

THEA 3870 – Acting II – Thinking and Playing Shakespeare / Syllabus for Winter 2022 [4 credits]

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 12-1:50pm, JMAC 104/106

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Office Hours: JMAC 122, Mondays/Wednesdays 2-3:30pm & by appointment

The Actor's Mind Podcast: www.theactorsmind.com

Cool quotes about acting Shakespeare

These first 3 quotes are from *Thinking Shakespeare* by Barry Edelstein.

Characters think, and then they speak.

Why am I using these words now? Because given who I am, and the situation I'm facing at this very moment, I have something I want to say, and of all the words in the English language, and of all the infinite ways of arranging them, I am choosing these words, in this order, to say it. (pgs. 12-13)

On stage . . . thought moves outward. It starts in the brain of the character and then emerges. . . . Thought is material, forceful. It affects things. On stage, thought comes alive. And the vehicle that brings it to life is language. (pg. 13)

Emotion flows from the exploration and expression of the thoughts in the text. (pg. 19)

*There are few absolute rules about playing Shakespeare but many possibilities. We don't offer ourselves as high priests but as explorers or detectives. We want to test and to question. Particularly we want to show how Shakespeare's own text can help to solve the seeming problems in the text. -John Barton, *Playing Shakespeare**

Within the elements of Shakespeare's language is encoded Shakespeare's creative force. When that language is incarnated—when the words become flesh and breath and feeling—today's actors are reborn to embody the archetypal stories told by the greatest poet-dramatist ever.

*Through the incarnation of language, today's theatre could rediscover the whole purpose of theatre, which is to bring healing and new life to the community it serves. The breath of life within the words, the word animating emotions in the body, the body and voice deepening and expanding the humanity of the actor, the actors revitalizing the theatre, the theatre nurturing the soul of its community, the community a microcosm of our global village, where, breathing deeply the air common to all humanity, we may one day before it is too late—find and share words and stories that can save our universal souls. -Kristin Linklater, "The Incredible Shrinking Shakespeare," *American Theatre Magazine**

Cool quotes about acting, generally

The reason great actors are so compelling is that they have the courage to bring their personalities to bear on everything they do. Don't ever play a part as someone else would play it. Remember that it is you onstage, not some mythical being called the character. . . . You have the right and responsibility to bring to the stage who you are. Your humanity is an absolutely vital contribution to any play you act in. Whenever you find yourself worrying about whether you are "doing the character" correctly, reflect for a moment on the words of Stanislavski: "The person you are is a thousand times more interesting than the best actor you could ever hope to be." -A Practical Handbook for the Actor, "The Myth of Character"

Mr. Clurman refused to accept a mask. He demanded me in the role. My love of acting was slowly reawakened as I began to deal with a strange new technique of evolving in the character. I was not allowed to begin with, or concern myself at any time with, a preconceived form. I was assured that a form would result from the work we were doing. -Uta Hagen, *Respect for Acting*

You're more anarchic onstage than you are anywhere else. -Helen McCrory, British actor

Cool quote about managing pandemic life (and acting, too, actually)

I'm not telling you to make the world better, because I don't think that progress is necessarily part of the package. I'm just telling you to live in it. Not just to endure it, not just to suffer it, not just to pass through it, but to live in it. To look at it. To try to get the picture. To live recklessly. To take chances. To make your own work and take pride in it. To seize the moment. And if you ask me why you should bother to do that, I could tell you that the grave's a fine and private place, but none I think do there embrace. Nor do they sing there, or write, or argue, or see the tidal bore on the Amazon, or touch their children. And that's what there is to do and get it while you can and good luck at it. -Joan Didion, American writer

Course Description

This is an intermediate acting course; my expectations of excellence are higher than in Acting I. As in Acting I, you will learn by doing. However, the “doing” in Acting II requires a level of dedication and attention to assigned readings, competent script analysis, and empathic connection to character beyond that of Acting I. Good acting requires a thorough, visceral understanding of text and its implications; Shakespeare’s writing offers us tremendous opportunities to dig deeply into characters—their relationships, wants, actions, and circumstances—and to truly make the words your own. You will be challenged; your acting work will strengthen in direct proportion to the effort you invest, and the tools you learn this quarter will improve any acting you do. Also, I look forward to you discovering what the plays mean to you. How will each of you grow attached to them in your own way?

