Studies in Methods of Performance Pedagogy

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Abstract: This study sought to explore various methods of performance pedagogy developed over the last century with a focus on Western methodologies and psychological realism. The study involved researching the major texts of those methodologies published in the last century as well as practicing them by testing their concepts in the classroom. The culmination is the course design of an Acting I class with an accompanying narrative explaining the decisions made in that design and how they were achieved through the research.
Introduction

The purpose of this study was to research various acting methodologies that have evolved in the last century, analyze their pedagogy to determine what tactics were employed by the teachers of those methodologies and what their desired results were, and to incorporate those that were found to be most effective into a course design for an introductory level Acting course. As I wrote in the proposal for this project, “If we are to assume that it [acting] is teachable (which we will given the existence of theatre departments and acting classes/ conservatories the world over) there are even more divisions on how to go about doing that.” I sought to explore and experiment with these methodologies in order to determine the effectiveness of their use in an introductory level acting class.

The avenue for exploring those acting techniques was two-fold. Academically, I researched and read the primary acting texts of Constantin Stanislavski, Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner, Uta Hagen, The Atlantic Theatre Company and Viola Spolin. Each of these acting masters' texts were analyzed to determine the circumstances which brought them into existence and the pedagogical focus of their varying techniques and methods. Practically, I completed a teaching assistantship for an Acting I class in the Fall of 2011, keeping a reflective log of that experience and testing the theories discovered in the acting texts in that class. These two avenues of research informed and shaped the final product of this study: a course design for an introductory level Acting class.

In "Part I", the reader will find a history of various acting theories stretching from the late 19th century to the late 20th century. The major texts of each of these theories is analyzed to determine how they were influenced by those who came before, what their pedagogical focus, and what pedagogical tactics were used as a part of that focus. All of these teachers staked their livelihood on the assumption that the training of an actor is possible and worthwhile, and that they specifically had something important to add to that field. It was my goal to determine what they added.

"Part I" of the study seeks to isolate and investigate the pedagogical techniques used by these
teachers and the specific results of those techniques which they objectively called "good" acting. "Part II" is the narrative explaining and defending the choices which were made in designing the Acting I course which came out of this study. The course syllabus, calendar, rubrics for the assignments and written quizzes appear as appendices. These materials are the manifestation of the practical and academic research and Part II is the roadmap between the two.
Part I: The Methods

Any undertaking to outline the history and evolution of modern acting methods must begin with Constantin Stanislavski. The revolutionary co-founder of the Moscow Art Theatre (Hapgood, Building ix) was perhaps the first theatre artist to successfully document the methods used by great actors and write them down into a recognizable, repeatable system. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood, translator of Stanislavski’s three major acting texts: An Actor Prepares, Building a Character, and Creating a Role, described Stanislavski's dream as a “manual, a handbook, a working textbook” and a “grammar of acting” (Actor vii). Stanislavski lived at a time when melodrama was the norm, when overacting and a lack of what he would call truthfulness existed on the stage. The goal of the Moscow Art Theatre was “to get rid of what has become artificial, and therefore an impediment” (Hapgood Actor vii).

Stanislavski sought to change this culture of artificiality.

Stanislavski travelled the world, watching theatre, choosing the actors he felt were the best, and asking them how they approached acting. A scavenger of techniques, he learned not only from Russian actors, but also from actors who did not even perform in Russian, including the Italians Tommaso Salvini and Eleonora Duse. Hapgood is quick to note, “[t]here is no claim made here to actual invention. The author is most ready to point out that a genius like Salvini or Duse may use without theory the right emotions and expressions that to the less inspired but intelligent students need to be taught” (Actor viii). Stanislavski was not the first great actor; it is even debated whether or not he was, in fact, “good.” Nor was he the first person to understand how acting worked. He was simply the first one who wrote it down with the goal of perpetuating both a repeatable system and training program.

An important aspect of Stanislavski’s “system,” as it has come to be called, is the fact that he never meant it to become an inflexible dogma. “He never intended that his statements be taken as rigid rules or his exercises be considered literally applicable to all situations or usable by all persons” (Hapgood, Building xii). The goal was truthful and beautiful acting, and if another system was found
that could reliably produce that, then all the better. Given how the other modern masters of acting have battled with each other, Stanislavski's fear of dogmatic adherence to systems was justified.

The most effective way to understand any method of acting is, of course, to read the texts and practice the concepts in them with fellow students and perhaps a teacher/student guide. It is worthwhile to stray from the focus of this study for a moment to highlight the idea of a teacher/student. The nature of acting as a collaboration between many people lends itself to a feeling of ensemble and equality. Stanislavski literally writes this ensemble feeling into his texts by writing from the point of view of a student named Kostya thinly veiled as a young Stanislavski. This young student attends classes with the experienced director, another thinly veiled Stanislavskian character named Tortsov. Even in his book, Stanislavski admits to continual learning. Thus, while there may be a more experienced person in the room who is assigned the role of “teacher,” it is perhaps unwise to claim intellectual superiority over the students, especially in an acting class where the most effective work is highly personal and internal to each student.

In any case, and in the absence of a classroom and a roster of students with which to read and discuss these ideas, the following major concepts will provide a workable vocabulary with which to discuss the Stanislavski system and the other techniques covered in this study.

- Action- Action is the idea that when on stage the actor must always be actively doing something. Performing an “action” is the heart of “acting”

- Imagination- The imagination serves as a powerful tool available for believing in the circumstances of the play.

- Given Circumstances- The given circumstances are the factual realities of the world created by the playwright. They must be accounted for and they provide fodder for the imagination.

- The Magic “If”- The magic “if” is related to imagination in that it requires the imagination, but it deserves special attention. The magic “if” is the supposition that the given circumstances are true, and that “if” they are true, what the next course of “action” should be.

- Concentration- One of the things that makes acting so difficult is the pressure that the auditorium implies. Audiences expect a performance. Concentrating on the realities on stage
Relaxation- Relaxation of the body and the muscles is vital, as physical tension reduces the actor's mental ability (which, in turn affects concentration). It is also vital to be limber and flexible enough to be able to comfortably play any character's physical traits.

Units- A practical idea, the unit is a short piece of the play which the actor can isolate and work on separately, much the way he eats a meal by cutting it into bite-size pieces.

Objectives- Similar to, and informed by, the “action”, the objective is what the character wants for each unit. The character always needs to want something, and the actions are the avenue toward achieving that objective.

Sense of Truth- If the actor is unable to believe in the scene, there is something wrong and he needs to isolate the problem and fix it. Perhaps he needs to strengthen the imaginary circumstances so he can believe in them, perhaps he needs to find another action or relax. A sense of truth or faith in the scene will, when achieved, help him play the scene truthfully and easily.

Emotion Memory- Emotion memory is the use of the actor's memories and previous emotional experiences to help achieve the emotional effect needed for the scene. This is the most controversial of Stanislavski's ideas and one which he later renounced. More attention will be given to this issue later on.

Communion- The idea of communion (or communication) is related to “concentration” and is the idea that the actor is always in communion with any number of things, including people, objects, sensations etc. The actor must concentrate on all of the things which require communion and use all of the tools he can (mind, voice, body, action etc.) to maintain that communion.

The Inner Motive Forces- The motive forces are not exactly a separate idea, but rather a summing up of previous concepts. The three motive forces are the mind, will and feelings. The mind corresponds to “imagination”, the will corresponds to “action” and the feelings correspond to “emotion.” Stanislavski felt that these three motive forces were inextricably connected. By stimulating any one of the three an actor or director could stimulate the other two as well. For example, when playing a scene in which the imaginary circumstances are difficult to imagine (using the mind) then by consciously strengthening the action (the will) the emotion will follow and so will a better understanding of and belief in the circumstances.

The Unbroken Line- This is one of the most important of Stanislavski's concepts which has not been universally debated. The idea is that when reading a play only bits and pieces of the characters' lives are revealed by the playwright. The characters had an entire life before the play began and they have a continued life during the play when they are not on stage. By ignoring these huge portions of a character's life the actor deprives the character of fulness. The job for the actor then, is to fill in the blanks left by the playwright by connecting the dots between the units and piecing the play together from what the playwright gives them.
The Super Objective- The super objective is related to the objective and the unbroken line, but is in relation to the entire play. Every character has an objective toward which all of their other objectives are related and in service to. If the actor analyzes (scores) the script and any of the objectives or actions are not in service to the super objective, something needs to be adjusted.

Of course, every one of these concepts, and others not covered, is given much more attention in Stanislavski's books and is far more nuanced and complicated than this study can afford to be. But these are the major concepts and their basic meanings, which will be fairly common to all of the other acting theorists.

Stanislavski revolutionized the art of acting and then brought his ideas to America when the Moscow Art Theatre went on tour (Strasberg 36). Lee Strasberg was able to attend a number of their productions and was struck by the strength of the entire ensemble, as opposed to the star-driven theatre popular at the time. “[W]hat had completely bowled me over,” he explains, “was not the acting of any of the great actors of the Moscow Art Theatre... but the simple fact that the acting on the stage was of equal reality and believability regardless of the stature of the actor or the size of the part that he played” (Strasberg 37).

Richard Boleslavsky and Maria Ouspenskaya (two members of the Moscow Art Theatre and students of Stanislavski's) stayed in the United States after the tour and started the short-lived but influential American Lab Theatre. The goal of the American Lab Theatre was to proliferate the Stanislavski system in the United States. Strasberg and Stella Adler, another influential acting teacher, were among the members of the American Lab Theatre's ensemble (Meisner and Longwell 9). At the American Lab Theatre, Boleslavsky and Ouspenskaya worked with their students on affective memory

1 “Scoring” the script has different meanings for many of the different teachers. In its simplest form it involves isolating the units of the play and determining the character's objective and action for each unit.
2 Strasberg said this of affective memory. “I should note that the term affective memory was used unclearly at the American Laboratory Theatre. Perhaps because Boleslavsky and Madame [Ouspenskaya] were untrained in English, some confusion resulted in how they distinguished between the two categories of affective memory. In my own work, I divide affective memory into sense memory, which is the memory of physical sensation, and emotional memory, which is the memory of the experience of more intense responses and reactions” (Strasberg 69-70). Emotion memory should be familiar from Hapgood's translations, and in fact, Hapgood lumps sense memory (she calls it “sensation memory”) in with the emotion memory. It is thus advisable to recognize Strasberg's “affective memory” as akin to “emotion memory” for Hapgood's translation of Stanislavski.
and concentration. This would form the basis for Strasberg's approach, what has generally come to be called “Method Acting.”

Strasberg felt that what inhibited performances the most was a lack of expressiveness. He thought that actors generally would be feeling and thinking the correct things, but that it would not read to an outside observer.

By the time an individual arrives at the age where he begins to aspire to be an actor, he is to some extent aware of his physical attributes, such as his voice, speech, and movement patterns. He has little or no knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of his sensory and memory equipment; even less does he understand the behavior of his emotions and the way in which he expresses them. Often he does so in ways which become so limited that we call them ‘mannerisms.’ Since to the individual these are his natural expressions, he thinks of them as being real and true and does not perceive that they are mannered... I had to find ways of dealing with an actor's mannerisms that obscured the truth of expression that involves the relationship between intensity of feeling and emotion (Strasberg 95).

