Theatre
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Theatre

FA / THEA 3250 3.0 SECTION A
SCREEN ACTING
FALL 2018 / WINTER 2019

Last Modified Date: 09/20/2018

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Offers an introduction to the complexities of the actor's process as it relates to contemporary film and television production. This course is open to all Arts, Media, Performance Design students and theatre majors.

The course is intended for students interested in the craft of screen performance. Participants gain practical understanding in actor process, as articulated by William H. Macy, Melissa Broder, and others, to create character, intention, and action. Students analyze the craft of performance from the context of professional theatre through to contemporary film and television production. In addition, participants chart the responsibilities of the actor as they develop character for the screen. Students also examine the vocabulary of performance as it relates to current film and television production protocols, as well as investigate notions of physical performance and re-imagining performance space now redefined by the camera. This course requires a range of skill sets from its participants, including close reading of film and television performance, script analysis, written assignments, as well as physical engagement in scene work that will be rehearsed and performed for the camera. Students will be able to review their on-camera performance work at the end of the semester. This upper level course is open to all AMPD students and theatre majors, with the pre-requisite of 1010 or 1011, or 1520 or 1521, or with permission of the department. 1st and 2nd year students are not permitted to enroll in this course.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>MacKay-Smith, Nancy Anna</td>
<td>Sec. A / STDO / F</td>
<td><a href="mailto:amackaysmith@gmail.com">amackaysmith@gmail.com</a></td>
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SPECIAL FEATURES

YORK UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE

THEA 3250 3.0 SCREEN ACTING FALL 2018

Course: THEA 3250 3.0 Screen Acting: Practical Approaches to the Craft of the Actor

Term: Fall Term 2018 (Term F)

Pre-requisite: 1010, or 1011, or 1520, or 1521
Course Instructor:
Anna MacKay-Smith
amackaysmith@gmail.com
647-229-7649 (for texting lates and absences before the class)
Course consultation hours: by appointment only.

Time and Location
STDO (lecture)          W  11:30 – 14:20                     ACW 008
STDO (lecture)            F  11:30  – 14:20                      ACW 002

Expanded Course Description
The course is designed to introduce students to contemporary screen acting and offer practical strategies for crafting film and television performance. Building upon the strong pedagogical foundation of acting offered by the Department of Theatre, as articulated primarily by Uta Hagen, students are introduced to additional approaches to acting. These approaches are highly practical and direct and can be implemented even by students with less formalized performance training. Once this foundational approach is examined, students turn to script analysis. This methodology is then reanalyzed from the context of contemporary film and television production and how the protocols of that industry create an additional techniques for the actor. Through screening contemporary film and television examples, students begin to examine the vocabulary of performance as it relates to the camera and how shot selection impacts their work. Students must complete a number of written and classroom assignments in which they can demonstrate a growing understanding of production protocols and terminology. Coursework continues to build toward a final project for each student in which they prepare, rehearse and perform a scene in front of the camera. Student work in the form of the Audition assignment will be reviewed in class to allow discussion, instructor feedback, and to highlight course objectives within their performance work.

The broader learning objectives of this course include: analysis and understanding of the actor’s process and the differences between the professional contexts of theatre and those of contemporary film production; learning the vocabulary of screen performance and how physicality in performance and the negotiation of space is a necessary and vital component of an actor’s work in the professional context.

This upper level course is open to all AMPD students and theatre majors, with the pre-requisite of 1010 or 1011, or 1520 or 1521, or with permission of the department. 1st and 2nd year students are not permitted to enroll in this course.

Organization of the course:

The first part of this course is structured around an analysis of the actor’s craft in the professional theatrical context. Using the class text book (A Practical Handbook for the Actor Bruder, et al.) important principles and approaches are examined. The course then turns toward an examination of the protocols of film and television production and how an actor may craft an approach in relation to those demands. Screen Acting then turns toward an experiential model by having students perform and practice in front of camera, as they explore audition techniques and finally their practicum assignments which will be filmed during class time.

Course Learning Objectives: The specific objectives of the course are that students will:

- analyze and understand the actor’s process
• identify the key differences between performance for professional theatre and contemporary film production
• learn terminology and vocabulary unique to screen performance
• articulate and craft a physical approach toward screen performance
• gain experience in front of the camera

Course Texts / Readings/ Required Theatre Viewing:

1. Handouts:
   various sides and screenplay excerpts
2. A Practical Handbook for the Actor
   Melissa Bruder, Lee Michael Cohn, Madeleine Olnek, Nathaniel Pollack, Robert Previto, Scott Zigler

Additional readings may be assigned during the course.

