ACTING ON CAMERA
Course Syllabus

Spring 2013 Semester
TH345
California State University, Northridge

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00AM – 1:30PM
Location: Oviatt Library Building, Ground Level, TV Studio/Room 37

Professor: Brad Lemack
Owner/President, Lemack & Company Talent Management/Public Relations
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Office hours: Thursdays, 9:45 – 10:45AM, Nordhoff Hall, Room NH 207

Course Description:
TH 345 prepares the student for the particular demands and challenges of acting on camera. This course also includes exposure to and hands-on experience in the technical aspects of the behind-the-camera process in capturing an actor’s on-camera performance.

Course components include the art and technique of acting on camera, defining your “type” vs. your “brand,” stage performance adaptation for the camera, monologue and scene rehearsal and production, theatrical and commercial audition techniques and preparation, and the creation of an acting reel demo scene. This course will also explore the related business aspects of pursuing an on-camera acting career.

On the technical front, the student will learn and participate in various production crew positions in support of the on-camera work done in the class, with exposure to camera operating and blocking, directing, audio, editing and other positions, as well as the terminology, vocabulary and etiquette required in studio production.

Classes will include assigned reading and discussion, monologue and scene rehearsals, playback and evaluation of recorded on-camera performances, and meetings with industry professionals. Additional time outside of regular class meetings for the preparation of scene materials and, later, assisted video editing, is also required.

Student Learning Outcomes:
The Theatre Department Student Learning Outcomes of the undergraduate program are:
1. The student will know and be able to process sensory information and respond to sensory information through the language unique to theatre.
2. The student will know and be able to apply their knowledge of artistic and theatre processes through production participation.
3. The student will know and be able to apply historical, cultural, and literary understandings to the creation of theatre.
4. The student will know and be able to apply appropriate criteria to make informed assessments of quality in works of theatre.
5. The student will know and be able to develop intra and interpersonal skills essential to the collaborative process in theatre.

Course Objectives:
1. To introduce and develop skills and techniques for on-camera performance.
2. To develop a basic understanding of the on-camera production process.
3. To develop critical on-camera audition and performance evaluation skills.
4. To develop an understanding of the professional landscape of on-camera performance.
5. To produce an acting reel demo scene suitable for professional use.

Required Reading:
Reading assignments from the assigned book are listed for each class session where required. Additional reading materials (newspaper and magazine articles, etc.) may be given to you in class throughout the semester.

**Recommended Reading:**

**Course & Writing Requirements:**
- Attendance, class preparation and in-class participation, including discussions, performance and production work (60% = 60 points; a missed class will result in a loss of five points for each class missed).
- Reaction papers and other writing assignments, as assigned (20% = 20 points).
- Final project (20% = 20 points).

100% = 100 points

**Grading:**
- 94 points to 100 points: A
- 90 points to 93 points: A-
- 87 points to 89 points: B+
- 84 points to 86 points: B
- 80 points to 83 points: B-
- 77 points to 79 points: C+
- 74 points to 76 points: C
- 70 points to 73 points: C-
- 67 points to 69 points: D+
- 64 points to 66 points: D
- Less than 65 points: F

There is a direct connection between a student’s class participation and their final grade. Students are expected to contribute intelligently and articulately. You are expected to complete class preparation work as assigned prior to coming to class.

Written assignments are due at the beginning of each class as assigned. Written assignments not completed on time will not be accepted at a later time and will be factored against you in final grade calculations. All written assignments and projects must be submitted on 8 1/2 x 11” white paper, typed.

Classes will commence promptly at 11:00AM. Tardiness matters. Arrival later than 1:10PM will be counted as an absence.

All cell phones/pdas must be turned off prior to entering class. There is no laptop, cell phone or pda use allow in or during class. Texting during class is strictly banned and will result in a loss of five points for each class in which the violation occurs.