Course Objectives

You will be able to identify, understand, discuss, and apply various acting tools to selected scenes from Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* (a comedy), *Hamlet* (a tragedy), a sonnet, and possibly other Shakespeare selections of your own choosing. You also will apply the language tools you learn in this class to a contemporary text from the late 20th or 21st century. You will be able to demonstrate your understanding of the acting craft (as applied to Shakespeare) through class exercises, assignments, and memorized monologue and scene work. Building upon the principles and your experiences of Acting I, you will deepen your skills in dynamic and truthful characterization, text analysis, given circumstances, objectives, and actions, listening and spontaneity, and being an all-around trusting and trusted scene partner. In addition, you will develop your understanding of Shakespearean verse by learning about iambic pentameter and scansion, paraphrasing, and building an argument, and how these tools help you speak any text. Finally, you will improve your ability to balance technical requirements and visceral instinct, preparation and improvisation.

Tips for Success

- Arrive to class a little early and ready to work. Two late arrivals equal one absence.
- Wear clothes and shoes you can move in comfortably. Be prepared to be on the floor and/or barefoot. Bring water, and please silence/turn off phones. No phone use allowed in class.

- Participate in discussions. Your thoughts and observations are integral to our development, and I expect you to share them. Ask questions. Decide to have fun and enjoy the work we do together.
- Be respectful of your classmates and listen to them, even if you disagree with their choices or comments. Be responsible for taking care of one another.
- Always communicate with me about any concerns or questions you have regarding the course, your progress, further areas of exploration, how this connects to your other coursework, etc.

Required Book

**Thinking Shakespeare*, by Barry Edelstein (revised edition, 2018)

Other books to consider purchasing, also available online or in the library

-*Twelfth Night*, Arden, Third Series

-*Hamlet*, Arden, Third Series

-*The Sonnets*, Arden, Third Series

Additional Reading, posted on Canvas or copies available in class

-*Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary* by Alexander Schmidt. There is an online version:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.03.0079&redirect=true>

Enter your Shakespeare word in the little white box in the middle of the page, immediately above the entry for “A.” Don’t use the more obvious box in the upper right corner.

-*Springboard Shakespeare: Hamlet* by Ben Crystal, “Before” section

-*Twelfth Night: A User’s Guide* by Michael Pennington, excerpts

-*Hamlet: A User’s Guide* by Michael Pennington, excerpts

-*Shakespeare After All* by Marjorie Garber, chapters on *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet*

-*Actions: The Actors’ Thesaurus* by Caldarone & Williams (book or app)

-*Playing Shakespeare: An Actor’s Guide* by John Barton; ISBN: 0-385-72085-8

-*Shakespeare’s Words: A Glossary and Language Companion* by David Crystal & Ben Crystal

-*The Eloquent Shakespeare* by Gary Logan

-*Shakespeare: Invention of the Human* by Harold Bloom

-*The Essential Shakespeare Handbook* by Leslie Dunton-Downer & Alan Riding

-And, of course, *A Practical Handbook for the Actor* and *Respect for Acting*, from Acting I

Viewing and Listening (* required, others encouraged as extra credit)

**The Shakespeare Sessions*, with John Barton (YouTube)

**Twelfth Night*, Drama Online, Mark Rylance (I’ll post the link for this)

**Hamlet with David Tennant*, part of Shakespeare Uncovered series (Kanopy database, library website)

-Digital Theatre Plus is a terrific resource; search for it on library website under “databases”

<https://edu-digitaltheatreplus-com.du.idm.oclc.org/search?q=hamlet>

A few examples of awesome little videos on the site:

-watch “In Defence of Character—Viola—Text in Performance”

-watch “In Defence of Character—Hamlet—The Interrogation”

-watch “In Defence of Character—Hamlet—Context and Analysis”

- Playing Shakespeare*, with John Barton, 11 videos (YouTube)
- Marjorie Garber Shakespeare lectures, her Introduction (YouTube)
- The Comedies with Joely Richardson*, part of Shakespeare Uncovered series (Kanopy database)
- Shakespeare Unlimited podcast, “Barry Edelstein: Thinking Shakespeare” episode
- Shakespeare in Love*, 1998—DVD is available
- various productions of *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet* are available online; I can guide you to many options.