Strasberg felt that without sensory experience there is no acting, and that the senses were the key to the inner motive forces. So the training that Strasberg developed was designed to train the actor’s ability to take in using the senses and respond with emotional truth. In Stanislavski's terms, Strasberg's focuses were relaxation, concentration, imagination and emotional memory (with renewed focus on sense memory). He felt that everything would fall into place if the actor was trained to relax on stage, concentrate on the scene and their scene partner, imagine the circumstances, and respond with emotional truth.

Strasberg's training took shape as a number of exercises in which the student interacts with imaginary items, such as recreating their morning using imaginary props and scenery. These exercises escalate, moving on to recreating a full body experience, like taking a shower, to recreating an intense emotional experience. All of these exercises are designed to train those areas which will help the actor be more expressive (relaxation, concentration, imagination and emotion). Specifically, Strasberg honed in on the idea of emotion memory as a tool actors can use to approach roles and scenes. The
implication there is that if there is a situation or an emotion in a play that an actor cannot relate to, they either cannot play it or need to seek out an experience that will assist them in playing it. This implication was a problem for many other actors and acting teachers and proved to become an enormous rift in the profession. Strasberg's training program is designed to continue along these lines, recreating sensory experiences, eventually turning to scenes.

Strasberg sought to match the strength of Stanislavski's ensemble and recruited others who also wanted to improve the state of American acting. With the now-famous director Harold Clurman and actress Cheryl Crawford he founded The Group Theatre. The Group Theatre would only last ten years but would forever change the dialogue of what acting was. Among the other members of the Group Theatre were Stella Adler, who had studied at the American Lab Theatre alongside Strasberg, and Sanford Meisner. The Group Theatre was short-lived for a number of reasons, but one of the main reasons is that some members, most notably Adler and Meisner, disagreed vehemently with Strasberg and left the Group.

Adler felt especially adamant that Strasberg's emotion memory tactics were incorrect. She is anecdotally\(^3\) attributed the following quote of Strasberg's Method. “Drawing on the emotions I experienced, for example, when my mother died to create a role, is sick and schizophrenic. If that is acting, I don't want to do it.” She decided to address her concerns by going right to the source. She travelled to Paris with her then-husband Harold Clurman, a founding member of the Group Theatre and a highly influential director. In Paris, Adler met with Stanislavski and trained with him privately for a number of weeks. She proudly claims that she is the only American to have studied directly with Stanislavski. In her studies she found that Stanislavski had since abandoned emotional memory as a tool (Kissel 264).

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\(^3\) This quote, along with another anecdotal quote of Adler's which appears later, does not appear in any peer-reviewed or published manuscript. They are both, however, widely attributed to Adler on hundreds of websites including wikipedia.org. Validity aside, it is a well-documented fact that Adler and Strasberg disagreed vehemently and these quotes serve to underscore that disagreement, if nothing else.
In response to what she saw as Strasberg's disjointed view of what the Stanislavski system was, Adler began developing her own system. She was not a huge believer in the classroom as a method of learning acting, but nonetheless she put together a few central pillars which her system revolves around. Imagination is the most important Stanislavskian concept for Adler. She does not seem concerned with anything that cannot be solved by using your imagination. “For Adler – and, she stressed, for Stanislavski – the imagination must take the lead” (Kissel 265). After keying in on the imagination as the most important tool an actor has, Adler developed the ideas of “justification” and “stretch”. “Justification,” related to Stanislavski's “Sense of Truth,” is the use of the imagination to justify every single item and person on the stage, every thing the character does, and every thing that happens. “Justification goes on continuously in the mind of the actor for as long as he's on stage. Finding reasons for everything you do on the stage keeps your actions truthful” (Adler 125). By using the imagination to imagine the circumstances and justify a belief in the other characters, the props, the room, etc., the actor can believe in the situation and that will suggest everything else including actions and objectives.

“Stretch” is Adler's own innovation. Adler had an unshakeable faith that the theatre, if it were not corrupted, could change the world. She said to her students “When you stand on the stage you must have a sense that you are addressing the whole world, and that what you say is so important the whole world must listen” (Adler 22). She advocated using the imagination in order to give the character's actions enough stretch to make them the most important thing in the world.

Meanwhile, Sanford Meisner was having his own problems with Strasberg's Method. Meisner tended to agree that a lack of truthful expressiveness was the thing that kept actors from “living truthfully under the imaginary circumstances,” (Bruder et al 5) a phrase he would become famous for coining. But he disagreed with Strasberg's assertion that by using their own experiences an actor could truthfully live under the extreme emotional conditions required by the stage. The imagination, for
Meisner, was a far more powerful tool for that. The other important part of the Meisner technique is the concept that unless an actor is reacting to the other people in the scene, the acting will be fake. “Don't do anything unless something happens to make you do it... What you do doesn't depend on you, it depends on the other fellow” (Meisner and Longwell 34).

The Meisner technique is geared toward training the actor to respond fully and truthfully. This means brushing off the socially acceptable censoring which we have all trained ourselves to take on. The Meisner technique trains the actor to respond in the moment to a living, breathing scene partner. The first exercise is to have two scene partners simply repeat objective observations back and forth. For example, “You're wearing a red shirt.” “I'm wearing a read shirt.” The purpose is to devalue the actual text in order to discourage mechanical line readings or altering the tone for the sake of interest. This helps train the actor not to do anything until something their partner does makes them. The training has many steps beyond this repetition exercise and culminates in performing scenes with the goal of incorporating the earlier training into a system that can be applied in production.

These three acting masters disagreed vehemently with each other, even taking shots at each other. Adler is also anecdotally attributed to have said of Strasberg, “That man set American theatre back 100 years.” According to Meisner, she also called Strasberg “a fake” (Meisner and Longwell 182) before the Group Theatre was even founded. She wrote disparagingly of Method acting, an ephemeral label at best, but likely describing Strasberg's Method. “Nowadays it's very fashionable to be a Method actor. Therefore it's time to change. When it's really fashionable, there's something wrong. An actor once came up to me and said, 'I'm a Meth...’ and he mumbled something. I said, 'Get out of here. I don't want that around. It's too corrupt'” (Adler 14).

Similarly, Meisner felt that Strasberg's emphasis on emotion memory was destructive and useless. Though emotional preparation (which is different from emotion memory) plays a role in
Meisner's technique, it is by no means the primary element. “On this issue [of emotion memory], Meisner sided with Stella Adler... and affective or emotional memory plays no role in the system Meisner has evolved” (Meisner and Longwell 10). Meisner apparently was not impressed by Strasberg's talent either, saying “[h]e was a terrible actor” (Meisner and Longwell 184). Meisner also took issue with Strasberg's claims of having trained various great actors. The following exchange between Meisner and one of his students, while humorous, also underscores a serious struggle between the various schools of thought to claim superiority, a struggle which continues to this day.

[Joseph]'If you're one of those people who let beautiful acting come out of them because that's the way they're made, then you can do it under any circumstances.'

[Meisner]"Yes, and you know what? Strasberg would see that talent and invite someone to join the [Actor's] Studio, all those famous, talented people, and then later say, “He was my student!”

'Did he do that with Duvall?' Joseph asks.

'Duvall studied with me.'

'I know he studied with you first, but he also went to the Studio afterwards.'

'To work on himself, not to learn to act! It's quite different.'

'What do you mean, “to work on himself”?'

'It was a place where there were other actors. That was the merit of the Actor's Studio' (Meisner and Longwell 183).

During the same conversation, Meisner also said, “in the back of the Neighborhood Playhouse brochure which we send to prospective students there's a list of the graduates. If you want to amuse yourself in a sickening kind of way, go through that list and see how many people he invited to the Studio and then said, 'He was my student.' It's amazing” (Meisner and Longwell 184).

These three acting teachers, Strasberg, Adler and Meisner, form a triumvirate which has for

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5 The school and theatre where Meisner taught for years
decades dominated the debate over how to train actors. But there were others, and among the most notable of the others is Uta Hagen. Uta Hagen was an actress and a teacher in the 20th century. Born in Germany and immigrating to the United States at an early age, Hagen became an actress at an early age and was quite successful. She was never satisfied, however, and spent the early part of her career wondering how she could get better at acting. She always felt like she was faking it (Hagen, Challenge xiv).

The big revelation came when she compared acting to the other performing arts (singing, playing an instrument or dancing). Other performers do not save their training for when they need to perform. A piano player spends his time off practicing. Dancers do not sit around waiting for their next job, they stretch their muscles and limbs, take dance classes to learn new forms, and practice dancing every day. The successful ones practice. Singers do scales and exercises, practice art songs, and stretch their voices to maintain control over them. Why should it be any different for actors? “A talented young pianist,” she writes, “skillful at improvisation or playing by ear, might be a temporary sensation in a night club or on television, but he knows better than to attempt a Beethoven piano concerto... But a young actor will unthinkingly plunge into Hamlet if he has the chance. He must learn that, until he's ready, he is doing the same destructive thing to himself and the role” (Hagen, Respect 4).

The difficulty for Hagen was isolating what the things were that needed to be practiced and developing exercises to help practice those things. Hagen created what she called the “Object Exercises” which were literally ways to practice the Stanislavskian concepts of pursuing an objective, completing an action, concentrating, imagining the given circumstances, etc. There are ten object exercises in all, ranging from imagining oneself alone in a familiar room for two minutes to imagining oneself as two different characters from plays from around the same time period. The object exercises can also be mixed and matched. The theory is that they are useful as tools for an actor when not in production to keep themselves ready, and as exercises to train oneself as a dancer or a singer trains a
body or a voice.

What sets Hagen's training exercises apart from Meisner's, Strasberg's or Adler's is that she appears to be concerned with all of the Stanislavskian concepts. Adler seems highly focused on the “imagination”, Strasberg latched on to “emotion memory,” and Meisner's system aims to train the actor's “sense of truth.” Hagen, meanwhile, has developed a set of exercises that can work interchangeably to train everything from “action” to “super objective.”

An alternative training program is offered in *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*. This was a concise book put together by a number of students of famed dramatist David Mamet and actor William H. Macy. The title implies its purpose, to be a practical system for actors. The focus of the book is on its unique and simple scene analysis, which has three parts.

1. What is the character literally doing?
   ○ Meaning literally what is the character doing? For example, *tricking a bank teller into opening someone else's safety deposit box.*

2. What is the essential action of what the character is doing in this scene?
   ○ Meaning what is it that the character is trying to get done in the other character? Using the same example, *charming a stranger.*

3. What is that action like to me? It's as if...
   ○ Meaning what is something in the actor's personal life that can assist them in relating to the situation the character finds themselves in. Using the same example, *it's as if I left my car keys in the movie theatre and had to charm the janitor to let me in after closing.*

The authors of *A Practical Handbook for the Actor* believe that this scene analysis model will work for any scene. They even go so far as to state: “We guarantee that any scene can be broken down into playable action by this method” (Bruder 38). In Stanislavskian terms the literal action seems to correspond well with “objective,” the essential action seems to correspond with the “action” and the
“as if” seems like a mix between the “imagination,” the magic if, and “emotion memory.”