Evaluation:

1. Participation 30%
   In-class assignments (written and practical) 10%
   Engagement (class discussion and analysis of film and television performance) 10%
   Technical assistance 10%

1. Audition (1st & 2nd Pass) 20%
   Students are required to put themselves on tape with audition material, edit, and bring to their instructor twice during the course, with each audition pass of the material evaluated at 10% of their overall grade

1. Written Exam 25%
   Students are required to write a mid-term Exam. Topics included in the exam material may include key film production terminology, script analysis and material from the class textbook.

1. Practicum 25%
   All students are required to prepare, rehearse, and film a scene from contemporary film or television script as part of their practicum experience

Last date to drop course without receiving a grade:
Term F: November 9, 2018

*Students will receive at least 15% of their overall grade on November 9, 2018

Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles.

Grading: The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9.0, A = 8.0, B+ = 7.7, C+ = 5.5, etc.). Assignments and tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 9.0 to 10.0, A = 8.0 to 8.9, B+ = 7.5 to 7.9, etc.). Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles. (For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar -
Students may take a limited number of courses for degree credit on an ungraded (pass/fail) basis. For full information on this option see Alternative Grading Option in the Faculty of Fine Arts section of the Undergraduate Calendar.

**Assignment Submission:** Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received on the due date specified for the assignment. Written assignments must be handed in during class time. Written assignments will NOT be accepted as email attachments. Late assignments should be date stamped by a department staff or faculty member and handed in to the drop-box marked *Greyeyes* on the 3rd floor of CFT. Links to audition material must be sent to the instructor, or submitted using an ftp server such as WeTransfer.

**Lateness Penalty:** Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized 3% per day (including weekends). Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be entertained by the course instructor but will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter). Please note that Audition Material, in keeping with the professional practice, has distinct and absolute deadlines; therefore, NO late Audition material will be accepted.

**Attendance Policy:**
Students are reminded that Department of Theatre rules require attendance at all classes. There is no differentiation between excused and unexcused absences - an absence is an absence and will affect your chances of success in this course. All classes are mandatory. Failure to attend all classes and outside rehearsals will result in either academic penalty or a request that the student withdraw from the class.

Any student who is absent or late without prior arrangement with the instructor may have 2% deducted from the final grade for each absence or late arrival. Three late arrivals or absences (excused or not) will result in course failure. If a student is going to be considerably late or miss a class for any reason, the student must contact the course director prior to the beginning of that class. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused late or absence.

Part-time jobs or outside employment in theatre-related endeavors do not count as excused absences.

**Medical Emergency:** In case of medical emergency, call *Department of Security Services* at 416-736-5333 or extension 33333.

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**Schedule**

**Subject to Change**

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<tr>
<td><strong>Sept</strong></td>
<td>5 &amp; 7</td>
<td>Introduction to Course Materials and Acting Concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 &amp; 14</td>
<td>Acting Concepts Continued</td>
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<td>19 &amp; 21</td>
<td>Script Analysis</td>
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<td>26 &amp; 28</td>
<td>Terminology &amp; Set Protocols Introducing the Camera</td>
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<td><strong>October</strong></td>
<td>3 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Inner Life – Hand out Practicum scenes</td>
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READING WEEK  October 8 to 12  NO CLASSES

10 & 12  Table work for Scenes
         17 & 19  Scene work on your feet – Moment before, Objectives, Obstacles. Film examples
         Scene work – Relationships, Action Reaction.

Film Examples
Audition Assignment given (1st pass due: Nov. 14)
         24  Scene Work  (Sub Teacher Anita La Selva)

26  **Mid-term Examination** (Sub Teacher Anita La Selva)

Nov.
         2  Scene Work
         7 & 9  Scene Work

14  **Audition Due Today**/ Auditions viewed, with Instructor Feedback

16  Practicum Assignment Group 1 (First Pass with notes)

21 & 23  Practicum Assignment  Group 2 (First Pass with notes)  and screening Group 1 and 2
         28 & 30  Practicum Assignment  Group 1 & 2 (Final Pass)

Audition (2nd pass Due)

December 5  Screening  Practicum Assignment

Final Class/

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Reading Schedule:

1. Handouts: Deadlines will be assigned with each specific handout/or assignment

1. *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*

   *Introduction by David Mamet*

Be prepared to discuss the chapters on each of the following weeks. Your input will be reflected in your Participation marks.

