to creating compositions on the fly. We address applying the improvisational structure to staging, choreography and text. The students get the opportunity to incorporate this work into their self –created pieces and explore their directorial eye and practice giving and receiving feedback.

Course Outline:

Week 1-3: Elements of Viewpoints

Training will begin by exploring through improvisation the elements of Viewpoints: Space and Time through the lens of the SITI Company

Week 4-5: Connecting Movement and Voice

Using elements of Ruth Zaporah’s Action Theater the class will explore the connection between sound and movement in improvisational structures

Week 6 – 7: Composition and the Director’s Eye

We will train in techniques of creating performance from scratch. Starting with elements of Barbara Dilley’s Spontaneous Composition and the Director’s Chair, we will progress to Composition as outlined by Anne Bogart and the SIT Company. Students will train in the process of giving and receiving feedback in addition to having the experience of using the director’s eye.

At the conclusion of this session each student will have the opportunity to step into the Director’s role.

Week 13 – 16: Improvisation into Performance

Training in taking improvisational techniques into the performance of scripted work. The semester will conclude with an open class showing of both improvisation and scripted work.

Unit 2: *Text As Performance*

Instructor: Randolph Curtis Rand, BFA, Theatre Arts, emphasis in performance, Penn State University, MFA track, Contemporary Performance, Naropa University. Actor’s Equity Association

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Text as Performance. There are many ways to make sense of a piece of text; one could divide it into ideas expressed, or images evoked; how is the work structured on the page, what is the alliteration, or the music of it? In this class we will explore text for its physical effect on the body/psyche of the performer, to give a somatic response to structure/meaning, allowing the text itself to reveal acting/staging/directing choices. We will use sound, alliteration, punctuation, rhythm, imagery, musical models ranging from opera to rap, and the work of Kristen Linklater and Cicely Berry, **to form a visceral link with the text. This “somatic analysis” will form a continuous feedback/loop of form, action, discovery, and intentions** (both the performers’ and the authors’).

Course Outline:

Weeks 1- 2: The basis of Text as Performance

Using the work of Kristen Linklater, and Cicely Berry (such as the vowel tree), as well as listening to pieces of music, the students will form a somatic relation to sound, punctuation, and imagery.

Week 3- 4: What does the Text Tell You?

“Shakespeare is the surest way of learning about text... Cicely Berry” Shakespeare’s work offers a clear, concise way into discovery of text. Changes in rhythm, meter, musicality, length of sounds, prose to poetry, and tense, all have direct relation to action/intention. Building on the previous weeks work, we will use a variety of text, poetic and other, but particularly Shakespeare, to plumb the writing how it directs the acting/staging ideas.

Week 10- 11: Review

Week 12 - 14: Work the text/The Text works You

The students will start to address/analyze a script, to be determined.

Week 15 - 16: Work on Solo Performance

We will conclude, by putting to use the tools we have learned to the students self generated material.

Unit 3: *Holistic Acting*

Instructor: Gleason Bauer, BA, Liberal Arts, Sarah Lawrence College, emphasis on Theatre Arts; MFA track, Contemporary Performance, Naropa University

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Holistic Acting grows out of a non-dualistic experience of the body/mind. This experience can be found in the words of Suzuki Roshi in ***Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*** :

This is the most important teaching: not two, not one. Our body and mind are not two and not one. If you think your body and your mind are two, that is wrong; if you think that they are one, that is also wrong. Our body and mind are both two and one. We usually think that if something is not one, it is more than one; if it is not singular, it is plural. But in actual experience, our life is not only plural, but also singular.

This class will be based on practices that view the mind/body as an interdependent whole – practices that stoke a unified whole into experiencing ignited imagery, bold precise action, and deep somatically derived emotion. The approach incorporates exercises attributed to Steven Wangh’s ***Physical Approach to Acting*** (inspired by Jerzy Grotowski) and John L. Gronbeck-Tedesco’s collation of acting exercises in ***Acting Through Exercises***. Other

diverse influences will also be in play including: a renegade version of Commedia dell Arte, Tadashi Suzuki's Actor Training Method, Viola Spolin's improvisational acting games and George Lakoff's neuro-linguistic theories as articulated in ***Metaphors We Live By***. Students will experiment through exercises and will then have the opportunity to apply these exercises on scenes from a given individual play as well as on their final projects. Students will be asked to keep and share a journal of their experience and will be assigned a variety of exercises to explore outside of class time. Although our time together is brief, it is my intention that you end the semester with a basic acting tool bag that you can apply to self-devised material, auditions and traditional theatrical performance.

Course Outline:

Week 1: Developing a Personal Warm-up

Training will begin with an exploration of the key elements of an actor's personal warm-up – finding space, grounding, balance, breath, openness, alignment and gifting the psychosomatic instrument. We will explore a variety of exercises that can be drawn on and re-visited throughout the semester. Students will be encouraged to experiment with and question their personal warm-up experience. We will look to stay in process with the warm-up, viewing it as a means of meeting the instrument where it is at any given moment and guiding it to where it needs to be in order to create the play of the day.

Week 2: Sharpening Perception

We will explore the link between perception and creative expression by developing the inner and outer eye through perceptual awareness exercises and internal awareness practice.

Weeks 3-4 and 10: Plastiques and Corporels

We will use these two weeks to learn Grotowski's basic physical containers. These containers are used to reconnect with and release the psychophysical energies of the body. They act as physical keys that unlock internal emotional/imagistic doors.

Week 11: Working with Others

We will spend this class beginning to explore the art of listening with the whole instrument.

Week 12: Character Work

We will explore external, physical, vocal and internal methods of building character.

Week 13 - 14: Scene Work

We will begin to apply the plastiques and our character work to scenes chosen from a work to be determined.

Week 15 - 16: Senior Projects

In our final two weeks, we will concentrate on applying this holistic approach to acting to the material of your final projects.

Unit 4: Self-Scripting. (Weeks 5- 9)

Instructor: Peggy Pettitt

Course description, and requirements to follow

If you have any special needs that may require accommodations or if you will miss a class because of a religious holiday, please contact the instructor by the third week of class. Naropa University will provide accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To request an accommodation, or to discuss any learning needs you may have, contact the Learning Needs Specialist, Kendra Kohlhaas. Her office is located in the Library Building, 2nd floor next to the Office of International Education on the Arapahoe Campus. You may contact her at 303-245-4749 or e-mail: kkohlhaas@naropa.edu