Finally, there is Viola Spolin. Without Viola Spolin theatre classrooms of today would likely be unrecognizable. She essentially invented modern improvisation technique and what are now called “theatre games.” There is no “Spolin technique” per se, but the games she invented (and there are hundreds of them) are all designed, much like Hagen's Object Exercises, to strengthen the fundamental Stanislavskian concepts of imagination, action, objective and the like. The games serve different, specific purposes, but generally the exercises were meant to train these Stanislavskian concepts by placing the actors into real-time situations where they have to live in the moment, react truthfully and connect (commune) with the ensemble. The ensemble was also an important concept for Spolin, something which had been somewhat lost in all the other Americanized versions of Stanislavski's system. She is quoted as saying of her games, “[d]o not think of present time as clock time but rather as a timeless moment, when all are mutually engaged in experiencing and experience, the outcome of which is as yet unknown. You're right there; you're connected and you don't know what's going to happen and that's where the spontaneity is, and that's where the joy is, and that's where the happiness is and that's the everlasting, the never-ending spiral” (Sills x-xi).

Each of the preceding acting teachers and their methods have their merits. It would be foolish to claim that any of them were “wrong” or “right.” In fact, it seems clear that Stanislavski was the one who was “right” and that the rest have expanded on his compilation of concepts. The disagreements about whose program was the best make for an interesting narrative, but when it comes down to it, they all added to the conversation. Without them this study would not have been possible and it will become clear in Part II that concepts from each of them informed the narrative of the course design and the logic behind it.
Part II: The Course Design

For this portion of the study I outline the choices made in designing this acting class and defending those choices. I will break each course assignment down in detail in order to illustrate:

- what exactly the assignment is
- how it is weighted in the class grading and why
- what the learning objectives are for that assignment
- how that assignment came to be as a result of my readings, experiences and reflections.
- why its inclusion in the course design is justified

Special consideration will be given to the participation category as it comprises 45% of the final course grade and is the most complex and involved feature of the syllabus. In addition to this, the exclusion of mandatory attendance and reflection on the institution’s formal theatrical season will be explained in further detail, but for now suffice it to say that these activities can be folded into the participation grade.

The following four assignments are all scene assignments. They will involve the students performing various kinds of scenes in front of the class and the instructor for a grade. These assignments have their bases in almost every acting class I have taken and many of the major acting texts. In *A Dream of Passion* Strasberg tells the reader that after the first stage of training, his concentration exercises, they are to move on to scenes. “The actor continues to practice these exercises, even as he moves into the next stage of his training. Next the actor begins to work with scenes from plays” (Strasberg 160). As Stella Adler put it, “I learned acting by acting... The classroom is not ideal, but it's all you have” (Adler 11). The modern convention of working on individual scenes in a classroom would have been unheard of two centuries ago. Actors used to train by acting in plays. But the closest we can come to performing a play together is to work on scenes together. This is why these assignments are important.

The Monologue Assignment (see Appendix C)

The monologue assignment culminates in a live performance by each student in front of the
class. The instructor will distribute an assortment of monologues among the students at a date to be determined on the calendar and the students will choose which monologues they wish to perform. Monologues are short pieces of text spoken by one character which will be performed by the students with a scene partner on stage. Students will be expected to memorize and deliver the text flawlessly to their scene partner. In addition, students will be required to fill out a monologue worksheet containing the elements of a scored script. Students will also be required to meet with the instructor for fifteen minutes outside of class for rehearsal time. Finally, students will be expected to perform the monologues on stage on the final monologue performance day as detailed on the calendar (Appendix B).

Every student will be paired with another student and those pairs are to rehearse together. For the student who is not performing the monologue, the only obligation is to show up to the partner's rehearsals and performances. A reduction in the final grade for this assignment will follow for any student who fails to cooperate reasonably as a scene partner.

The monologue assignment is worth only 5% of the final grade. It is the only performance-based assignment that is not worth 10% of the grade. Since the final performance of the monologues occurs only three weeks into the semester, it was important to the course design not to overwhelm the students with the pressure of a public performance that could significantly affect their grade so early in the course. Since many students who enroll in this course are likely to be shy and reluctant to perform or speak publicly, the monologue assignment serves as an ice-breaker that builds confidence and teaches the benefits of text analysis and script-scoring in creating the character and the scene so that the audience does not become a major distraction.

Referring to the syllabus (Appendix A), the monologue assignment is meant to “introduce the student to the fundamentals of realistic acting including given circumstances, actions, objectives and obstacles.” Under the course objectives, this assignment aims to build on #1, #3 and #4.
There is a debate as to the validity of the monologue assignment in an Acting I class. Jeff Cordell, who was the instructor for the Acting I class that I took as a student and is also serving as the thesis advisor for this project, places the monologue assignment at the beginning of the course both as a way of easing students into some acting fundamentals as well as a method of making the students hungry for a scene partner with which to interact. Then he delivers on that hunger with the following assignment, the open scene. Casiha Felt, who was the instructor for the course I assisted in teaching, finds the monologue appropriate at the end of the course simply as a tool for introducing the students of the department to the monologue as the industry standard audition format. Still other teachers find monologues inappropriate for an introductory level acting class at all. For example, none of the acting texts that were read in preparation for this study spend much time, if any at all, on the "monologue." Certainly none of them used it as the first assignment in a class. Stanislavski spends some time on a monologue from *Othello* in *Building a Character*, however that section appeared in the chapter "Intonations and Pauses" and was more of a study in using intonations and pauses with heightened text rather than an exercise meant to introduce the students to performance.

Personally, I find the set of skills and techniques used to approach performing a monologue (in an auditioning style) to an imaginary scene partner vastly different than those used in performing a piece of dialogue on stage with a live scene partner. This is why there are separate classes devoted to auditioning technique. At the same time there is something to be said for the focus and relative ease with which students may be introduced to acting with a monologue, and it is perhaps not advisable to simply throw two scene partners together without any sense of how the ensemble works together and without any knowledge of the students' level of comfort with performing. This is why I have introduced the convention of the scene partner into the monologue assignment. It turns the monologue into a dialogue where one person never speaks. In this way, the student with the monologue can focus on achieving active objectives in a living, breathing person right in front of them without having to
deliver the “monologue” to the gaping hole of an audience and without having to juggle spoken responses from a scene partner.

**The Open Scene Assignment (See Appendix D)**

The open scenes are meant to build on the lessons and learning objectives of the monologue assignment. It will culminate in a live performance on stage in front of the class. The instructor will distribute gender-neutral scenes that portray ambiguous relationships between two characters so that the students are required to fill in the blanks of the given circumstances. At the date prescribed in the calendar, the students will pair off and choose their preferred scenes. The same expectations of memorization and completing the performance as outlined in the monologue assignment will apply. In the place of a worksheet containing the elements of a scored script, students will be expected to score the script on the page. Additionally, students will be expected to meet with the instructor for 30 minutes rather than the 15 minutes of the monologue assignment.

The open scene comes second on the calendar and is the first of three performances which are each worth 10% of the final grade. I feel strongly that in an acting class a major portion of the grade should be devoted to actual performance, rather than writing. The tablework involved in creating a role and performing will be incorporated into the performance assignments (see Appendices C, D, E and F), however at its very core, an acting class should be about acting, getting up onto a stage and pursuing objectives with clear actions. By the second performance of the class, the students are expected to bring a level of commitment and preparation appropriate for an assignment which is worth 10% of the final grade.

As per the syllabus, the open scene is meant to expand upon the monologue assignment in a number of ways, specifically the building of given circumstances when not provided by the text. It builds on course objectives #1, #2, #3 and #4. The open scene also seeks to introduce the concept of working with an active and vocal scene partner.
The open scene is something that is common to both Jeff Cordell's Acting I design and Casiha Felt's Acting I design. It is a feature of Stella Adler's *The Art of Acting*.

Here are a few lines. Break up into pairs and perform them for us. They don't make much sense on the surface. It's your job to give them an inner justification. Make them logical and compelling.

'I wouldn't go in there if I were you.'
'How long has she been like that?'
'Her dress still has the stains on it.'
'Has he left yet?'
'I heard a door slam hours ago.'
'But I'm sure the blue car is his' (Adler 137).

The open scene is also found in *The Practical Handbook for the Actor*, though the scene provided here has more details

PETE: Your outfit is lovely today.
HARRIET: Do you like it? I thought you would.
PETE: Must have cost you a pretty penny.
HARRIET: Wasn't cheap. You look nice too.
PETE: Thanks. Payday'll do it to you.
HARRIET: Mn-hmm. Always buy a little something to make me feel good.
PETE: The boss held my check back, you know.
HARRIET: Poor thing! Why?
PETE: Er, trouble with serial numbers or something-- I don't know.
HARRIET: Why, come on, I'll take you out to dinner.
PETE: No, that's okay, I couldn't--
HARRIET: Well, we could make dinner at my apartment.
PETE: No, I can't, Harriet. Actually, I was hoping you could lend me forty dollars (Bruder 38).

I find the open scene to be important as a foundational exercise in the effectiveness of determining the given circumstances of a scene, and how those circumstances can inform the actions and objectives in different ways, even with the same text. It also provides an opportunity for a more truthful audience reaction from the other students as the choices made in rehearsal will carry much more weight than the text itself. That feedback can then affect choices made and it introduces the idea of feedback, revision and rehearsal as an artistic process rather than a line-memorizing session.
The Shape of Things Scene Assignment (See Appendix E)

The benefit of moving from open scenes onto scenes from a play that the entire class will work on is invaluable. The students will all read the play beforehand and take a comprehension quiz on it (see below), following which the instructor will lead a discussion. Then the students will pick scenes and scene partners or the instructor will assign scenes and scene partners. The only significant difference between what is expected of the students between the open scene and this scene is that they will now be accountable to the entire text of a play which they are working on with the support of the whole class. This will enable the students to differentiate between having to create the entire set of given circumstances (in the monologue and open scenes) to working with a text where many of the circumstances are provided by the actual text. And yet it will also provide the instructor an opportunity to introduce the concepts of the through-line of action, the concept of changing tactics without changing objectives, and the concept of the super objective.

Before moving on, I would like to justify the choice of play. The Shape of Things by Neil LaBute has four characters. Three of them are undergraduates at a small liberal arts college. The fourth is a young graduate student at the same college. These characters are involved in the problems of relationships, balancing a personal life with academia, facing the future with uncertainty and forging a personal identity among others. These problems should be relatable to many of the students enrolled in an undergraduate acting course. We will spend some time talking about what Uta Hagen calls “conditioning forces” meaning characteristics of a character that the actor has to “put on” like coldness, drunkenness, lateness, a limp, etc. However this is not the primary focus. The primary focus of this class is on contemporary realism. There are other acting classes for those special topics: advanced acting class, voice and movement classes, etc. The fewer externals and the fewer major differences between the actors in the class and the characters they are to play, the easier it can be to focus on the work of “living truthfully under the imaginary circumstances.” In addition, it offers gender balance and
multiple casting options for the students. This is why, for a course designed for undergraduate students at a small liberal arts institution, I felt it immensely appropriate to use *The Shape of Things*.

