COURSE DESCRIPTION
A practical approach to the development of acting skills used by singers in theatrical genres. Students will gain an understanding of various acting techniques and their application in both sung and spoken story telling.

Prerequisites: None.

Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- To implement acting techniques and tools necessary to grow and thrive in a rehearsal process and in performance
- To develop an appetite and willingness to risk failure as a means towards discovering authenticity in the work.
- To develop a sense of empowerment as artists, singers and actors.
- To develop the student’s acting versatility.
- To develop and implement a professional spirit, attitude and work ethic.
- Bridge a gap between professional theatre artists and students.
- To develop a productive artistic dialogue and professional relationship between the actor and their colleagues.
- To provide an opportunity to develop skills and experience at ensemble building.
- To develop the students sense of professionalism.
- To understand that reliable acting technique can be developed in much the same way as vocal technique, with tangible results
- To become familiar with the vernacular of acting in order to work with directors and other actors in an articulate, effective and empowered manner.
- To encourage, support and respect others around them in a positive, generous manner at all times.
- To foster creativity in themselves and others, in all of their artistic endeavours.
- To display bravery in the classroom, the studio, and the theatre.
- To uncover their own power and creativity as artists.
- To enter into the work with an inquiring mind.
- To hone the spirit of investigation.
- To trust “process “ as a means toward growth.
By the end of this course, students will develop a keen understanding of the acting process and its various techniques, tools and methods. They will have gained an increased and applicable awareness of the specific techniques that work best for them in both a musical and non-musical context. They will demonstrate the knowledge and skills to work collaboratively and professionally with others.

COURSE CONTENT

Acting for Singers is designed to introduce and develop a practical understanding of techniques of dramatic preparation and performance. The ultimate goal is the integration of these tools to allow students to begin or continue the process of becoming a fully authentic, aware, and consistent actor. They will understand how these dramatic abilities can join forces with their skills as singers to exponentially increase the impact and truth of their performances.

The classes will be highly participatory and will include discussion and instruction. The classes will involve physical investigations and exercises as well as working on text both within and outside their singing repertoire.

Exercises in the various techniques will form the backdrop to all sessions, allowing the course to unfold like a series of workshops. During warm-ups and introductory exercises, ongoing question-and-answer sessions will be held, guided by the students’ individual interests. During these discussions, regular attention will be paid to the realities and expectations in the professional world.

COURSE TIMELINE

To Be Determined: The specifics of the timeline is dependant on the prior acting training and experience of the students attending the course.

COURSE FORMAT

Each class will begin with a warm-up; stretching, movement, and (occasionally) some vocalizing. Instruction will follow, with reference material handed out as necessary. A discussion of the session topic involving all students is next, followed by exercises allowing them to incorporate the ideas and techniques of the day. Each session will end with further discussions and/or demonstrations by the students themselves, along with a group summary and reflection of any ideas, questions and discoveries made.
JOURNAL

- Each student will create and maintain a journal involving their work in class – their perspectives, discoveries, challenges and ideas. This journal will be due on the last day of class of each of the two semesters.
- Accordingly, the student will maintain a class journal. This journal can include any observations, questions, research that is collected, and any material that inspires the actor’s and/or director’s imagination. This can be a place in which one can work out ideas, express challenges, celebrations and understandings of what is being learned and shared in this class. It is the ideal site in which to evaluate process and work. This journal will be shared with me at the end of the class so the student should feel free to edit it before handing it in. There may be things the student doesn’t wish to share and that will be respected.

In addition, please note that CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE, WARM-UP ATTENDANCE and JOURNALS will also be factored into the FINAL grade for each course.

Journal content will not be graded, but missed, late or superficial work may impact on the Professional Behaviour grade in the course area about which the student is writing.

ATTENDANCE
Attendance and punctuality are mandatory. Students are required to attend all classes. Acceptable exceptions will be illness or personal crisis. Students will be expected to participate in all exercises unless prior permission has been given. Accommodations will be made and respected as per prior discussion.

DRESS Students should be prepared for physical movement in all classes and should dress accordingly. Contact with the floor (kneeling, lying down, rolling around) should be anticipated in every case.

EVALUATION:
Students will be evaluated on their participation in class, their enthusiasm in the exercises and demonstrations, their inquiry and comprehension of the material, their personal/ artistic growth during the course, their attendance, and punctuality.
EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Technique 35% – Students will be expected to apply technical information and tools acquired during the course—intention, immediacy, relationship, physical and vocal transparency, as well as text tools specific to the analysis and performance of contemporary text and/or storytelling – and then to extend and refine them to a more conscious application. Students will be expected to apply their growing understanding of space and physical relationship in a creative process as well as to bring their speech and voice work into any practical application.

