

I watched an episode of the television program *Inside the Actors' Studio* with the cast and writers of the comedy sitcom *Will and Grace* as guests. At one point, the creators of the show were asked where the name *Will and Grace* came from. "Oh," answered the head writer, "from the philosopher Martin Buber: the *will* to go out and the *grace* to receive." I bolted upright when I heard this. Buber's notion of will and grace has everything to do with acting, I thought. - Ann Bogart

"Will and Grace"
THEA 170.2 Fundamentals of Acting I
Syllabus

Instructor:

Elizabeth Parks
NFAC 171
eparks@uwsp.edu

Contacting the Instructor: Please allow up to 48 hours for a response to emails or voicemail messages.

Office Hours and Meeting Times: Subject to change. You are also welcome to schedule an appointment.

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.	1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.	10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. 3:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Required Texts:

For Rent or Purchase:

- ***And, Then You Act*** by Ann Bogart
- ***Respect for Acting*** by Uta Hagan

Provided on Canvas:

- ***Actions: The Actor's Thesaurus*** By Marina Caldarone and Maggie Lloyd-Williams
- ***On Acting*** by Sanford Meisner
- ***Top Ten Actor Tendencies*** by Kari Margolis
- ***Margolis Method*** Handout by Kari Margolis

Course Description: Beginning acting course for theatre majors to explore the fundamental process of character development through playing a dramatic action. This course will include exercises to free the body, voice, and emotions of inhibitions that restrict open communication within a dramatic situation.

IN ADDITION:

Working together to cultivate a space of BELONGING AGENCY, COMPASSION, AND ARTISTIC CURIOSITY, we will practice key skills and practices of an actor/artist. We will look at the actor as: collaborator, responder/receiver, player, actioner, human, and artist. The exercises will allow students to release and manage (in)tension, cultivate their ability to listen, and activate their actor tools including breath, body/mind/world, heart/mind, voice, and the playing of dramatic action.

Questions explored in this course include:

1. What is acting?
2. What is actor training?
3. What are the basic skills of the actor?
4. Instead of asking “how do I say this line?” What concrete tools and skills can an actor employ?
5. How can I safely invest my instrument in performance with efficiency, clarity, and ease?
6. If a musician plays their scales daily for practice, what are the “scales” of the actor?
7. What does it mean to be an *auteur*?
8. How do you embody an emotion instead of just play an emotion? (Don’t just “be” sad.)
9. **What are *my own personal acting tools*?**
10. **How do you gain confidence?**
11. **What does it mean to be part of an ensemble?**
12. **How can I learn from failure? (When is something a failure?)**

Other questions YOU want to add?

Course Learning Outcomes:

In accordance with the Program Curriculum and Program Learning Outcomes (PLO), at the conclusion of this course, you will be able to:

PLO 1: Knowledge of Theatre

Demonstrate knowledge of theatre by defining [basic acting concepts](#)
[Employ the basic acting concepts for your own craft.](#)

PLO 2: Analysis and Rehearsal

Analyze dramatic texts for objectives, tactics, and intentions.

Analyze and rehearse dramatic events using Uta Hagan’s Basic Exercises and Six Steps.

Analyze and rehearse Dramatic Packets to create dynamic, 3-dimensional stories via Margolis Method.

How to interpret text with instincts, (how to honor impulses in cold-reads...to be developed)

How to connect and embody a character and understand the choices they might make. Able to understand a character. (Be honestly a character w/o losing sense of self).

PLO 3: Performance and Creative Expression

Utilize [basic acting concepts](#) to perform Uta Hagan's Basic Exercises and Margolis Method Dramatic Packets.

PLO 4: Professionalism

Practice the etiquette and business of the actor's profession by communicating and collaborating with others and adhering to professional practices outlined in the course community agreement.

PLO 5: Evaluation

Use [basic acting concepts](#) to evaluate one's own performance and the performance of others to refine one's own creative process

MY MAJOR GOALS OF THE SEMESTER:

To provide you with enough fundamental skills so that you:

Never again rely on "Theatre of the Gods"

Never again need to ask: "How do I say this line?"

Never again need to ask: "What do I do with my hands?"