*The Shape of Things* scene is, along with the open scene and the final scene, worth 10% of the final grade. The lack of an escalating grading scale across these three scenes is meant to imply that learning is a constant, it is not meant to imply that there is to be no growth or ownership of craft. If we are forced to assign grades to what is an otherwise highly subjective endeavor, then it must follow that we assign grades for effort, desire to learn, and commitment to the work. I feel uncomfortable designing an acting class and saying to the students, through my point system, that between the open scene and *The Shape of Things* scene they will improve their acting skills by a measurable percentage. I feel much more comfortable saying to my students, through my point system, that every performance they complete should be given the same amount of care and commitment, and that as they improve and learn the performances will improve, but that I will not grade based on any system of expected improvement as an actor.

This assignment builds on course objectives #1 through #4. At this point in the class we will also have completed reading and workshopping all of Uta Hagen’s object exercises and will be well on our way to finishing Part 3 concerning “The Part and the Role.” This means that objective #5 will be incorporated as well. As mentioned above, the assignment is also meant to tap into the support offered by an ensemble working together on a common play, as well as the concept of working with a full text.

That last point deserves some attention. In a 100-level, 3-credit Acting course at a small liberal arts college we do not have the luxury of students and teachers whose sole purpose for attending is to build an ensemble of artists. We cannot, like the students in Tortsov's classes in *An Actor Prepares*, *Building a Character* and *Creating a Role*, spend all of every day in a conservatory taking acting classes, voice and singing classes, plus movement and dance classes, while simultaneously rehearsing a play. Instructors cannot spontaneously say to the students, “[L]et Grisha and Vanya go up onto the
stage a play for us the first scene in Othello” (Stanislavski, Creating 147) with the confidence that every student in the class has it memorized as part of their education.

We cannot build the type of ensemble that existed with the Moscow Art Theatre or with the Group Theatre where Sanford Meisner, Stella Adler and Lee Strasberg all lived and worked together before they began to disagree and fight among themselves. But we can give the students a small taste of what that was like. In Creating a Role the whole class worked on both Othello and The Inspector General by Nikolai Gogol. In An Actor Prepares the whole class worked on scenes from The Inspector General as well as improvisations which they had created as an ensemble. In Acting I with Jeff Cordell we worked on Bodies, Rest and Motion by Roger Hedden. In Casiha's class we worked on Proof by David Auburn. In an advanced acting class with Andy Felt we worked on Aeschylus's The Persians. By doing acting exercises together, by rehearsing together, and by working on the same text together we can come close to the ensemble feelings. This assignment is the culmination of the effort to build the ensemble. After weeks of playing together and watching each other work on different texts, we now come together and work on the same text and support each other in that effort. The entire ensemble will know the given circumstances and the characters and we will be able to see the growth and progress of the scene. After this, when the students are broken up into different scenes from separate plays, the feeling of ensemble support will be diminished as they are encouraged to take account of themselves and their work without the support of an ensemble who can support them with their own knowledge of the text.6

The Final Scene Assignment (See Appendix F)

It is my firm belief that the best acting happens when the actors love the text they are working with. This comes from my personal experience as well as my observations of my peers. I have found that the parts which I have been cast in which I loved performing I went above and beyond for no

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6 An important lesson to learn for any artist is that sometimes you will have the support of a group and sometimes you will be forced to press on alone.
reason other than the fact that I was enjoying the work. I have seen my classmates work harder for scenes and classes which they enjoyed, and prepare more for auditions which they were more excited about. There are countless lessons to be learned from finding something that you want to perform and then being given an avenue to do just that. This is where the concept of Reading Cards emerged from. The Reading Cards are explained in more detail later, but the idea is that students will find and read plays independently and determine if there are good scenes in those plays which they might enjoy performing. A day set aside on the calendar will be used to discuss all of those scenes, choose scene partners and then send the students on their way with a piece of text that they respond to. Guidelines for choosing scenes will be made clear in the rubric, which will be passed out to each student.

Once the students have chosen their text they will still be required to memorize, score and perform it, just like the other performances. However, this time they will also be expected to meet outside of class with their partner(s) for at least 3 hours of rehearsal time (with written proof of that time in an acting log signed by both students), and none of it needs to be time with the instructor. This change is meant especially to build on course objectives #2 and #5. The students should be at a point where they can work with a text independently of the instructor and diagnose problems and work on them alone. The addition of the acting log is more for the student’s benefit than the instructor’s. In previous scenes a lack of rehearsal time will have been evident, as it will be in the final scene as well. But I felt that, since a goal of this assignment is to have the students begin to claim a process or a craft, having them document the time and effort would be beneficial for them to see that they can work and learn without a teacher holding their hand. This change in rehearsal documentation was informed by my personal experience in the advanced acting Meisner technique class with Andy Felt, and I have found it beneficial as a student to see written documentation of the work I put in to that class.

The final scene, like the last two performances, is worth 10% of the final grade. The justification is the same as the justification for the point value of The Shape of Things scene and the
open scene. This brings the total percentage of the final grade devoted to public performances in class to 35%, which does not include the portion of the Participation grade which is based on rehearsing and acting exercises done in class. As I have mentioned, I find it important in an acting class to make acting the focus. It is not a lecture-based class. I am not interested in having the students memorize names and dates of acting teachers and methods or in sitting down and having me speak to them for an hour about what acting is. All of that information is readily available. Although there is some objective testing of knowledge, the fundamental difference between an acting class and most other undergraduate courses is that it is highly experiential. The class is the experience and the experience is the class. This is the only way I can see to “teach” acting.

The final scene should build on all five course objectives, and should add a level of difficulty from The Shape of Things scene in that the students will still have to be accountable for an entire text and incorporate the through-line, the super objective, and tactics. Additionally, they will not have the support of the entire class working on the same text, they will all be rehearsing scenes from different plays.

The portion of assignment where I have the students pick their own scenes is derived mostly from Jeff Cordell's Acting I class. This idea does occur in An Actor Prepares as the very first assignment. “We were excited as we waited for our first lesson with the Director, Tortsov, today. But he came into our class only to make the unexpected announcement that in order to become better acquainted with us, he wished us to give a performance in which we should act bits from plays chosen by us” (Stanislavski, Actor 1). However, this does not really return. In Jeff’s class, we were to find our own scenes and then “pitch” them to the class. I have added the reading cards as assignments with point values to help raise the stakes of finding those scenes.

**Reading Cards (See Appendix G)**

The students will be expected to read two outside plays (with a suggested focus on
contemporary plays and playwrights) and fill out a form detailing the name of the play, the author, a character breakdown, a one sentence plot summary, and potential scenes for the final performance. As mentioned in the syllabus, this is not a dramatic literature course. However, the best way to ensure that the students want to perform the final scenes is to have them go out and find scenes that they enjoyed reading. Stanislavski put it best when he wrote, “[N]ever allow yourself externally to portray anything that you have not inwardly experienced and which is not even interesting to you” (Actor 31).

The reading cards are given the smallest weight on the grading scale (2.5% each) because they are geared toward having the students do what they want to do. If the students do not want to engage with the class and the material, they will not do the reading and they will not have really wanted to perform a final scene anyway. If, however, a student is excited about the final scene and is excited by the fact that they have some say over what their final scene will be, they will do the reading cards with no qualms. In all reality, the reading cards can be seen as a graded pre-requisite for the final scene.

**Quiz #1 (See Appendix H)**

This quiz will be a comprehension test on *The Shape of Things*. Most of the questions are objective, though questions #6 and #7 ask for the student's favorite character and scene and why. These questions are important for much the same reason as the reading cards. They help the student formulate opinions about the text. From those opinions will come a desire to play this or that character or play this or that scene. And this desire will hopefully translate into a willingness to work.

The questions purposefully avoid things which can be learned on sites such as Wikipedia but which are integral to the play and could not be easily missed upon a careful reading. The quiz is assigned the second lowest percentage total (5%) for much the same reasons as the reading cards, and may be seen as a graded pre-requisite for *The Shape of Things* scene.

**Quiz #2 (See Appendix I)**

This quiz will be based largely on the discussion held in class and the assigned reading (*Respect*
for Acting by Uta Hagen), as well as handouts which will be distributed in class. Students will be
expected to claim objective knowledge of the concepts covered in class, including a definition of
acting, who Uta Hagen and Constantin Stanislavski are (at their most basic), the components of a
scored script, the difference between the mind, the will, and the feelings and how these “inner motive
forces” respond to one another, and what a conditioning force and a substitution are. They will also be
asked to subjectively name, describe and provide examples of their three favorite object exercises from
Uta Hagen’s book. This quiz should be easy for any student who has attended class and engaged in
discussions and exercises. The final portion of the quiz will ask the students to score a scene from
David Auburn’s Proof.

As the only other play which will be common to every student, Proof requires some explanation
as well. It is, like The Shape of Things, about young adults in academia. It is a play about Catherine, the
daughter of a famous mathematician who went crazy at the end of his life. Upon his death, it is
discovered that someone in the house wrote a revolutionary mathematical proof, and neither
Catherine's sister nor her newfound lover (and former Ph.D student of her father's) believe that she
wrote it. The scene contained in the quiz is the first encounter between Catherine and Hal (the Ph.D
student) setting up both their eventual romance and distrust of one another.

The scoring portion is important to me as a test of what the entire class has been focused on.
That is how to turn acting theory (actions, objectives, obstacles, given circumstances, units etc.) into a
repeatable, quality performance. Having them score a scene with a time limit will test their knowledge
of what the components of a scored scene are and what the strongest choices can be, and will be a
useful teaching assessment tool in terms of measuring learning outcomes.

The quiz is worth 10% of the final grade for the class, and in all reality may be seen as a portion
of the Participation grade. Many times I have found that until I am forced to articulate something in
either words or in writing I cannot claim it as knowledge. The quiz is a reinforcement tool to help the
students claim the concepts covered through experience as more tangible, academic knowledge of a craft. It is also a direct assessment tool for me to see which of the concepts on the quiz were effectively communicated to the students, then decoded and put into use, and then re-encoded and communicated back on paper. It will also yield a quantifiable measurement of teaching effectiveness which none of the other assignments in the course can truly claim to yield.

I should justify these written quizzes, since none of the acting texts read in preparation for this study contain any mention of a written quiz. A part of the absence of quizzes in those texts has to do with the fact that the students in the classes in these books were, more often than not, people who had already spent much of their lives acting, and the goal was simply to gain more training. It is also true that none of the acting classes in these books occurred at institutions that labelled the students' success with a letter grade, so there was no need for written documentation of what was learned. When Stanislavksi wanted to test his students knowledge and opinions of *Othello* in *Creating a Role* he simple asked, “Since you know the play, tell me its contents” (125). When Stella Adler wanted to test whether or not her students understood the concept of “Justification” she told them to do it. “Give me five reasons why you complimented somebody, why you left your job, why you helped someone on the street, why the man crossed the street so fast, why the mother left the package at the department store” (Adler 136). There was no need to have them write these things down on a quiz because there was no need to quantify the knowledge.