**Final Project: Your Acting Reel Demo**
The final project is due in our final class on Tuesday, 5/14/13, at 10:15AM and consists of two components: your edited acting reel demo scene on DVD and your minimum 750 word paper on the your process of creating your final project from initial scene selection to completion, as well as how you intend to use your demo in your next step.
Course Outline:

Class #1  Tuesday, 1/22/13:  1. Course Introduction
                            2. Monologue and Scene Selection Guidelines

Class #2  Thursday, 1/24/13:  Great Performances: Acting – The Art & Technique of Acting on Camera

Assignment: Research and be prepared to discuss actor whose work in general or whose performance in a particular role has influenced you in a personal way (as an actor and as a spectator). Review both the person’s IMDB.com and IBDB.com pages and bring a hard copy of his or her credit listings to class.

Class #3  Tuesday, 1/29/13:  Great Performances: Production

Introduction to the jobs, the technical components and the language behind acting on camera production (with Tony Hillbruner).

Class #4  Thursday, 1/31/13:  What Kind of Actor are You?: An On-Camera Exercise

Assignment: Be prepared to discuss your “type” vs. your “brand.” Submit a hard copy statement of your assessment.

Class #5  Tuesday, 2/05/13:  What Kind of Actor Are You?

Video playback, analysis & discussion.

Class #6  Thursday, 2/07/13:  The Business of Acting: Meshing the Performance and Non-Performances Skills

Assignment: Read The New Business of Acting Foreword, Preface, Introduction, chapter 1 (“The Transition From Student to Working Professional” and chapter 2 (“Skills to Build a Career On in The New Business of Acting”), and then write one reaction paper for discussion in class.

Class #7  Tuesday, 2/12/13:  1. An Actor’s Team: Talent Representatives
                            2. The Hollywood Complex

Assignment: Read The New Business of Acting chapter 4 (“The Business of Talent Representation”), and then write a reaction paper for discussion in class.

Class #8  Thursday, 2/14/13:  Monologues: In-Studio Rehearsal

Class #9  Tuesday, 2/19/13:  Monologues: Recorded (Single Camera)

Class #10 Thursday, 2/21/13:  Monologues: Playback, Analysis and Discussion
Class #11 Tuesday, 2/26/13: **The Tools**

Assignment: Read *The New Business of Acting* chapter 3 (“The Art of the Head Shot”) for discussion in class. Bring a copy of your current head shot to class, if you have one, for review.

Additional assignment: Read *The New Business of Acting* chapter 8 (“An Actor’s Resume and Bio”). Using the guidelines discussed in the book – and after reviewing the resume samples on the Resources page at TheBusinessOfActing.com, create a draft of your (new) acting resume for presentation, review and discussion in class.

Class #12 Thursday, 2/28/13: 1. **Audition Preparedness**

Assignment: Read *The New Business of Acting* chapter 5 (“The Business of Talent Casting”) and chapter 6 (“Self-Submitting: The Art of Selectivity in Pursuing Casting Opportunities”) and then write one reaction paper for discussion in class.


2. **A Perspective on the On-Camera Audition Process**

Screen of and discussion about the documentary *Casting About* (86:00).

Class #13 Tuesday, 3/05/13: **The Business of Talent Casting**

Class meeting with casting director Patrick Baca.

Assignment: Research the class guest’s credits at IMDB.com.

Class #14 Thursday, 3/07/13: **Casting Submission Workshop**

Class #15 Tuesday, 3/12/13: **Commercial Auditions**

The Process: From sign in, to entering the room, to taped audition, to completion.

Class #16 Thursday, 3/14/13: **Theatrical Auditions**

The Process: From sign in, to entering the room, to taped audition, to completion – and an exercise in cold reading.