Personal Growth 15%— Individual growth cannot be mandated but each student will be expected to work rigorously This part of the grade will reflect the distance travelled rather than a goal reached.

Artistry/Creativity 35% – The student is expected to make artistically relevant and compelling inquires and choices based on their growing knowledge, derived through discussion, research and practice. Included in the above is the willingness to dare and embrace failure as an intrinsic part of all creative process. The trusting of one’s personal voice rather than working for approval is key. Openness, sensitivity, support and compassion are necessary for this work.

Professional Behaviour 15% – Rehearsal/ classroom protocols and courtesies are fundamental; Class agreements will be created communally and followed. Students will be expected to undertake rehearsal and research outside of class hours in preparation for presentations.

TECHNIQUE
- Level of understanding of technique being taught
- Level of achievement in application of technique
- Ability to apply critical notes in demonstrable way

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR / ENSEMBLE
- Follows directions and meets deadlines
- Level of presence/focus for all aspects of the work
- Follows guidelines for punctuality, studio attire, hygiene and safety
- Ability to hear critical notes positively
- Ability to work respectfully, co-operatively and supportively
- Ability to work independently

PERSONAL GROWTH
- Progress in technical and artistic achievement (relative to starting point)
- Progress in ability to be open, truthful and take creative/personal risks
- Ability to retain what has been learned and build on successes
ARTISTRY / CREATIVITY
We recognize that while artistry perhaps cannot be taught, it can be invited and encouraged, and certainly acknowledged when it appears. It is an essential part of what makes a fine actor, so even though this element of the grade is necessarily subjective, we believe it must be included in the evaluation process.

- Ability to move technique beyond the level of mechanical application
- Ability to make personal and unique choices— to think outside the box
- Level of trust in, and access to, sources for working intuitively in conjunction with technical skill at the appropriate level of training.

REQUIRED BOOKS OR MATERIALS:
TBD. All written/scripts/scenes/monologues/visual materials will be provided via google drive and/or email.

i) Course Prerequisites: None. Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

ii) Grading Scale A=80-100%, B=70-79%, C=60-69, F=0-59%.

iii) Statement on Accommodation for Medical Illness:
The Graduate Program in Music recognizes that a student’s ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by physical or mental illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The Graduate Program in Music further recognizes that physical or mental illness situations are deeply personal, and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. In order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student’s overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities.

- Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the office of the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies), not to the course instructor.
- Students with special learning needs or other circumstances are asked to inform the instructor as soon as possible so that necessary accommodations can be considered.
Special Note for Covid-19-related Situations:

“Students will be expected to wear triple layer non-medical masks at all times in the classroom as per Western policy and public health directives except when directed to remove them by your instructor for essential instructional purposes.” Students who are unable to wear a mask for medical or religious reasons must seek formal accommodation through Accessible Education at aew@uwo.ca

Students are expected not to eat or drink while in class to ensure masks stay in place. Students will be able to eat and drink outside of the classroom during scheduled breaks.

Students unwilling to wear a mask as stipulated by Western policy and public health directives will be referred to the Department, and such actions will be considered a violation of the student Code of Conduct.”

As a guideline, if a student has been contacted by the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) to self-quarantine due to a Covid-19-related situation, then the Self-Reported Absence system is not to be used to report this absence or to request an academic accommodation. The student should contact the Academic Counselling office as soon as they are notified.

In general, students are advised to not self-determine when to self-isolate. Unless directed by the MLHU students should go about their business as usual. But if a student chooses to self-isolate due to a suspected Covid-19-related situation while waiting to receive direction from the MLHU then the student is directed to contact the Academic Counselling office as soon as possible for further direction on receiving accommodation consideration.

v) Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic offence, as found at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

vi) Health & Wellness: As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help students achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing a graduate degree. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone in whom they feel comfortable confiding, such as a faculty supervisor, a program advisor, or the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies).
Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html.”

vii) **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** The University accommodates students with disabilities, subject to not compromising the academic integrity of the course or program. Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education Western (AEW, formerly SSD), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation of psychological and cognitive testing. Support Services for graduate students with disabilities can be found here: https://grad.uwo.ca/administration/regulations/14.html.

viii) **Religious Accommodation:** Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar. http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo

ix) **Contingency Plan:** In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online at the discretion of the course instructor.