The Job of the Actor & Technique Outline  

     Due  
     Sept. 21

Part One:  Physical Action  
         Due  
         Sept. 28

Analyzing a Scene  
         Due  
         Oct. 5

The Truth of the Moment

     Externals  
     Due  
     Oct. 12
Preparing for a Scene

Troubleshooting

The Tools of the Craft

Due Oct. 19

Part Two: Introduction

The Emotional Trap

Due Nov. 2

The Myth of Character

Keeping the Theatre Clean

Due Nov. 9

Conclusion

Due Nov. 16

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Reminder: Students must maintain a 5.00 (C+) grade point average in their major (i.e. all Theatre courses) to remain in good academic standing in the department. Check the grade point average calculator at the following link if you have any questions:
http://ampd.yorku.ca/current-students/academic-resources/gpa-calculator/

A Note on Challenging Content

One of the central educational goals of the Theatre Department is to produce socially conscious artists — artists who are aware of and capable of participating in challenging dialogues about social injustice and inequality. This means that our courses, public events, and productions often grapple with difficult subject matter, including sex, violence, terror, and illness (among other topics). While these presentations will no doubt provoke strong emotions and cause discomfort, we feel that the diverse experiences they promote are also essential to the development of our students’ critical faculties, empathy, and understanding of the world. Rather than warning our students in advance about every potentially uncomfortable topic that they might encounter in the course of their studies, we instead encourage students to meet them head on in the classroom, in rehearsals, and performances, and to engage in civil and compassionate debate about the possibilities and effects of staging difficult knowledge.

If you require an accommodation related to your participation in Theatre experiences, please ensure that you share relevant documentation with your course director. Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

ACADEMIC POLICIES / INFORMATION: The Senate Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy Committee (ASCP) provides a Student Information Sheet that includes:
York's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures / Academic Integrity Web site
Access/Disability
Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants
Religious Observance Accommodation
Student Code of Conduct
Alternate Exam and Test Scheduling
"20% Rule" - No examinations or tests collectively worth more than 20% of the final grade in a course will be given during the final 14 calendar days of classes in a term. The exceptions to the rule are classes which regularly meet Friday evenings or on Saturday and/or Sunday at any time, and courses offered in the compressed summer terms. Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grades distribution profiles. http://secretariat.info.yorku.ca/files/CourseInformationForStudentsAugust20121.pdf

Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy -

The Senate Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy stipulates that (a) the grading scheme (i.e. kinds and weights of assignments, essays, exams, etc.) be announced, and be available in writing, within the first two weeks of class, and that, (b) under normal circumstances, graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final grade for Fall, Winter or Summer Term, and 30% for ‘full year’ courses offered in the Fall/Winter Term be received by students in all courses prior to the final withdrawal date from a course without receiving a grade.

York's Policy on Academic Honesty

York's Senate Policy on Academic Honesty affirms and clarifies the general obligation for all members of the University to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. AMPD has establish complementary procedures for the investigation and resolution of alleged violations of the Senate Policy involving students in AMPD degree program courses at the undergraduate level.

THE ACADEMIC HONESTY PROCESS

An Overview

1. Investigation
2. The person discovering the suspected violation will notify the course director. The course director should not meet with the student or discuss the case at this point.
3. The course director will notify his or her department Chair, providing all documentary evidence.
4. The Chair will consult with the Manager, Faculty Governance & Policy. It will then be determined whether there has been an infraction, and if so, whether it is minor or more serious. In either case, if there has been an infraction, an exploratory meeting will be held (Part B, below). A case is minor where the infraction is small in extent, can reasonably be construed as an error on the student’s part, and where there appears to be no intent to deceive.
5. If, on consultation, it is determined that an infraction has taken place, the Manager will place a “flag” in the student’s file, block enrolment activity in the course, and investigate whether there is a prior history. If it is a repeat offence, then the matter must proceed directly to a formal hearing (Part C, below).
6. Exploratory Meeting

If Minor:

1. The department Chair will conduct an exploratory meeting, attended by the course director and the student. If there is more than one student involved, each should be met with separately. Each may bring a representative.
2. If the student admits to a breach of academic honesty, a suitable penalty — not exceeding failure in the course — will be agreed upon.
3. In all cases, outcomes are reported to the Manager, Faculty Governance & Policy. Where a penalty is imposed, a joint agreement is signed by both parties, and approved by the Associate Dean Academic.