Certainly this sentiment is a large reason why Participation is weighted so heavily in this course design. But I have discussed my rationale for including the quizzes, and they do form an important part of the course design.

**Participation (See Appendix J)**

I have created a detailed rubric of what participation means for me and for this class. I find it important to give weight to participation in a class which must be based more on experiential learning
rather than objective knowledge. At the same time, since so much weight is given to participation, I felt it important to detail exactly and specifically what participation means. Otherwise, participation becomes a 45% chunk of the grade without clear guidelines.

There are 28 class periods, and each class period is worth 15 points (1.5% of the final grade). Additionally, participation is divided into three categories.

- Attendance
- Punctuality, Preparedness and Daily Assignments
- General Willingness to Work and Discuss.

For each class period, students will receive 5 points for attending. They will receive 5 points for arriving on time and having completed the assignment for the day (which may include readings, what I call a “5 thoughts” paper where they turn in 5 thoughts for the reading that day, memorization, etc.). And they will receive 5 points for being active in discussions and willing to do the activities which I lead them through during class.

I find it very important when assigning such weight to a participation grade to be constantly informing the students of how they are doing in that area, much the same way I would return other graded work and inform the students of their grades on other assignments. In this spirit, I would post the students’ weekly participation grades to the online course portal (Moodle at Marietta College) every week at the end of the week. Students with a perfect participation grade for the week would see 30/30 for that Friday.

This comes primarily from my experiences with acting teachers at Marietta College. Participation has been heavily weighted in all of the acting classes I have worked with (as either a student or a teaching assistant), going as high as 70% for an advanced acting class in the Meisner method. Portions of my grading breakdown are my own variations. The “5 thoughts” papers are of my own invention (though they certainly have their basis in any number of other assignments in multiple
undergraduate courses whose purpose was to help the students have predetermined thoughts with which to engage in discussion). The weekly notification of their participation grades is a variation on the same idea that Andy Felt used in the advanced acting Meisner class where he would e-mail us our participation grades (out of 5 points) for the week every week. I enjoy the transparency of that method, especially in contrast to what has often been my perception in other courses where participation seems an ambiguous category used at the end of the semester to increase the grades of students whom the instructor felt were more engaged with the material and to dock those students who seemed disinterested.

**Required Attendance at Departmental Productions**

There is one assignment which does not appear on my syllabus which will be surprising to many familiar with undergraduate acting classes. I do not require the students to attend performances of that institution’s formal departmental productions. I have purposefully avoided designing these assignments into the course because this course design aspires to be a template for an acting class at any institution. At any institution where admission was not free to the students I might shy away from requiring attendance. At any institution where admission was free it would depend on the season and the plays being done. I might avoid requiring attendance if the entire season was full of avant-garde, surrealist theatre as this class is focused on modern realism. In any case, if it is so desired, the required attendance may easily be folded into the participation grade by incorporating a writing response or graded discussion of the productions into the course calendar and basing the participation grade that week partially on whether or not the students attended the production and did the related assignment or discussed in class.

The following pages contain appendices with the syllabus, calendar and rubrics for each of the graded assignments which have just been discussed. Save for Appendix J (the reflective log kept of the Acting I Teaching Assistantship), these materials would all be passed out to the students.
THEA 106: Acting I

What is this class?
This introductory level acting course will expose the students (hereafter, actors) to some of the fundamental aspects of performing on stage as well as conventions of the contemporary theatre world. We will be exploring various definitions and methods of realistic acting techniques, specifically methods developed by Constantin Stanislavski and Uta Hagen. Actors will read and discuss texts by these masters and execute various acting exercises developed by them. In addition, actors will be required to complete 4 public performances in order to practice and work with some of the core concepts of acting including, but not limited to, analyzing and scoring a scene effectively, identifying strong choices for live performance, creating a character different from themselves and executing a live performance. In addition, actors will be expected to keep up on class readings and participate in discussions, acting exercises, improvisations, voice and body work, ensemble building and theatre warm-ups and games. This course assumes that students enter the classroom with varying levels of experience and raw skill. Course objectives and grades for performances will be measured by progress, commitment to the work, and willingness to engage the class rather than natural skill or the instructor's aesthetic opinion.

Upon the completion of this course actors should be able to
1. Create a character separate from themselves.
2. Rehearse a dramatic text independently with a scene partner.
3. Score a script by identifying actions, objectives, obstacles, and given circumstances in a given scene from a contemporary acting text.
4. Speak in public with confidence.
5. Claim as knowledge the acting techniques and exercises outlined by Uta Hagen as they developed from the Stanislavski system.

Materials required
The Shape of Things by Neil Labute
Respect for Acting by Uta Hagen

Grading breakdown
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>450 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monologue</td>
<td>50 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Scene</td>
<td>100 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Shape of Things Scene</td>
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<td>Final Scene</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Card #2</td>
<td>25 (2.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz #1 (Shape of Things Reading Quiz)</td>
<td>50 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz #2 (Acting Quiz, history, terms, score a scene)</td>
<td>100 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total points</td>
<td>1000 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A (100-93); A- (92-90); B+ (89-87); B (86-83); B- (82-80); C+ (79-77); C (76-73); C- (72-70); D+ (69-67); D (66-63); D- (62-60); F (59-0)
Participation (450 points, 45%)  
You cannot participate if you do not attend class. Participation is vital to an acting class. Without fellow actors we cannot collaborate together on the stage. There are 30 class periods in the semester, and each class period is worth 15 participation points. 5 points will be awarded for attendance. If you arrive to class within a reasonable amount of time, you will receive 5 points for the day with no further obligation. This means that, if you do not miss a day of class, you will receive 150 points simply for attending. If, along with attending class, you are prepared, on time and have completed the assignment (reading, writing, acting or otherwise), you will receive another 5 points for that class period. Please see the calendar for each day's assignment. Finally, we WILL be up on stage moving around and using our bodies and voices during almost every class period, and we WILL be discussing every day. If you engage and are willing to do the work and exercises in class and if you participate in the discussions every class, you will receive another 5 points for that class period.

You will see on the calendar that a number of days have the assignment “5 Thoughts Paper” due. This means that you are required to bring in a written document with five thoughts from that day's reading. Do not stress out over these assignments, just come up with five things to say about the reading and write them down legibly on something you can turn in.

You may miss 2 class periods without penalty. Beyond that you will lose 15 points for every class missed. If you need to miss class and have a legitimate excuse, contact the instructor via e-mail, phone call, text, note-on-door etc. Excused absences will not count against your two unexcused absences.

Every week the instructor will e-mail you with a grade between 0 and 30 to inform you of the grade you received for that week. If you attend class on time both days of that week, complete the assignments, and bring a cheerful and willing disposition to each class, you will receive 30 points per week and 450 points for the course.

The Monologue Assignment (50 points, 5%)  
The monologue assignment will culminate in a live performance for a grade in front of the class. Gender-neutral monologues will be distributed and chosen among the students at the date indicated by the calendar. The monologue is worth 50 points, or 5% of your grade. A more detailed rubric will be distributed in class. The purpose of the monologue assignment is to introduce the student to the fundamentals of realistic acting including given circumstances, actions, objectives and obstacles, among other concepts.

Each actor in the class will be paired with a scene partner. The scene partner's obligations are to rehearse with the actor who is performing the monologue and to be on stage for that actor on the day of the final performance. Their performance as a scene partner will not be graded, but a lack of cooperation with the actor who is performing will affect the partner's monologue assignment grade.

The Open Scene Assignment (100 points, 10%)  
The open scene assignment will culminate in a live performance for a grade in front of the class. Scenes will be distributed, discussed and chosen at a date to be determined by the calendar. The open scene is worth 100 points, or 10% of your grade. A more detailed rubric will be distributed in class. The purpose of the open scene assignment is to strengthen and emphasize the concepts introduced in the monologue assignment and introduce students to working with a scene partner.

The Shape of Things Quiz #1 (50 points, 5%) and Scene Assignment (100 points, 10%)  
Each actor will read The Shape of Things by Neil Labute. WARNING: This play contains adult content, scenes and situations. You will NOT be required to perform a scene that you are
uncomfortable with. If these things make you uncomfortable reading the play, please come to the instructor to make other arrangements. This is college-level theatre and good theatre is conflict. If you expect that you may find this material uncomfortable, I encourage you to pre-read the play before the drop period to determine whether or not to remain in the course. If other arrangements need to be made for you it is your responsibility to bring that to the attention of the instructor at the earliest possible date.

Actors will take a quiz on *The Shape of Things* worth 50 points (or 5% of your grade) prior to discussing and choosing scenes. *The Shape of Things* assignment will culminate in a live performance for a grade in front of the class. Scenes will be discussed, chosen and performed on the dates indicated by the calendar. The scene is worth 100 points, or 10% of your grade. A detailed rubric for this assignment will be distributed during class. The purpose of *The Shape of Things* scene is to build on and continue the concepts of the monologue and open scene assignments in addition to introducing actors to working with and being accountable to a full play text and working on the same text with the entire ensemble.

**Reading Cards (25 points each, 2.5% each)**

Each actor will read at least two other plays in search of a scene to pitch for the final scene. This is not a dramatic literature course, but it is a vital part of acting to expose yourself to other pieces of actable text. Upon confirming the plays to be read with the instructor, actors will fill out index cards (rubric to follow at a later date) proving that the plays have been read and indicating potential scenes to be performed for their final scene. Each card is worth 25 points (or 2.5% of your grade).

**The Final Scene Assignment (100 points, 10%)**

Using the scenes isolated by the actors' reading cards, final scenes will be discussed and chosen at the dates indicated by the calendar. The final scene will culminate in a live performance for a grade in front of the class during the final exam period for this class which is ____________. The final scene is worth 100 points (or 10% of your grade). A more detailed rubric will be distributed in class. The purpose of the final scene is to tie in all of the concepts of previous assignments and to introduce actors to being accountable to an entire script and working independently of the ensemble.

**Quiz #2 (100 points, 10%)**

This quiz will be administered on the final class period day and will cover the key terms, histories and concepts which will have been discussed throughout the semester. It WILL also contain a scene to be scored. The quiz is worth 100 points (or 10% of your grade).

**Expectations and Decorum**

This is an acting class, and in order to fully participate and engage you must always be ready to act. Acting involves flexibility of body, voice and mind. Flexibility of voice means that gum, tobacco in all forms and anything else which would inhibit the actors from using their voice and their mouth fully are prohibited. Flexibility of body means that, unless it is a specific costume for a performance or rehearsal, actors should arrive to class in comfortable clothing and footwear (no sandals in class!). The rule of thumb is, if you would not be comfortable rolling around on the floor in your clothing, don't wear it to class. Flexibility of mind means that you should be prepared to engage with the activities for each day's class period, including committing fully to the acting exercises, engaging in lively discussion of the material read. It also means turning off the cell phone or any other potential distraction for the class period. Finally, you will be working directly with multiple scene partners on your assignments, as well as with each other in various class activities. Respect everyone's time and
effort by being punctual, prepared and willing to discuss and adapt.

