



**DRAM-1351-140CL**  
**Acting 1**  
**Spring 2023, Building #5, Room 1224**  
**Tuesday/Thursday 11am-12:20pm**

**Instructor Information:**

Name: Sarah Sneesby  
Email: [ssneesby@com.edu](mailto:ssneesby@com.edu)  
Phone: 409-933-8348

**Student hours and location:**

By appointment in-person or virtual. To make an appointment with me, please send me an email.

**Required Textbook/Materials:** There is no required textbook for this course

**Course Description:** An introduction to the fundamental principles and tools of acting as used in auditions, rehearsals, and performances. This may include ensemble performing, character and script analysis, and basic theatre terminology. This exploration will emphasize the development of the actor's instrument: voice, body and imagination.

Attendance at representative plays is required.

**Course requirements:** (including description of any special projects or assignments)

Daily Engagement/Attendance	20%	The Grading Scale is as Follows: 90-100 = A 80-89 = B 70-79 = C 65-69 = D 64-below = F
Play Reviews (2)	10%	
Self-Evaluations	10%	
Audition Monologue Project	20%	
Semester Midterm	20%	
Evening of Scenes/Partnered Project	20%	

**Determination of Course Grade/Detailed Grading Formula:**

Grades will be determined based on qualitative (projects) and quantitative (papers and exams) formulas. 20% of your grade will be based on your attendance and engagement in class. 20% will be based on reviews of plays and evaluations of your own work. 20% will be based on an individual project, 20% on a group/partnered project, and 20% on a written midterm exam.

### **Play Review Assignment Detail:**

You must see a performance of the COM Theatre productions of *Sweeney Todd* by Stephen Sondheim and *Donkey* by John Patrick Bray. You may see any preview or regular performance free of charge and you are welcome to bring a guest. There is no need to make a reservation.

*Sweeney Todd – The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*: Feb. 2-19, 2023 – review due uploaded on Brightspace by March 3rd at 5:00 p.m.

*\*Contains themes and elements of violence and adult language*

*Donkey*: April 20-May 7, 2023– review due uploaded on Brightspace by May 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

All performances run Thursdays – Saturdays at 7:00pm and Sundays at 2:30pm.

The best reviews for this purpose are approximately three (3) typewritten, double-space pages. This is not a test of whether you have seen the production -- that is a given. It should be a discussion of what you experienced and how it affected you. The following is an OUTLINE of topics which should be addressed in your review. Your point of view and critical thinking skills will be the focus of your grade. I do not care what your opinions are; I care if you are clearly communicating your opinions with evidence that supports your claims (just like with a research paper).

- I. Introductory Paragraph, including play and title
- II. Dramatic Values a. Story/Plot (keep this part short) b. Theme/Idea
- III. Personal reaction (A brief paragraph stating honestly what you think about the play)
- IV. Production Values a. Scenery b. Lighting c. Costumes d. Sound (music, special effects, etc.)
- V. Evaluate the Acting (use actors' names provided in the program, not the characters' names)
- VI. Identify and Discuss Contributions of the Director
- VII. Conclusion

### **Audition Monologue Project:**

The purpose of this project is that students will try their hand at preparing a 60-90 second monologue for an audition. You will be given time in class to memorize and work on the monologue, and taught how to slate. At the end of the project, we will set a class date that is run like an audition where you will come in one at a time to “audition” for a big casting director (me).

At the end of the project students will be evaluated on proper slating, memorization, and their ability to change beats/intentions throughout the monologue. The students will also submit a self-evaluation/reflection of their work.

### **Evening of Scenes/Partnered Project:**

Later in the semester you will be assigned a partner to work on a dramatic scene from a play. We will use these scenes to explore partner dynamics, blocking concepts, and complete a character/scene analysis. The culmination of this project is when they are presented alongside the Acting II scenes at the end of semester **Evening of Scenes / Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 7pm!** (Attendance/Performance is mandatory!)

### **Content Disclosure**

Courses within COM Theatre deal with works of dramatic literature, both on the page and on the stage. Sometimes the situations, actions, and language of these works can be off-putting, activating, triggering, or offensive to some students on such grounds as sexual explicitness, value judgements, violence, or blasphemy. As the course is devoted to the principle of free expression, artistic and otherwise, and it is not the course's practice to censor these works on any of these grounds, students who might feel unduly distressed or made uncomfortable by such expressions should withdraw at the start of the term and seek another course or speak with the instructor immediately. The instructor will provide more specific content disclosures before engaging with specific works.

**Late Work, Make-Up, and Extra-Credit Policy:** Make-up assignments are not permitted outside of emergency situations. Performances and group presentations cannot be made up due to scheduling.

### **Attendance Policy:**

Timeliness and presence are crucial to excellence in the performing arts. Each student is allowed **two (2)** absences before your final grade is affected. Please arrive on time. If you do not feel well, do not come to class. If you have extenuating circumstances that affect your ability to follow these policies, you need to speak with the instructor before being late or absent. If you are impacted by COVID or Monkeypox, communicate with your instructor as soon as you are able, and modifications/accommodations will be worked out.

