



IMPROVISATION

Instructor: Mr. Geoffrey Arndt, M.S.

I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being ~Oscar Wilde

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Improvisation is an exploratory course that is designed to help the students create characters onstage using physical, vocal, and emotional choices. Through performances, character studies, and activities, the students will engage in an active journey from the first day to discover the how to create and sustain theatrical truth both in themselves and onstage.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- ❖ Apply methods articulated by improvisation theorists
 - ❖ Analyze the text of a play in terms of its structure, form, style and historical background
 - ❖ Play strong objectives as well as maintain active subtext when acting
 - ❖ Create and sustain an active inner life of a character based upon the actor's imagination and the playwright's given circumstances
 - ❖ Relate and utilize specific exercise work to help solve challenges faced within assigned scene work
 - ❖ Speak with breathing and correct vowel, diphthong and consonant pronunciation
-

REQUIRED TEXTS AND COURSE MATERIALS:

- ❖ Pencils/ Pens
 - ❖ A notebook with folders for journaling and to keep handouts
-

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Students are expected to attend and eagerly participate in all regularly scheduled classes and examinations. Students who are not prepared to present their work when called on in class or who have unexcused absences on presentation days will receive a zero for that particular lesson/activity. Due to the presentation and activity-based structure to the course, scheduled presentations cannot be made up. You will be expected to be responsible, respectful, and resourceful!

You will be graded on your responsible, disciplined commitment to daily work. This is a highly subjective subject, so the instructor will be as specific as possible in critique and grading matters. As this is a craft that is improved throughout a lifetime, it is improvement that I will be focusing my attention upon. REMEMBER: it is attitude and not aptitude that will defines your altitude.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will be responsible for a total of 1,200 points for the semester. A breakdown of how the points are distributed is listed below with a description of each of the major assignments for this course.

Participation & class assignments - In this class, **silence is not golden!** This class is based solely upon student participation. In the spirit of this, participation will weigh heavily on the student's grade; this grade will also fluctuate over the course of the semester.

Character Study- Students will create a character vocally and physically



Scenes –This assignment will consist of the students presenting a scene based on a stock script of lines.

Voice and Physical Performances- Each student will present a piece that focuses all of their skills gained in the areas of voice and movement.

Theatresports- Following Keith Johnstone’s method of improvisation, the students will compete in a Theatresports inspired competition with one another.

Final Assignment- The final for this course is a performance (with an audience) of sketches, scenes, monologues, and performance pieces.

Quizzes- Quizzes will generally consist of between 5-10 multiple-choice, true/false, and/or essay questions. They may be announced a class period ahead or of the “pop” variety. The questions for quizzes may be on material assigned for reading but not yet discussed in lectures.

EXTRA CREDIT POSSIBILITIES:

Listed below are possible options for extra credit. **PLEASE NOTE THAT EXTRA CREDIT POINTS CAN ONLY BE RECEIVED IF ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE UP TO DATE!**

Additional Theatre Review- You can receive up to **20 points** for attending and reviewing an additional theatrical production. Details will be given by the instructor.

Ushering for a Saint Patrick Performing Arts Centre Event- You can receive **10 points** for each evening you usher for an event in the Saint Patrick Performing Arts Centre. This entails handing out programs, helping people to their seats, and a few other safety related issues that will be explained to you.

UNIT BREAKDOWN:

UNIT	ACTIVITIES	ASSIGNMENT
1	SUBJECT: Theory and Play	Exercises vs Games
2	SUBJECT: Character Building	Nonverbal Improv Interview with a character
3	SUBJECT: Two Person Scenes	Scene work with stakes, goal, tactics, and arc
4	SUBJECT: Scene Work	We will practice discovery vs. invention. We will review matching, wants, and honesty as tools in scenes.
5	SUBJECT: Telling Stories and Creating Narratives	We will learn scene painting, basic narrative frameworks, and playing “line by line” with a larger group.
6	SUBJECT: Comedy Sportz/ iO/ Second City	Comedy Sportz/ iO/ Second City
7	SUBJECT: FINAL EXAM	Final Project