If Serious:
1. The Manager, Faculty Governance & Policy will chair an exploratory meeting, attended by the course director and student and their representatives.

2. If the student admits to a breach of academic honesty, a suitable penalty — not exceeding failure in the course — will be agreed upon. The Associate Dean, Academic may be consulted on a penalty, if necessary.

3. A joint agreement is signed by both parties, and approved by the Associate Dean, Academic.

C. Formal Hearing

A formal hearing by AAPPC will be held in cases where:
1. a) It is not the student’s first offence.
2. b) The student neglects to attend the exploratory meeting and it is found that there are grounds to proceed with a charge of a breach of academic honesty.
3. c) The student admits to a breach of academic honesty, but no penalty can be agreed upon.
4. d) The student does not admit to a breach of academic honesty.

For further information on the penalties for academic misconduct, please see AMPD’s Policy on Academic Honesty.

As approved by AMPD Faculty Council, March 21, 2018

**HARASSMENT GUIDELINES:** Discussing sexual harassment is no one’s favourite topic, but we ask you to take a few minutes to read this section carefully. These guidelines explain what sexual harassment is, and what it is not, in the context of the Department of Theatre. We also hope to decrease any chance for misunderstanding surrounding activities, such as costume fitting, that are absolutely essential to the teaching and craft of theatre. What should you expect? What are the warning signals that something might be wrong?

As we know, theatre reflects life; and life has its share of sex, violence, murder, insanity, cruelty and terror, as well as romance and hilarity. To teach students to evoke an empathetic response in audiences involves the simulation of physical violence and dealing with strong emotions in the classroom, in rehearsals and in performances. Clearly, we cannot avoid these topics, so we meet them head-on in the classroom.

The York policy lists “unnecessary touching or patting” as behaviour indicative of sexual harassment. However, in the Department of Theatre, touching routinely happens in acting/directing classes and in costume fittings.

In acting, voice and movement classes, students will be touched in the abdomen, diaphragm area, rib cage, chest, spine, back, shoulders, limbs, neck and head to assist the student in proper breathing, relaxation of tensions, alignment or similar instruction. At no time should a teacher, without the student’s permission, touch those parts of a student’s body that would normally be covered by a two-piece bathing suit. At no time in an acting class will a student be asked to remove intimate apparel.

The removal of clothing, however, is integral to a costume fitting. Getting changed into or out of a costume is done in the privacy of a closed fitting room, but then the costume designer and/or the cutter building the costume will have to touch the costume (and therefore the student in the costume) anywhere that it needs fitting. The costume may also include undergarments that are not the student’s (e.g. corsets for women), that require the removal of the student’s own undergarments, and costume undergarments also require fittings. No students will be asked to put on or remove any item of underclothing in the presence of any other person.

A danger signal in physical contact could be unnecessarily prolonged touching, or touching body parts not involved in the current teaching. Students who feel uncomfortable about touch from the teacher, staff member or another student have a responsibility to speak to the teacher about opting out, or to discuss the problem with York’s Centre for Human Rights, South Ross, Suite 327, 416-736-5682 / TTY: 416-650-8023, rights@yorku.ca
As well as physical contact, there is also psychological contact and gender harassment. Sexual harassment can occur with no physical contact at all: psychological contact can therefore be a more difficult area to ascertain than physical contact since it involves words, intonations or body language. Theatre training must deal with sex. For example, some of the discussions needed in acting classes are of a sexually explicit nature. There is no way for students to fully explore the nature of acting without being honest, to some level, with their personal lives.

Gender harassment consists of derogatory or degrading remarks directed towards members of one gender or sexual preference group. These are most often directed at a woman, women in general, or homosexuals. Gender harassment is definitely sexual harassment.

If you feel that sexual harassment may have occurred, speak to the teacher, the class rep, your faculty advisor, or to the Centre for Human Rights, South Ross, Suite 327, 416-736-5682 / TTY: 416-650-8023, rights@yorku.ca

Sexual assault awareness and resources information is available on the York website and we encourage you to also carefully review this information.

You shouldn’t ever feel guilty or be made to feel guilty about reporting a problem!