ATTENDANCE and GRADING POLICY

Attendance: You learn by doing in this class, so attendance is crucial. Class begins on time. However, I’d rather have you late than absent.

Arriving any time after 12pm = late

2 lates = one absence

3 absences = lose 5 points from final grade

Participation

30% (3%/week)

Success depends upon your consistent embrace of the following:

- 1) Individual focus & preparation
- 2) Willingness to play, to try new things, to risk your ego
- 3) Interdependence, reliance on others, vulnerability, teamwork
- 4) Full commitment to all assignments, work ethic

I evaluate participation using various measures: Are you prepared for discussions about the reading and so share your ideas and questions about it in class? Are you focused and prepared during rehearsals? Are you engaged with whatever activity the class is doing? Do you arrive on time? When you collaborate with scene partners are you mentally present and supportive of their ideas, as well as your own? Are you ever busy on your phone when you should be present and engaged with a class activity? I expect you to be off your phones from the moment you walk through the classroom door until you leave at the end.

Applied Practice / Scene Rehearsals & Performances

40%

You will rehearse and perform monologues and scenes from *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet*, as well as your sonnet and your contemporary text. I will evaluate your preparation; ability to integrate reading/discussion ideas and tools into your performances; commitment to the rehearsal process; willingness to collaborate with others; and desire to take risks and direction.

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|---|---|--------------|
| 1) <i>Twelfth Night</i> “rough draft” scenes/monologues, 1/26 | = | 4% |
| 2) <i>Twelfth Night</i> “completed” scenes/monologues, 2/2 | = | 6% |
| 3) Sonnets “rough draft” performances, 2/7 | = | 4% |
| 4) <i>Hamlet</i> “rough draft” scenes, 2/25 | = | 4% |
| 5) Contemporary Text “rough draft” performances, 2/28 | = | 4% |
| 6) Final Performances of 3 “completed” pieces, weeks 10/11 | = | 18% (6% x 3) |

Character River Story, March 2

4%

Emailed Critical Responses to 2 Plays

8% (4%/play)

In a minimum of 300 words, please critique the acting in each play or reading and how the actors tackle the text. Think about it like a Shakespeare play; what clues does each text give to the actors? You may see and write about a third one for extra credit. There are four options:

- 1) DU Theatre’s production of *Stop Kiss*, February 9-12 (week 6), Byron Theater
- 2) DU Theatre’s production of *Cabaret*, week 9, Byron Theater
- 3) DU Theatre’s staged reading of *Eurydice*, Thursday, March 10 @ 7:30pm (week 10), Byron Theater, FREE
- 4) *The Lady M Project*, co-produced by Local Theater Company and me, March 12 & 13 (week 10)

Written Assignments

18%

- | | | |
|---|---|----|
| 1) Paraphrase assignment, <i>Twelfth Night</i> , 1/12 | = | 2% |
| 2) Paraphrase/Argument/Scansion <i>Twelfth Night</i> assignment, 1/21 | = | 3% |
| 3) Paraphrase assignment, <i>Hamlet</i> , all Hamlets, 2/14 | = | 2% |
| 4) Paraphrase/Argument/Scansion <i>Hamlet</i> assignment, 2/23 | = | 3% |
| 5) Script Analysis for one scene, 3/14 | = | 4% |
| 6) 500-word Final Reflection, 3/17 | = | 4% |

Extra Credit

Feel free to ask me about extra credit opportunities throughout the quarter (but not after final class meeting).