**Academic Dishonesty and Intellectual Property**

Academic dishonesty within the academic community is a very serious matter, because dishonesty destroys the basic trust necessary for a healthy education environment. Academic dishonesty is any treatment or representation of work as if one were fully responsible for it, when it is in fact the work of another person. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, theft, or improper manipulation of laboratory or research data or theft of services. A substantiated case of academic dishonesty may result in disciplinary action, including a failing grade on the project, a failing grade in the course, or expulsion from the College. All work produced in this course is considered “public” and is used for purposes of teaching and evaluation. This includes the use of your work as a model for current and future students/courses and the submission of your work to an online plagiarism detection service. In cases where student work is made available publicly, the instructor will be sensitive to maintain anonymity where it is appropriate.

**Disabilities Services**

Students who believe that they may need accommodations due to a documented disability should contact the Academic Resource Center (Andrews Hall, Third floor, 376-4700) and the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. You must meet with the ARC staff to verify your eligibility for any accommodation and for academic assistance.
## Appendix B - Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading Due</th>
<th>Paperwork Due</th>
<th>Scenework Due</th>
<th>Class Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-Jan</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Intro, syllabus, name games, ensemble-building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-Jan</td>
<td><em>Respect for Acting</em>, Introduction</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>RfA discussion, pick monologues, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-Jan</td>
<td>RfA Chapters 1,2&amp;3</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>RfA discussion, monologue work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-Jan</td>
<td>RfA Chapters 4</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>Monologues Memorized</td>
<td>RfA discussion, monologue work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-Jan</td>
<td>RfA Chapter 5,6&amp;7</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>RfA discussion, monologue work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Feb</td>
<td>RfA Chapter 8</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>Meeting w/instructor completed</td>
<td>RfA discussion, monologue work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Feb</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Monologue Final Performance</td>
<td>Watch and perform monologues,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-Feb</td>
<td>RfA Chapters 9&amp;10 and Reading Card Play #1</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Discuss plays and RfA, discuss and pick open scenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-Feb</td>
<td>RfA Part II Intro and Chapters 11 &amp; 12</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>RfA discussion, open scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-Feb</td>
<td>RfA Chapter 13 &amp; 14</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>RfA discussion, open scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-Feb</td>
<td>RfA Chapters 15, 16, 17 &amp; 18</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>Open Scenes Memorized</td>
<td>RfA discussion, open scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-Feb</td>
<td>RfA Chapter 19 &amp; 20</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>RfA discussion, open scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-Feb</td>
<td>RfA Part III Introduction and Chapters 21 &amp; 22</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>Meeting w/instructor completed</td>
<td>RfA discussion, open scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/1/2012</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>Scored Script</td>
<td>Open Scene Final Performance</td>
<td>Watch and perform scenes, discuss.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: *RfA* stands for *Respect for Acting*.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Task Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-Mar</td>
<td>All of <em>The Shape of Things</em></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Quiz #1, Shape of Things discussion, pick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-Mar</td>
<td>RfA Chapter 23</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>RfA discussion, Shape scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-Mar</td>
<td>RfA Chapters 24, 25 &amp; 26</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>RfA discussion, Shape scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-Mar</td>
<td>RfA Chapter 27</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>RfA discussion, Shape scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-Mar</td>
<td>RfA Chapters 28, 29 &amp; 30</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>RfA discussion, Shape scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-Mar</td>
<td>RfA Chapter 31</td>
<td>5 Thoughts</td>
<td>RfA discussion, Shape scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Apr</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Scored Script</td>
<td><em>Shape of Things</em> Scene Final Performance Watch and perform scenes, discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Apr</td>
<td>Reading Card Play #2</td>
<td>Reading Card #2</td>
<td>Discuss all plays from reading cards, pick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-Apr</td>
<td>Full Play of individual Final Scene</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Final scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Apr</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Final scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-Apr</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Final scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-Apr</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Final scene work, activities, discuss quiz #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-Apr</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Final scene work, activities, review for quiz #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-Apr</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Quiz #2, Final scene work, activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Scored Script and Acting Log</td>
<td>Final Scene Performance Perform final scenes and discuss</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C Monologue (50 points)

Memorization (10 points)
- Obviously unfamiliar, need the script in front of you.
- Somewhat familiar, still on book.
- Familiar, but on book.
- Appears mostly memorized, but book is on stage.
- No book on stage, but obviously unfamiliar, started over due to lack of memorization
- No book on stage, somewhat unfamiliar, got through it with significant paraphrasing and missed portions
- No book on stage, somewhat unfamiliar, got all the major ideas out.
- No book on stage, some paraphrasing.
- No book on stage, almost word-perfect.
- No book on stage, word perfect.

Worksheet (Objective, Action, Obstacle, GC's, Scene Partner) (15 points)

My name is _____________. My scene partner's name is ________________. We are (in/ at/ on etc.) (place) , It is (time and date) , I want _________________. _____________ is preventing me from getting that. In order to overcome this obstacle I am going to ________________ my scene partner. Each blank is worth 2 points. 1 point for completing the whole assignment.

Outside Rehearsal Time (15 points)

Sign up for a 15 minute time-slot with the instructor. Completing this meeting results in the full 15 points. If the actors arrange a meeting time with the instructor and fail to attend that meeting they will receive a 5 point penalty and scheduling priority will be given to other students.

Performance (10 points)

Completing the performance. 5 points will be awarded for actors who attend to scenic elements (costume, props, scenery) to a reasonable degree. The remaining 5 points will be based on individual goals developed between instructor and actor. If it is evident that the actor has put in rehearsal time on these goals, the remaining 5 points will be awarded.

Scene Partners (Variable)

Every actor will be paired with another actor. These partners will serve as silent, on-stage scene partners for each other in rehearsals and in performance. Actors who fail to cooperate reasonably as partners will have their monologue assignment grades reduced by an appropriate amount.
Appendix D Open Scene (100 points)

Memorization (10 points)
- Obviously unfamiliar, need the script in front of you.
- Somewhat familiar, still on book.
- Familiar, but on book.
- Appears mostly memorized, but book is on stage.
- No book on stage, but obviously unfamiliar, started over due to lack of memorization
- No book on stage, somewhat unfamiliar, got through it with significant paraphrasing and missed portions
- No book on stage, somewhat unfamiliar, got all the major ideas out.
- No book on stage, some paraphrasing.
- No book on stage, almost word-perfect.
- No book on stage, word perfect.

Scored Script (30 points)
The score for the script needs to have clear delineations of beats, and for every beat the details which were included in the monologue worksheet (GC’s, action, objective, obstacle etc.) must be filled out. 15 Points will be awarded for having completed the assignment. The remaining 15 points will be determined based on the quality of the work.

Outside Rehearsal Time (30 points)
Sign up for a 30 minute time-slot with the instructor. Completing this meeting results in the full 30 points. If the actors arrange a meeting time with the instructor and fail to attend that meeting they will receive a 10 point penalty and scheduling priority will be given to other students.

Performance (30 points)
Completing the performance. 15 points will be awarded for actors who attend to scenic elements (costume, props, scenery) to a reasonable degree. The remaining 15 points will be based on individual goals developed between instructor and actors. If it is evident that the actors have put in rehearsal time on these goals, the remaining 15 points will be awarded.
Appendix E *The Shape of Things* Scene (100 points)

Memorization (10 points)
- Obviously unfamiliar, need the script in front of you.
- Somewhat familiar, still on book.
- Familiar, but on book.
- Appears mostly memorized, but book is on stage.
- No book on stage, but obviously unfamiliar, started over due to lack of memorization
- No book on stage, somewhat unfamiliar, got through it with significant paraphrasing and missed portions
- No book on stage, somewhat unfamiliar, got all the major ideas out.
- No book on stage, some paraphrasing.
- No book on stage, almost word-perfect.
- No book on stage, word perfect.

Scored Script (30 points)
The score for the script needs to have clear delineations of beats, and for every beat the details which were included in the monologue worksheet (GC’s, action, objective, obstacle etc.) must be filled out. 15 Points will be awarded for having completed the assignment. The remaining 15 points will be determined based on the quality of the work.

Outside Rehearsal Time (30 points)
Sign up for a 30 minute time-slot with the instructor. Completing this meeting results in the full 30 points. If the actors arrange a meeting time with the instructor and fail to attend that meeting they will receive a 10 point penalty and scheduling priority will be given to other students.

Performance (30 points)
Completing the performance. 15 points will be awarded for actors who attend to scenic elements (costume, props, scenery) to a reasonable degree. The remaining 15 points will be based on individual goals developed between instructor and actors. If it is evident that the actors have put in rehearsal time on these goals, the remaining 15 points will be awarded. These goals may vary from assignment to assignment and from actor to actor. They may be as practical as finding adequate props or as conceptual as incorporating the “will” more in the scene. The actors will, in the outside rehearsal times with the instructor, develop and become aware of these individual goals.
Appendix F  Final Scene (100 points)

Memorization (10 points)

- Obviously unfamiliar, need the script in front of you.
- Somewhat familiar, still on book.
- Familiar, but on book.
- Appears mostly memorized, but book is on stage.
- No book on stage, but obviously unfamiliar, started over due to lack of memorization
- No book on stage, somewhat unfamiliar, got through it with significant paraphrasing and missed portions
- No book on stage, somewhat unfamiliar, got all the major ideas out.
- No book on stage, some paraphrasing.
- No book on stage, almost word-perfect.
- No book on stage, word perfect.

Scored Script (30 points)

The score for the script needs to have clear delineations of beats, and for every beat the details which were included in the monologue worksheet (GC’s, action, objective, obstacle etc.) must be filled out. 15 Points will be awarded for having completed the assignment. The remaining 15 points will be determined based on the quality of the work.

Outside Rehearsal Time (30 points)

For the final scene actors will not be required to sign up for a time with the instructor, though they may do so if they wish. The outside rehearsal time requirement will be completed as follows. Written proof of rehearsal time detailing the exact times and date rehearsed, space used, what was done and signed by all scene partners. 90 minutes of rehearsal time must be accounted for. For every 3 minutes of rehearsal you will receive 1 point. If 90 minutes of rehearsal are achieved, the full 30 points will be awarded. It is highly recommended that actors split this 90 minutes into 3 or more rehearsals.

Performance (30 points)

Completing the performance. 15 points will be awarded for actors who attend to scenic elements (costume, props, scenery) to a reasonable degree. The remaining 15 points will be based on individual goals developed between instructor and actors. If it is evident that the actors have put in rehearsal time on these goals, the remaining 15 points will be awarded.
Appendix G Reading Cards (25 points each)

Time Period
The acting “style” we are exploring is contemporary realism, so you should try to find plays from at least the 20th century, if not from the 1950 onward. Classic plays like the Greeks, Shakespeare, Chekov etc. while fantastic to read, are going to complicate the assignment with topics which we will have not covered. Try, as much as possible, to find more contemporary plays. Playwrights such as Neil Labute, David Auburn, Eric Bogosian, David Mamet, David Lindsay-Abaire and Sarah Ruhl may be good places to start. See the instructor if you are having difficulty finding plays.