Other OUTCOMES YOU want to add?**Assessment/Assignments**

The Outcomes listed above will be assessed as follows:

Students will grade THEMSELVES on:**1. Engagement, Preparedness, and Professionalism**

This includes but is not limited to:

- i. Please reserve eating for before or after class or on a break.
- ii. Wearing appropriate attire for class. (see policy below)
- iii. Doing assigned homework including readings, videos, analysis assignments, and being prepared to discuss them IN CLASS.
- iv. Engaging in all in-class activities to the best of your ability.
- v. Engaging in professionalism and courtesy
- vi. Completing written assignments *before* class
- vii. Providing respectful feedback to oneself and others

2. Watch and Evaluate Three UWSP Productions

Complete a short, (300-350 word) written evaluation of THREE performances this semester. Focus your evaluation on one or two of the following: 1) groundedness of the actor(s) 2) the reality of doing 3) what skills of the actor(s) caused you to lean in? 4) the quality of absorption and receiving done by the actor 5) clearly fighting for objectives 6) clear use of tactics

- i. *Murder on the Orient Express*- 9/29-10/2
 1. Due 10/4, accepted until 10/18
- ii. *The Wolves*- 10/21-10/23, 10/27-10/29

1. Due 11/3, accepted until 11/22
- iii. *A Christmas Carol* 12/2-12/4, 12/8- 12/10
 1. Due- 12/15 accepted until 12/21
- iv. Extra Credit-
 1. *Afterimages*- 11/10-11/13
Must be submitted by 11/17, accepted until 12/21

3. Letter to Your Comfort Zone: Write 1 page letter to your comfort zone- this will turn into dramatic text used in additional exercises.

4. Reading Responses

- a. Students will read and submit one brief reflection on assigned readings from *And Then, You Act* and *Respect for Acting*.
- b. Brief reflection should contain the following: **2 quotes, 2 questions, and 1 take-away from the reading. The take-away should be 80-150 words.**

PLEASE REFER TO THE [CALENDAR](#) FOR ANY CHANGES TO THESE DATES.

- c. *And Then You Act*- by Ann Bogart
 1. Attitude- 9/8
 2. Intention- 9/13
 3. Magnetism- 10/13
 4. Time- 10/25
 5. Attention- 11/8
 - You have until December 22nd to turn in Bogart responses
- d. *Respect for Acting* -by Uta Hagan
 1. Introduction and Introduction- (pgs. 3-10 & 81-90)- 9/20
 - You have until October 18th to turn in Uta Hagan response
- e. *On Acting*- by Sanford Meisner
 1. Building a Foundation: The Reality of Doing – 11/1
 - You have until 11/22 to turn in Meisner response
- f. Margolis Method readings
 1. Top 10 tendencies- 11/15
 2. Margolis Method Handout- 12/6
 - a. You have until December 22nd to turn in Margolis Method responses

Students will be graded BY THE PROFESSOR on:

5. Score Dramatic Text

- a. Students will score the dramatic action of a paragraph and a scenes as a written assignment. This process may include multiple drafts.

6. Uta Hagan Exercise Performances- analysis for the following exercises will need to be submitted. Accepted through 11/22

- a. Immediacy 9/22
- b. Three Entrances – 9/29
- c. Basic Object Exercise 10/6

7. Meetings

- a. In lieu of a journal, students will meet with the professor once a month for 20-25 minutes to discuss class exercises, concepts, questions, challenges etc.
- b. Three one-on-one meetings (one in September, October, November, and December)

- c. Students must be prepared with two things for the meeting to focus the conversation on *their* needs. Topics or focal points can range from: a question, a confusion, discussing a concept, practicing an exercise, coaching a performance project. When in doubt, be prepared to answer: “How can this time be useful for you?” and “How can I supportively challenge you?”

8. Outside of Class Events



- a. Please attend at least three of the seven events scheduled this semester. **Bring some proof of attendance to the instructor.** Other event details coming soon!
- i. Keith Hamilton Cobb performance 9/16 1:30 and 7:00pm
 - ii. Creg Sclavi 9/23- 2-5 in NFAC 221
 - iii. Empathetic Discourse: AAA Long Table, 9/30 12:00-1:30, location TBD
9. **Final Project-** a culmination and combination of several exercises throughout the semester.
- a. Analysis
 - b. showing

To offset meetings, seeing productions, and attending outside of class that you must attend **we will not meet** for TWO regularly scheduled class sessions: Proposed dates are Wednesday October 18th and Wednesday November 10th.