100% points total

	93.5-100 = A	90-93 = A-
87.5-89 =B+	83.5-87 = B	80-83 = B-
77.5-79 = C+	73.5-77 = C	70-73 = C-
60-69 = D	0-59 = F	

SCHEDULE: (Weeks 1 + 2 on Zoom)

Zoom code: <https://udenver.zoom.us/j/2872105618>

Wk#1	Mon	1/3	Introductions, syllabus + materials, <i>Twelfth Night</i> and <i>Hamlet</i> Watch the hourlong John Barton Shakespeare Sessions on YouTube
	Wed	1/5	DUE: post/discuss 3+ ideas from John Barton’s The Shakespeare Sessions DUE: read & discuss the story of <i>Twelfth Night</i>, Acts I + II DUE: hand in worksheet from first class
	Fri	1/7	DUE: read & discuss the story of <i>Twelfth Night</i>, Acts III, IV, V
Wk#2	Mon	1/10	<i>No class.</i> <i>Please watch this famous Twelfth Night + respond to my questions.</i>

- Wed 1/12 **DUE: read chapters 1 & 4 in *Thinking Shakespeare***
DUE: Paraphrase Assignment, *Twelfth Night* speech (Viola)
- Fri 1/14 **DUE: read chapter 2 in *Thinking Shakespeare***
Cast *Twelfth Night* scenes; connect chapter 2 to Shakespeare scene work
- Wk#3 Mon 1/17 No class, MLK Day
- Wed 1/19 **DUE: read chapter 3 in *Thinking Shakespeare***
Scansion; *Twelfth Night* rehearsals
- Fri 1/21 **DUE: read chapter 5 in *Thinking Shakespeare***
DUE: Paraphrase/Argument/Scansion *Twelfth Night* assignment
Twelfth Night rehearsals
- Wk#4 Mon 1/24 **DUE: read chapter 6 in *Thinking Shakespeare***
Twelfth Night rehearsals
- Wed 1/26 **DUE: rough drafts of *Twelfth Night* scenes**
Introduce + hand out individual sonnets
- Fri 1/28 **DUE: read chapter 7 in *Thinking Shakespeare***
Twelfth Night + sonnet rehearsals
- Wk#5 Mon 1/31 *Twelfth Night* + sonnet rehearsals
- Wed 2/2 **DUE: perform completed *Twelfth Night* scenes**
- Fri 2/4 **Special Guest: Wren Schuyler, DU alum, movement + Shakespeare**
Work on sonnets; introduce *Hamlet*
- Wk#6 Mon 2/7 **DUE: Perform rough drafts of sonnets**
DUE: watch *Hamlet with David Tennant*, Shakespeare Uncovered series
- Wed 2/9 **DUE: read & discuss *Hamlet*, Acts I, II, III.1 and III.2**
- Fri 2/11 **DUE: read & discuss *Hamlet*, III.3, III.4, Acts IV, V**
- See DU Theatre Department's *Stop Kiss*, February 9-12, Byron Theater
- Wk#7 Mon 2/14 **Special Guest: Gareth Saxe, professional actor**
DUE: Paraphrase assignment, your individual *Hamlet* text
DUE: read chapter 9 in *Thinking Shakespeare*
DUE: response to *Stop Kiss* posted to Canvas

Wed 2/16 **DUE: read chapter 10 in *Thinking Shakespeare***
Cast *Hamlet* scenes; connect reading to scene work

Fri 2/18 **DUE: read chapter 11 in *Thinking Shakespeare***
Hamlet rehearsals

Wk#8 Mon 2/21 *No class meeting today.*

Wed 2/23 **DUE: Paraphrase/Argument/Scansion *Hamlet* assignment**
DUE: read chapter 12 in *Thinking Shakespeare*
Hamlet rehearsals
Introduce Contemporary Texts assignment

Fri 2/25 **DUE: rough draft of *Hamlet* scenes**
DUE: read chapter 13 in *Thinking Shakespeare*

Wk#9 Mon 2/28 **DUE: rough draft of Contemporary Texts**
Extra credit: response to one *Shakespeare After All* chapter
Check-in: your final performance choices? Set up River Stories

Wed 3/2 **DUE: read chapter 14 in *Thinking Shakespeare***
DUE: present Character River Stories
Choose Final Performances

Fri 3/4 Rehearsals for Final Performances

See DU Theatre's *Cabaret*, Byron Theater

Wk#10 Mon 3/7 **DUE: response to *Cabaret* posted to Canvas**
Rehearsals for Final Performances