The most important part of this class is showing up to the class, acting is a craft honed over decades on in-body practice. You are expected to arrive in attire you can fully participate in, along with a journal, composition book, or spiral folder that is dedicated solely to this class. This folder will hold all new terminology you learn as well as your in-class reflections and evaluations. You ***must*** bring the journal to EVERY class. No journal? You are counted as absent.

**Communicating with your instructor:** ALL electronic communication with the instructor must be through your COM email. Due to FERPA restrictions, faculty cannot share any information about performance in the class through other electronic means.

**Academic Dishonesty:** There is a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism. If using source materials in any project or assignment, please site the source! Quizzes and the Final exam are open note – but copies of previous terms quizzes (either in copy or note form) will not be allowed, and a zero will be given on that assessment.

**Student Concerns:** If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please contact me using the contact information previously provided. If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact H. Russ Brown, Director of Theatre, at 409-933-8544 or [hrussbrown@com.edu](mailto:hrussbrown@com.edu). If you are still not satisfied with that outcome, please contact the Chair of Fine Arts, Dr. Paul Boyd at 409-933-8342 or [pboyd@com.edu](mailto:pboyd@com.edu).

---

### **Course outline:**

*This outline is subject to change during the semester. Students will be notified immediately of any changes and will be given the appropriate time and accommodations in the event of those changes.*

- Week 1-Introduction to class, syllabus review, Self-Evaluation #1 Assigned, Actor's Journal  
What is Acting? Introduction to Objectives
- Week 2- Exploring Objectives (Self-Evaluation #1 due Tuesday)  
Introduction to Obstacles/Conflict
- Week 3- Exploring Obstacles/Conflict  
(Monologue selection due at beginning of class Thurs, Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>)  
Introduction to Strategy/Tactics/Stakes
- Week 4- Exploring Strategy/Tactics/Stakes  
Using text to find Given Circumstances/Conditioning Forces
- Week 5-Exploring application of Given Circumstances/Conditioning forces  
Introduction to Subtext/Inner Monologue (Monologues memorized by end of class on the 16<sup>th</sup>!)
- Week 6- TBD – Guest Instructor
- Week 7- TBD – Guest Instructor
- Week 8- Tuesday – Audition Day!  
Thursday – Midterm Exam!
- Week 9- Active Listening!  
Scene Partners Assigned
- Week 10- Scene Selections Due  
Using text to define beats/events and set objectives
- Week 11- Exploring Inner Monologues in Scene Work
- Week 12- Exploring Dynamic Silence in Scene Work
- Week 13- Finding Naturalisms in Scene Work
- Week 14- Work on Scenes
- Week 15- **Evening of Scenes / Tuesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 7pm!**
- Week 16- Theatrical Intimacy & Stage Fighting

## **Institutional Policies and Guidelines**

**Grade Appeal Process:** Concerns about the accuracy of grades should first be discussed with the instructor. A request for a change of grade is a formal request and must be made within six months of the grade assignment. Directions for filing an appeal can be found in the student handbook [Student Handbook 2022-2023 v4.pdf \(com.edu\)](#). *An appeal will not be considered because of general dissatisfaction with a grade, penalty, or outcome of a course. Disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment of the quality of the student's work and performance is also not an admissible basis for a grade appeal.*

**Academic Success & Support Services:** College of the Mainland is committed to providing students the necessary support and tools for success in their college careers. Support is offered through our Tutoring Services, Library, Counseling, and through Student Services. Please discuss any concerns with your faculty or an advisor.

**ADA Statement:** Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to contact Kimberly Lachney at 409-933-8919 or [klachney@com.edu](mailto:klachney@com.edu). The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities is located in the Student Success Center.

**Textbook Purchasing Statement:** A student attending College of the Mainland is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from the college-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

**Withdrawal Policy:** Students may withdraw from this course for any reason prior to the last eligible day for a "W" grade. Before withdrawing students should speak with the instructor and consult an advisor. Students are permitted to withdraw only six times during their college career by state law. The last date to withdraw from the 1<sup>st</sup> 8-week session is March 1. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is April 24. The last date to withdraw for the 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-week session is May 3.

**FN Grading:** The FN grade is issued in cases of *failure due to a lack of attendance*, as determined by the instructor. The FN grade may be issued for cases in which the student ceases or fails to attend class, submit assignments, or participate in required capacities, and for which the student has failed to withdraw. The issuing of the FN grade is at the discretion of the instructor. The last date of attendance should be documented for submission of an FN grade.

**Early Alert Program:** The Student Success Center at College of the Mainland has implemented an Early Alert Program because student success and retention are very important to us. I have been asked to refer students to the program throughout the semester if they are having difficulty completing assignments or have poor attendance. If you are referred to the Early Alert Program you will be contacted by someone in the Student Success Center who will schedule a meeting with you to see what assistance they can offer in order for you to meet your academic goals.

**Resources to Help with Stress:**

If you are experiencing stress or anxiety about your daily living needs including food, housing or just feel you could benefit from free resources to help you through a difficult time, please click here <https://www.com.edu/community-resource-center/>. College of the Mainland has partnered with free community resources to help you stay on track with your schoolwork, by addressing life issues that get in the way of doing your best in school. All services are private and confidential. You may also contact the Dean of Students office at [deanofstudents@com.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@com.edu) or [communityresources@com.edu](mailto:communityresources@com.edu).