Requirements

Title (5 points): (The title of the play)
Author (5 points): (The author. Include the translator/adaptor if applicable)
Character Breakdown (5 points): (Give at least the names, genders and ages (if discernible) of each character in the play)
One Sentence Plot Summary (5 points): (Simple, summarize the plot in one line. Don't be afraid of spoiling endings or surprises, just tell us what happens.)
Potential Scenes (5 points): (Find substantial scenes between two or three characters that you or someone else might be interested in playing. Find at least three.)

Each category is worth 5 points. If the category is fully complete, you will receive the full 5 points. If every category is fully complete, you will receive the full 25 points. Please see the example below.

Example

Title: The Shape of Things
Author: Neil LaBute
Character Breakdown: Adam, male, an undergraduate student. Evelyn, female, a graduate art student. Jenny, female, an undergraduate student. Phillip, male, an undergraduate student.
One Sentence Plot Summary: Evelyn seduces Adam into changing his lifestyle and giving up his friends as a part of her graduate art thesis in literally “sculpting” a new person.
Potential Scenes: Opening scene between Adam and Evelyn (pages 1-9), Confrontation between Adam and Phillip (pages 48-58), Final scene between Adam and Evelyn (pages 80-88).
Appendix H

The Shape of Things Quiz

Name: _____________________

Answer the following questions with as much detail as you can provide. Complete sentences are not necessary.

1. What is Evelyn planning to do to the statue at the museum where she meets Adam for the first time?
   She is going to vandalize it by spray-painting it. The private parts of the statue's subject had been covered in plaster and Evelyn is planning on painting a crude drawing of those private parts on top of the censored material.

2. What piece of clothing does Adam discard (to Phillip's amazement) at Evelyn's suggestion?
   Adam discards an old ratty jacket which he had worn for years and which Phillip had suggested he throw away multiple times.

3. When Adam introduces Evelyn to Jenny and Phillip for the first time, what is the outcome?
   The first time Evelyn meets Jenny and Phillip, Phillip and Evelyn get into a heated debate over the merits of the vandalism which Evelyn committed. Evelyn had not been caught, and the debate gets so heated that this information comes out.

4. Name three items from Evelyn's exhibit.
   An engagement ring from Adam proposing to her. A video tape of one of their love-making sessions. Adam's jacket which he had thrown away.

5. Name three specific things Adam changes about himself at Evelyn's suggestions (not including the item mentioned in question #2)
   Adam gets a nose job. Adam gets contact lenses in the place of his glasses. Adam gets a haircut.

6. Who is your favorite character and why?

7. What is your favorite scene and why?

8. What is the name of the college these characters attend?
   Mercy College.

9. What does Evelyn whisper into Adam's ear after one of their nights together?
   The audience does not hear it, but at the end of the play Evelyn informs Adam that that was the only thing about their relationship which was true.

10. Who is the playwright of this play?
    Neil LaBute.
Appendix I

Quiz #2

Name: ____________________

Answer the following questions with as much detail as you can provide. Complete sentences are not necessary.

1. What is acting? (10 points)
“Living truthfully under imaginary circumstances” (or ‘extraordinary imaginary circumstances’).

2. Who is Constantin Stanislavski and how did he contribute to the art of acting? (5 points)

3. Who is Uta Hagen and how did she contribute to the art of acting? (5 points)
Acting teacher, wrote *Respect for Acting*, developed object exercises to literally exercise areas of artistic expression (concentration, imagination, sense of truth, objective, action)

4. What are the components of a scored script? (5 points)
At minimum… Action, Objective, Obstacle, Beat Marks.

5. Name your three favorite object exercises, explain them, and why they are your favorites. (15 points)
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

6. What are the three motive forces? (15 points)
   ○ Feelings (Emotion)
   ○ Will (Action)
   ○ Mind (Thought)

7. What is a “conditioning force”? Give two examples. (10)
A “condition” that you put onto a character as a part of the given circumstances of the scene which affects that character's physicality, voice, and/or mental faculties. Externals can range from coldness to drunkenness to a sense of immediacy, from a costume piece to a physical characteristic or deportment.

8. What is a substitution? Give an example of something you might use a substitution for in a role, but DO NOT tell me what your potential substitution would be. (5 points)
A substitution is a parallel from your own (the actor’s) life that you use to help yourself relate to the given circumstances of “your” (the character’s) life. Substitutions are not meant to be public knowledge, nor are they supposed to literally take the place of the scene’s given circumstances, rather they are gateways to understanding the situation until the given circumstances can have been sufficiently endowed within the actor.
Score the following scene from *Proof* by David Auburn, taking into account the following given circumstances. Catherine is the daughter of one of the most famous mathematicians of the 20th century, Robert. Robert, despite his genius, spent the last years of his life being taken care of by Catherine (a mathematical genius in her own right, though nobody knows that) and literally going insane. During his final years Robert filled hundreds of notebooks with inane notes and scribblings. Hal, one of Robert's students and now a professor himself, is determined to go through all of that material to see if Robert made one final contribution to the field. This scene finds Catherine having just come out of a hallucination where she speaks with her father and is interrupted late at night by Hal who has been working in Robert's study for hours.

(CATHERINE sits alone. Noise off. HAL enters, semi-hip clothes. He carries a backpack and a jacket, folded. He lets the door go and it bangs shut. CATHERINE sits up with a jolt.)

CATHERINE: What?

HAL: Oh, God. Sorry—did I wake you?

CATHERINE: What?

HAL: Were you asleep?

CATHERINE: You scared me, for Chrissake. What are you doing?

HAL: I'm sorry. I didn't realize it had gotten so late. I'm done for the night.

CATHERINE: Good.

HAL: Drinking alone?

(CATHERINE realizes she is holding a champagne bottle. She puts it down quickly.)

CATHERINE: Yes.

HAL: Champagne, huh?

CATHERINE: Yes.

HAL: Celebrating?

CATHERINE: No. I just like champagne.

HAL: It's festive.

CATHERINE: What?

HAL: Festive. (He makes an awkward “party” gesture.)
CATHERINE: Do you want some?

HAL: Sure.

CATHERINE: (Gives him the bottle.) I’m done. You can take the rest with you.

HAL: Oh. No thanks.

CATHERINE: Take it, I’m done.

HAL: No, I shouldn’t. I’m driving. Well I can let myself out.

CATHERINE: Good.

HAL: When should I come back?

CATHERINE: Come back?

HAL: Yeah. I’m nowhere near finished. Maybe tomorrow?

CATHERINE: We have a funeral tomorrow.

HAL: God, you’re right, I’m sorry I was going to attend, if that’s all right.

CATHERINE: Yes.

HAL: What about Sunday? Will you be around?

CATHERINE: You’ve had three days.

HAL: I’d love to get in some more time up there.

CATHERINE: How much longer do you need?

HAL: Another week. At least.

CATHERINE: Are you joking?

HAL: No. Do you know how much stuff there is?

CATHERINE: A week?

HAL: I know you don’t need anybody in your hair right now. Look, I spent the last couple days getting everything sorted out. It’s mostly notebooks. He dated them all now that I’ve got them in order I don’t have to work here. I could take some stuff home, read it, bring it back.
CATHERINE: No.

HAL: I’ll be careful.

CATHERINE: My father wouldn’t want anything moved and I don’t want anything to leave this house.

HAL: Then I should work here. I’ll stay out of the way.

CATHERINE: You’re wasting your time.

HAL: Someone needs to go through your dad’s papers.

CATHERINE: There’s nothing up there. It’s garbage.

HAL: There are a hundred and three notebooks.

CATHERINE: I’ve looked at those. It’s gibberish.

HAL: Someone should read them.

CATHERINE: He was crazy.

HAL: Yes, but he wrote them.

CATHERINE: He was a graphomaniac, Harold. Do you know what that is?

HAL: I know. He wrote compulsively. Call me Hal.

CATHERINE: There’s no connection between the ideas. There’s no ideas. It’s like a monkey at a typewriter. A hundred and three notebooks full of bullshit.

HAL: Let’s make sure they’re bullshit.

CATHERINE: I’m sure.

HAL: I’m prepared to look at every page. Are you?

CATHERINE: No. I’m not crazy.

HAL: Well, I’m gonna be late . . . Some friends of mine are in this band. They’re playing at a bar up on Diversey. Way down the bill, they’re probably going on around two, two-thirty. I said I’d be there.

CATHERINE: Great.

HAL: They’re all in the math department. They’re really good. They have this great
song – you’d like it – called “I” – lower-case I. they just stand there and don’t play anything for three minutes.

CATHERINE: “Imaginary Number.”

HAL: It’s a math joke. You see why they’re way down the bill.

CATHERINE: Long drive to see some nerds in a band.

HAL: God I hate when people say that. It is not that long a drive.

CATHERINE: So they are nerds.

HAL: Oh they’re raging geeks. But they’re geeks who, you know, can dress themselves . . . hold down a job at a major university . . . Some of them have switched from glasses to contacts. They plays sports, they play in a band, they get laid surprisingly often, so in that sense they sort of make you question the whole set of terms: geek, nerd, wonk, dweeb, dilbert, paste-eater.

CATHERINE: You’re in this band, aren’t you?


CATHERINE: No thanks.

HAL: All right. Look, Catherine, Monday: what do you say?

CATHERINE: Don’t you have a job?

HAL: Yeah, I have a full teaching load this quarter plus my own work.

CATHERINE: Plus band practice.

HAL: I don’t have time to do this but I’m going to. If you’ll let me. I loved your dad. I don’t believe a mind like his can just shut down. He had lucid moments. He had a lucid year, a whole year four years ago.

CATHERINE: It wasn’t a year. It was more like nine months.

HAL: A school year. He was advising students . . . I was stalled on my Ph. D. I was this close to quitting. I met with your dad and he put me on the right track with my research. I owe him.

CATHERINE: Sorry.

HAL: Look. Let me—You’re twenty-five, right?
CATHERINE: How old are you?

HAL: It doesn’t matter. Listen.

CATHERINE: Fuck you, how old are you?

HAL: I’m twenty-eight, all right? When your dad was younger than both of us, he made major contributions to three fields: game theory, algebraic geometry, and nonlinear operator theory. Most of us never get our heads around one. He basically invented the mathematical techniques for studying rational behavior, and he gave the astrophysicists plenty to work over too. Okay?

CATHERINE: Don’t lecture me.

HAL: I’m not. I’m telling you, if I came up with one-tenth of the shit your dad produced, I could write my own ticket to any math department in the country.
Appendix J Participation (450 points)
As per the syllabus, every class period is worth 15 points. You may miss two class periods without penalty. If you need to miss class and have a legitimate excuse, contact the instructor via e-mail, phone call, text, note-on-door etc. Excused absences will not count against your two unexcused absences.

Attendance (5 points per class period)
If you arrive to class within a reasonable amount of time, you will receive 5 points for the day with no further obligation. This means that, if you do not miss a day of class, you will receive 150 points simply for attending.

Punctuality, Preparedness, and Daily Assignments (5 points per class period)
If, along with attending class, you are on time and have completed the assignment (reading, writing, acting or otherwise), you will receive another 5 points for that class period. Please see the calendar for each day’s assignment.

