

**Introduction to Screen Acting
(FIPR 269A Topics in Film Production)**

Winter 2014, Term 2
Days, Time, Location: TBA
Prerequisites: None
Instructor: Tom Scholte
Email: tom.scholte@ubc.ca
Office hours: TBA

Course Description

This course introduces the fundamental techniques used by actors to create emotionally engaged and narratively effective performances for film, video, and digital media. It covers the core concepts of the Stanislavski System of Acting, the application of further developments of the System by later teachers and practitioners working specifically within the context of television and film, the technical demands of the actor/camera relationship, the physical skills necessary for the actor to effectively communicate narrative information within an overall pictorial composition, and the ways in which the actors' creative choices can impact the editorial process, the final assembly of the completed motion picture and, ultimately, the production of meaning.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will:

- Develop skills in the analysis and interpretation of dramatic texts.
- Begin to develop the skills necessary to create effective performances for the camera.
- Become familiar with common technical terms used to describe the filmmaking process and its various contributors.
- Gain an understanding of the role screen actors play in the production of meaning through the conscious application of specific techniques of signification.

Required Texts

Tony Barr. *Acting for the Camera: Revised Edition* (New York: Perennial Library, 1997)

Assignments/Grading

Quiz – Stanislavski System of Acting: Core Concepts	25 marks
Scene Analysis	25 marks
<i>-students will be assigned a short scene and asked to submit a written Stanislavskian analysis clearly demonstrating a thorough investigation of both the direct and indirect backstory information disclosed by the text and offering a convincing statement of character motivation drawn from that information.</i>	
On Camera Scene 1 (Close Up)	25 marks
<i>-students will record themselves performing the scene they have previously analyzed and demonstrate their ability to shape an effective performance appropriate to a static close-up shot</i>	
On Camera Scene 2 (Wide, Medium, Close Up)	25 marks
<i>-students will be assigned a short scene in which they must demonstrate their ability to hit marks which move them through wide, medium, and close up shots while adjusting their performances accordingly</i>	
TOTAL	100 marks

Methodology

This course is taught by a single instructor and meets for two hours twice weekly: one lecture on the central concepts covered in that week's reading assignment and one workshop session in which students perform exercises in the application of those concepts. Given that there is no audition for entry to this class, the course has been designed to base 50% of the student's grade on the on-camera acting ability which they demonstrate (naturalness/believability/relaxation, narrative clarity, appropriate adjustment of vocal and physical relative to shot size, awareness of frame, hitting of marks) and 50% on their ability to express, in written form, their intellectual comprehension of the concepts and techniques discussed regardless of their ability to execute them in practice.

Course Outline

Week 1: Chapter 1: *Film and Stage: Two Sides of the Same Coin* (p. 3-7)

Chapter 2: *The Development of Film Styles* (p. 8 -11)

Chapter 4: *Acting Defined* (p. 15 – 18)

Week 2: Chapter 11: *Preparation* (p. 59 -68)

Chapter 12: *Facts and Conditions* (p. 69 -79)

Week 3: Chapter 13: *Imagination* (p. 80 -82)

Chapter 14: *Learn the Role/Not the Lines* (p. 83 – 92)

Week 4: Review/Quiz: Stanislavsky System: Core Concepts

Week 5: Chapter 5: *Listening and Sensing* (p. 19 – 26)
Chapter 6: *The Character* (p. 27 – 31)
Chapter 7: *Focus and Concentration* (p. 32 – 35)

Week 6: Chapter 8: *Energy* (p. 36 – 39)
Chapter 9: *The Emotions* (p. 40 – 53)
Chapter 10: *Spontaneity* (p. 54 -55)
*Scene Analysis due

Week 8: *On-Camera Performance 1 Due
Chapter 15: *Rhythm and Change* (p. 97 – 109)
Chapter 16: *Dynamics* (p. 110 – 112)
Chapter 17: *Movement* (p.113 – 115)
Chapter 18: *The Need* (p. 116 – 121)

Week 9: Chapter 19: *Selectivity* (p. 122 – 135)
Chapter 20: *Personalization* (p. 135 – 137)
Chapter 27: *In a Nutshell* (P. 136)

Week 10: Review/Critique: Selected Scenes from On-Camera Performance 1

Week 11: Chapter 28: *Day One on Set* (p. 167 – 168)
Chapter 30: *Some Specifics of Film* (p. 171 -191)

Week 12: *On-Camera Performance 2 Due
First half - Chapter 31: *Shooting a Scene* (p. 193 – 254)

Week 13: Second half – Chapter 31: *Shooting a Scene* (p. 193 – 254)

Week 14: Review/Critique: Selected Scenes from On-Camera Performance 2