Class #17 Tuesday, 3/19/13: **On-Camera Demo Reel Scenes: In-Studio Rehearsal**

In-studio rehearsal of two-actor scenes – **Group 1**.
Class #18 Thursday, 3/21/13: **Recording of Two-Actor Demo Reel Scenes From Three Angles – Group 1**

1. Over-the-shoulder shot on Actor A only.
2. Over-the-shoulder shot on Actor B only.

Class #19 Tuesday, 3/26/13: **On-Camera Demo Reel Scenes: In-Studio Rehearsal**

In-studio rehearsal of two-actor scenes – **Group 2**.

Class #20 Thursday, 3/28/13: **Recording of Two-Actor Demo Reel Scenes From Three Angles – Group 2**

1. Over-the-shoulder shot on Actor A only.
2. Over-the-shoulder shot on Actor B only.

Class #21 Tuesday, 4/02/13: **On-Camera Demo Reel Scenes: In-Studio Rehearsal**

In-studio rehearsal of two-actor scenes – **Group 3**

Class #22 Thursday, 4/04/13: **Recording of Two-Actor Demo Reel Scenes From Three Angles – Group 3**

1. Over-the-shoulder shot on Actor A only.
2. Over-the-shoulder shot on Actor B only.

Class #23 Tuesday, 4/16/13: **On-Camera Demo Reel Scenes: In-Studio Rehearsal**

In-studio rehearsal of two-actor scenes – **Group 4**

Class #24 Thursday, 4/18/13: **Recording of Two-Actor Demo Reel Scenes From Three Angles – Group 4**

1. Over-the-shoulder shot on Actor A only.
2. Over-the-shoulder shot on Actor B only.


Assignment: Read the article “So Many Acting B.A.s, So Few Paying Gigs,” and then write a reaction paper for discussion in class.

2. **Case Study: Joan Rivers**

Screening of and discussion about the documentary *A Piece of Work* (84:00).

Class #26 Thursday, 4/25/13: **Survival in The Business of Acting – Part 2**

Class meeting with working actor Pamela Roylance.
Assignment: Read *The New Business of Acting* chapter 9 (“Emotional, Physical and Fiscal Fitness”) and then write a reaction paper for discussion in class.

Additional assignment: Research the class guest’s credits at IMDB.com.

Class #27  Tuesday, 4/30/13:  **Young Actors Panel**

Class #28  Thursday, 5/02/13:  **Screening, Analysis and Discussion of Final Project Two-Actor, Single Camera or Multi-Camera (Edited) Scenes – Groups 1 and 2**

Class #29  Tuesday, 5/07/13:  **Screening, Analysis and Discussion of Final Project Two-Actor, Single Camera or Multi-Camera (Edited) Scenes – Groups 3 and 4**

Class #30  Thursday, 5/09/13:  **The Next Steps on Your Journey to a Career as a Working Actor**

Assignment: Read *The New Business of Acting* chapter 10 (“It’s All About the Plan”) and then write a reaction paper for discussion in class.

Class #31  Tuesday, 5/14/13:  **Final Class**

Final class meets from 10:15AM – 12:15PM;
Final project (DVD and paper due).

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Topics, guests, order of sessions and assignments subject to change.

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**Disability Statement:**
If you have a disability and need accommodations, please register with the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office or the National Center on Deafness (NCOD). The DRES office is located in Bayramian Hall, Room 110 and can be reached at (818) 677-2684. NCOD is located on Bertrand Street in Jeanne Chisholm Hall and can be reached at (818) 677-2611. If you would like to discuss a need for accommodations, please contact me to set up an appointment.

**Academic Honesty:**
Student behavior that is not consistent with the Student Conduct Code is addressed through an educational process that is designed to promote safety and good citizenship and, when necessary, impose appropriate consequences. The following are the grounds upon which student discipline can be based:

Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty that are intended to gain unfair academic advantage; Furnishing false information to a University official, faculty member, or campus office; Forgery, alteration, or misuse of a University document, key, or identification instrument; Misrepresenting one’s self to be an authorized agent of the University or one of its auxiliaries.

Complete information on the University’s Standards for Student Conduct is available at:
http://www.csun.edu/a&r/soc/studentconduct.html.