DISPUTES: The following steps are the steps to be taken in the event of unresolved issues within the class:

- If your class has a tutorial leader or studio instructor, speak to your instructor first.
- If unresolved, speak to the Course Director.
- If unresolved, contact the Chair of the Department at thechair@yorku.ca.

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY SESSIONAL DATES (where you will find classes and exams start/end dates, reading/co-curricular week, add/drop deadlines, holidays, University closings and more.

http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/enrol/dates/index.htm
Manage my Academic record http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/

- Last date to drop a fall term (F) course without receiving a grade: November , 9 2018
- Last date to drop a winter term (W) course without receiving a grade: March 8, 2019
- Last date to drop a full year (Y) course without receiving a grade: February 8, 2019

DEGREE STATUS – BA AND BFA: All students accepted into the Department of Theatre in the School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design (AMPD) enter as Specialized Honours BA Theatre-Theatre Studies majors. The first year is a program common to all Theatre students, and offers courses in Acting, Production/Design and Performance Creation & Research. At the end of the first year, there is a selection process (either by audition or interview) to proceed into the various areas of interest.

POLICY REGARDING LOSS, DAMAGE AND THEFT OF PERSONAL EQUIPMENT AND BELONGINGS: The School of Arts, Media, Performance & Design at York University will not be held responsible for the loss, damage or theft of personal equipment or any other personal belongings that are left
in studios, classrooms, storage areas or any other space within the School. It is each individual’s responsibility to take care of their own property. Under no circumstances will the School incur liability for loss, damage or theft of such property.

Please take all reasonable measures to protect your personal belongings. If you do experience loss, damage or theft of personal property, please report it immediately to the Department of Security Services at (416) 736-5333 or extension 33333 from any University phone.

ROOM BOOKING POLICY: Rehearsals for mainstage productions take precedence when assigning rooms, followed by faculty assigned work. Personal projects, including playGround, will be considered only if space allows.

First-year Theatre majors are not eligible to book studios.

Adopt professional standards by agreeing on a rehearsal schedule with group members and by having one group member do the arranging of the space in advance. Please ensure that the floors and walls are clean. All garbage must be removed. Please treat the studios with respect.

The studios are available only within the following hours: Mon-Fri 8:00am-10:00pm and Sat-Sun 10:00am-6:00pm

All spaces must be booked one week in advance and will be accepted only until 4:00pm on Thursday the previous week.

Requests will be confirmed Friday by 4:00pm.

Requests must be sent by e-mail only to rehearse@yorku.ca
Include your full name, student ID, program, brief explanation of what the space will be used for and what kind of space you need (studio / classroom / big / small).

Requests must be submitted each week for a room unless special arrangements have been made.

You cannot “claim” a space by writing in your name or the course name in an empty slot on the weekly schedules posted outside each space (exception – Light Lab CFT 153).

Spaces must be returned to neutral at the end of each booking session. There will be a picture of what “neutral” is in each studio.

The sign-off sheet must be checked and signed at the end of your studio time. If you enter a space and find it not “neutral”, please e-mail rehearse@yorku.ca.

Anything left behind in the spaces after your booking will be thrown out.

Procedures for use of studios after-hours: These procedures are designed to enhance the safety of authorized students when working alone in one of our studios after-hours - Monday through Friday from 11:00pm to 6:30am, and Saturday/Sunday from 10:00pm to 8:00am.
An After-Hours Use form will be completed and emailed to University Security at: scc@yorku.ca;

Be advised of the University’s emergency protocols (e.g. contact 911 in the event of a life threatening situation) and University Security’s urgent number (416.736.5333);

Contact University Security non-urgent number - 416.650.8000 - upon arrival and departure.

**SITE-SPECIFIC PROJECTS:** All site-specific theatre projects anywhere on campus must be cleared by the course director, York University’s Security Services, and the department or governing body of the proposed site. This request should be made in writing at least three weeks in advance of the date required.

All public spaces on Campus require contact with the Office of Temporary Use of University Space - http://tuus.info.yorku.ca/space-room-reservations-forms/

The course director will also need to complete a “Temporary Use of University Space Application and Notification Form” and submit it two weeks in advance of the date required.

For ALL site specific work, the course director must send the request to security@yorku.ca outlining where and when the work is to take place.

**Please note:** at no time shall any form of replica, prop, or real weapon (handguns, rifles, shotguns, swords, daggers, knives, etc) be used in any site specific work.

Many courses utilize Moodle, York University’s course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.

**Moodle @ York University**