General Willingness to Work and Discuss (5 points per class period)
We WILL be up on stage moving around and using our bodies and voices during almost every class period, and we WILL be discussing every day. If you engage and are willing to do the work and exercises in class and if you participate in the discussions every class, you will receive another 5 points for that class period.

Every week the instructor will e-mail you with a grade between 0 and 30 to inform you of the grade you received for that week. If you attend class on time both days, complete the assignments, and bring a cheerful and willing disposition to each class, you will receive 30 points per week and 450 points for the course.
Appendix K- Reflective Log of Acting I Teaching Assistantship

Summer 2011

I didn't finish all of the reading over the summer., but it will probably be helpful to actually be reading while TA'ing as well. The really frustrating part of reading was that there was not way to really get up myself and test all of these exercises because of A) The sheer volume of the material to be read, B) lack of time due to employment at the Huron Playhouse and C) I didn't have an ensemble which many of these things would have required. I need to go back through my notes and pick out my favorite exercises from each text to try out in class, then go through the calendar and try to pre-plan when that might be appropriate.

August 29, 2011

First day of class. We played the name/ action circle game. There were a couple of moments I kind of felt like jumping in, but Jeff was doing that and I felt like if they had three different people talking at them it would be confusing. Anyway, the syllabus was the only other thing we did. It was a low-key day.

August 31, 2011

I did the throwing energy with them today. It was good, but I could have planned it better. I know I wanted to make the point that it was an easy physical, vocal mental exercise but I got flustered at the end and forgot to make that point because I felt like I'd been talking for a while. This is where I miss having a chalkboard or an index card w/ my thoughts. Anyway, then Jeff took over and held a discussion of the vocal instrument, once again I held back contributing, but this time it was because I didn't want to hi-jack the discussion. I think discussions teach best when the participants have to work hard mentally. I need to find tactful ways to provoke these discussions without ending up answering all of Jeff's and Casiha's questions. Also, I'm not sure I'm comfortable and confident enough with my own vocal instrument to teach about it from experience.

September 5, 2011

Voice day w/ Casiha. She did a short vocal warm-up and then I tried to lead “what a to do to die today.” This greatly impressed one me the need for rehearsal of classroom activities. It was a disaster for me to try to do it at a slower pace and insert breaths where I was not used to it. Anyway, I checked in on their vocal riskiness’ and it looks like they all did a lot of observing as opposed to actually doing it themselves. That's the kind of assignment that you can really just put out there and the students that want to engage with it will and the students that don't want to won't. Then we had a discussion about acting, what it is, who's good at it. I really like how Andy and Casiha are always bringing in examples from TV and movies because that's a good way to excite the class and get them talking. They start to look at acting a different way when they realize that they're doing the same thing their favorite tv actor does. Then we assigned monologue biographies and reading.

September 7, 2011

Movement day with Jeff. He led them through “triple jump, triple leap” and “jump, jump, pause, leap.” Also did some Michael Chekhov stuff**, but used water, jelly and pudding. I was impressed at their

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* Jeff gave them the assignment to do something vocally risky over the weekend.

** A student of Stanislavski’s, his technique has to do with working “from the outside in” and manipulating the space in different ways (molding, floating, soaring etc.) which makes it perfect for movement.
dealing with the reality (splashing each other, eating the pudding, rolling their pant legs up). Jeff had me split them up and create a 1-minute physical scene with gibberish and animal noises. I could have been more clear in my directions because some of them thought they were actual animals. Then we debriefed.
Lessons from the week: Rehearse giving the assignment's directions, give clearer directions, it's difficult watching 20 students.

September 12, 2011
We started off in the pit in Friedrich and Casiha took them through the heavy/ light, quick/ slow, direct/ indirect* stuff. I was going to interject with the Stanislavski exercise (lifting the piano and doing math to prove that tension reduces mental capability), but there didn't appear to be a good time for that. Anyway, we spent the rest of the class talking about Practical Handbook, specifically actions and the system. Casiha asked me to flesh out the “as if” which I wasn't prepared for but it was fine.

September 14, 2011
Jeff started me off leading “imaginary throwing energy.” It was surprisingly successful, we even had 3 “balls” going. Then we saw the monologues they brought in**. They were all pretty daring in either a physical or vocal way, I was impressed. Then we talked about what worked and what didn't work, what was strong etc. Jeff asked me to specifically weigh in on exaggeration. I took the stylistic route and Jeff took the “reach the back of the audience” route. He passed out monologues and we read through them, then we were done.

September 19, 2011
We started off with a reminder about the shows this weekend and then played the energy throwing, but with image association. The big takeaways were that you don't get the benefit of having your name called, the need to think on your feet and you only have 3 seconds to find a new image. Then we split up into groups and they read their three monologue choices to each other and picked ones for each other. Me and Casiha floated around and gave advice/ opinions etc. Then we talked about Practical Handbook (more on actions) and did the Open Scene at the end of that chapter. Casiha threw two pairs up there w/ two sets of actions to show how it could be different.

September 21, 2011
Jeff talked about memorization techniques (repeating it over and over, typing/ writing it, breaking it up into beats). Then we had a big discussion about transitive verbs and discussed weak/ strong actions and looked at the actors thesaurus a lot. Then Jeff put them on stage and led them through some relaxation (puppet arms, stretch up, fall, rise back up) after which they said their monologues silently to themselves to prove they could do it. Jeff asked them to find an action in their monologue and use it. Talked briefly about given circumstances again, point of view about the person and the situation and how the “as if” can help. Then they broke up into groups and did their monologues for each other with their actions and with me and Jeff floating around. Finally, we reminded them of the assignment, the shows and audience etiquette.

September 26, 2011
Casiha just wanted to see them all do their monologues, we almost got through all of them on time, but we stayed after a bit late to finish. She said she could only grade this project on progress so it

*A series of movement concepts from the Laban movement technique.
**He'd asked them to prepare a monologue from a conversation with a stranger
was important that she see where they were.

**September 28, 2011 - Monologue Performances**

Recorded the monologues. Some surprises. Katrina was really nervous but rocked it out, Julia D. pulled back a bit’, Tina brought in underscoring and Alex started off with his hat and hoodie before taking them off. Everyone made some progress. I didn't 100% know how to put videos online but I got TJ's help. The rest of the time we spent talking about strong work and touched on some big points.

~You can't play emotion, the action will trigger it  
~Underscoring helped the presentation (Aristotle, spectacle, music etc.)
~When they were really connected to a scene partner it was good.

We needed to talk about And Then/ Ashes to Ashes but we didn't get to it.

**October 3, 2011**

Casiha's back full time now. We talked about Ashes to Ashes/ And Then, and Casiha introduced open scenes. She gave everyone the same open scene to show how many different ways you could play it. Julia's partner wasn't there so I did hers w/ her. It felt good to do the thing in front of the class. Then Casiha had them all pick an open scene w/ their partner and said to be ready to go on Wednesday with given circumstances, characters, and action. Justifying the text is a big thing.

**October 5, 2011**

We saw 5 of the open scenes today, schedule to see the other 5 on the 12th (no class on the 10th because of 4-dat break. Casiha had to leave early so I lead a discussion of Practical Handbook in prep for their upcoming quiz. I wish I'd had more time, but I guess it's good that we're not doing a lot of sitting around and talking.

**October 12-13, 2011**

I ran an imagination Adler exercise w/ both classes. The first class was actually not as receptive which was weird. Maybe I was a little too eager in feedback. I also apparently spoke a little too quickly. Also, the objectives I set out to do (reinforce given circumstances) weren't necessarily what got done. They locked more into point of view about other characters, the room, and the physical and vocal life of the character which was interesting. Anyway, in the rest of Casiha's class we saw the other 5 scenes.

**October 14-17, 2011**

Casiha and I met w/ the groups outside of class to look at their scenes and do some real teaching. I met w/ 5 overall. A couple of takeaways: I kept using Uta Hagen's “What did you think was your strongest and weakest moments.” and they would generally have the same thoughts as me, and then I could help diagnose why. I also kept harping on finding props, costumes, sound, set, etc. That way they would believe in the scene because it's easier to lock in that way.

**October 17, 2011**

They performed their scenes (most of them) and it looked like all of them worked outside in between seeing me and Casiha and performing. We broke early after reminding them of Woman in Black this weekend.

**October 19, 2011**

* She'd been overplaying it majorly
Casiha taught them “I want you to listen to me” and Alex Cousins and Olivia Von Lembcke did it. Good game. Then we talked about Proof and Casiha assigned scenes. It was interesting to finally have a full length text to deal with.

**October 24, 2011**

We did tablework for their scenes today. I really liked it and thought it was good to expose them to that actual area of production, but I wish I'd had more time. We couldn't really get into any of it in depth. We spent the entire class on this basically.

**October 26, 2011**

This time we decided on a set w/ them, since it's all I set anyway. I liked that too, it exposes them to another area of production and makes them work with a set that they didn't decide on entirely by themselves. We talked about Woman in Black and played “I want you to listen to me.”

**October 31, 2011**

Spent all of today blocking their scenes w/ them. This seems like a waste of time to me. We only got through 3 groups. They were supposed to be blocked anyway, and we're just fixing it for them.

**November 2, 2011**

More blocking. Still think it's a waste of time.

**November 7, 2011**

More blocking. At least we finished today.

**November 11, 2011**

Started doing some scenework today, this is more like it. I also brought in an exercise today, I brought in a bunch of props and had them come up with stories about that prop and create scenes with them. At first it seemed like it was going to be a total flop, but they got more into it as they started doing it. My biggest problem w/ these is that I'm not clear enough in explaining them. I need to work on that when I design one. I'm not 100% sure I got the message across of how important it is to have a relationship with everything on stage.

**November 14, 2011**

More scenework. Tech week is kicking my butt, so I'm not able to meet outside of class with them which is unfortunate, but I'm taking notes on each scene. I feel like every student needs a personalized rubric to measure progress (at least for aesthetic things). Memorization, blocking, costumes etc. I feel like can be the same for everyone, but stuff like actions, point of view, physical and vocal life are on a scale.

**November 16, 2011**

More scenework, same deal.

**November 17, 2011**

Brought in gunshot particularization to Jeff's class. Felt like it went pretty well and I was glad that I got to pass out an example so they could see what the next step would be. That's been my focus lately, to always praise one thing in each scene and always have a suggestion and call it “the next step” to highlight the progress being made.
November 21, 2011
Proof performances. I think maybe I should stop offering to provide props, they don't rehearse
with them and then they perform with the for the first time on final performance day.

November 28, 2011
Started them off w/ throwing energy, got up to walking in a circle w/ 3 hackies. It freaked them
out, which was good. Then we talked about “Zoo” and got in some points about ornaments, action and
text analysis.

November 30, 2011
Ran an exercise with Casiha's class where they had to perform their scenes silently and it went
really well. It makes them be physical. They have to know their scene and blocking for it to work,
though.

December 1, 2011
Ran an exercise with Jeff's class where I had them stare at each other w/ their hands on the table
and do their scenes like that. It didn't work great because they weren't off book at all. Oh well.
Bibliography