Assessment:

	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Students Grade Themselves	1. Engagement, Preparedness, and Professionalism	300
	2. Reading Responses (25 points each x 9)	225
	3. Three Evaluations of UWSP Productions (50 pts each)	150
	subtotal	(675)
Graded by Professor	4. Score Paragraph	100
	5. Score a Scene	100
	6. Uta Hagan Exercises (50 pts each x 3)	150
	7. One-on-one meetings (25 points each x4)	100
	8. Outside of class events (50 points each x 3)	150
	9. Final Project (analysis and showing)	75
		subtotal
	Total	1350

Grading Scale:

94-100	A	73-76	C
90-93	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	0-59	F

Course Policies:**Things you are highly encouraged to do in this class:**

- Take care of yourself
 - Yawn
- Inform me of your needs
- Work as an ensemble
- Say “I don’t know”- Not for lack of trying or preparation

SHOWING UP FOR YOURSELF: Your attendance is the #1 thing you can do to forge your own success. Be an active participant in your education.

Forge your own success and show up for yourself-LITERALLY!

Class Attendance:

- a. Each student is allowed **a total of two absences for the semester**—I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences.
- b. For each absence beyond the allotted two, the student’s grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade. Thus, an A will become an A-, an A- will become a B etc.
- c. When a student has missed a total of 6 (six) classes, they will automatically fail the course.
- d. Be on time for class

Performance Day Attendance:

- a. **You must attend class on the day of your scheduled performance.** Missing class on the day of your performance will result in a zero for that assignment.
- b. **If you are late, you will not be able to perform,** and this will result in a zero for that assignment.
- c. **I do not permit make-up performances.** Only in cases of extreme emergency and only at the instructor’s discretion might you be permitted to make-up a performance. This is not a guarantee.
- d. **If your partner is absent and/or late** for your scheduled performance- Only the student who was present and on time for the performance day will be permitted to make arrangements with the instructor and have the opportunity to earn a grade. The absent partner will receive a zero.

Turning in Assignments:

- c. All assignments are given a due date. Please turn assignments in on time.

- d. To prioritize learning over grades all assignments THIS semester have a window of submission. See [CALENDAR](#). Once the final deadline for submission has passed no work will be accepted.
- e. Your final chance to turn in anything is December 23rd. You will only be awarded ½ of the points you earn for that assignment. This will not be offered next semester. These points will be awarded by the instructor even if the assignment was originally to be graded by the student.

[Academic Integrity: \(click for policies\)](#)

- a. Students are expected to perform all assigned work themselves. Any form of cheating or plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the [University Policy on Academic Integrity](#) and as outlined in the Theatre and Dance Department Student Handbook.

ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY:

Cell phones:

As stated in the Department of Theatre and Dance Student Handbook, cell phones are strictly prohibited in the classroom unless approved by the instructor.

Laptops may be used with discretion and consent of the instructor.

ATTIRE:

You need to be free to work. Loose-fitting clothes are necessary. Jeans, hats, lanyards, phones, jewelry take you out of training mode and into daily life mode and are not permitted. Please come dressed to **work**. Please email me or see me if you have access needs around this policy.

PHYSICAL CONTACT- Consent will always be asked before any physical contact is made.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES:

- [The Americans with Disabilities Act & Accommodations](#)
- [Student Success Resources](#)

Please let me know if you have other Access Needs.

COVID and Zoom POLICY: **Zooming into class must be approved by the professor.** Zooming into class is permissible if you have tested positive for Covid or based on CDC GUIDELINES, you are required to quarantine. Otherwise, students are expected to attend class in person. If you attend via Zoom you are expected to participate as you would in person, this means leaving the camera on and being dressed and prepared for class. If your symptoms do not allow this please contact the instructor or consider using one of your two absences.

You MUST contact the professor at least 3 hours before class if you encounter a situation that requires permission to zoom.