Wed 3/9 **Special Guest: Kyle Haden—Stanislavski's Active Analysis**

See DU Theatre's staged reading of *Eurydice*, Thursday, March 10 @ 7:30pm, Byron Theater, FREE

Fri 3/11 Rehearsals for Final Performances

See *The Lady M Project*, March 12 and 13, Denver venue TBD

Wk#11 Mon 3/14 **DUE: Final Performances, Day #1**
DUE: Script Analysis assignment for one scene

Thur 3/17 **DUE: Final Performances, Day #2**
DUE: 500 word written reflection by end of day
DUE: Response(s) to *Eurydice* and/or *The Lady M Project* posted to Canvas

I encourage you to visit www.coloradoheatreguild.org for local audition listings. General Auditions for next year's seasons take place throughout the spring for various local theatre companies. Check out Denver Center Theatre Company, Curious Theatre Company, Arvada Center, BETC (Butterfly Effect Theatre Company), Benchmark Theatre, Aurora Fox, and ask me about others.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY: As part of its commitment to diversity and Inclusive Excellence, the University provides reasonable accommodations for students' sincerely held religious beliefs or practices unless the University determines that such an accommodation would fundamentally alter the curriculum or academic program. For full details, including request process, visit the [Religious and Spiritual Life web page](#).

HONOR CODE/ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. For the consequences of violating the Academic Misconduct policy, refer to the University of Denver website on the Honor Code (www.du.edu/honorcode). See also <http://www.du.edu/studentconduct> for information about conduct expectations from the Office of Student Conduct.

INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: In this class, we will work together to develop a learning community that is inclusive and respectful. Our diversity may be reflected by differences in race, culture, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and myriad other social identities and life experiences. The goal of inclusiveness, in a diverse community, encourages and appreciates expressions of different ideas, opinions, and beliefs, so that conversations and interactions that could potentially be divisive turn instead into opportunities for intellectual and personal enrichment. A dedication to inclusiveness requires respecting what others say, their right to say it, and the thoughtful consideration of others' communication. Both speaking up and listening are valuable tools for furthering thoughtful, enlightening dialogue.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS: As part of the University's Culture of Care & Support we provide campus resources to create access for you to maintain your safety, health, and well-being. We understand that as a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug concerns, depression, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These stressful moments can impact academic performance or reduce your ability to engage. The University offers services to assist you with addressing these or ANY other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any challenges, you should reach out for support. You can seek confidential mental health services available on campus in the Health & Counseling Center (HCC) and My Student Support System (My SSP). Another helpful campus office is Student Outreach & Support (SOS).

[Health & Counseling Services](#)

[My SSP 24/7 confidential services for students \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

[Student Outreach & Support \(SOS\) and SOS Referrals](#)

TITLE IX: Gender violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, class, age, appearance, gender identity, or sexual orientation. The University of Denver is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex (gender), including sexual misconduct, sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking. [The Center for Advocacy, Prevention and Empowerment \(CAPE\)](#) provides programs and resources to help promote healthy relationships, teach non-violence and equality, and foster a respectful and safe environment for all members of the University of Denver community. All services are confidential and free of charge. For assistance during business

hours, call 303-871-3853 and ask to speak to the Director of CAPE. After hours, please call the Emergency & Crisis Dispatch Line at 303-871-3000 and ask to speak to the CAPE advocate on call.

STUDENT ATHLETES: If you are a student-athlete, you should inform me of any class days to be missed due to DU sponsored varsity athletic events in which you are participating. Please provide me with an absence policy form by the end of the first week of class.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM: Access to the Internet can be a valuable aid to the classroom learning environment. You may be encouraged to use a laptop, smart phone, or other device to explore concepts related to course discussions and in-class activity. Keep in mind, however, that these technologies can be distracting – not only for you, but to others in the class. Please avoid the temptation of Facebook, texting, or other off-topic diversions.

RESTRICTION OF AUDIO OR VISUAL RECORDING, REPRODUCTION, AND DISTRIBUTION OF CONTENT IN ONLINE COURSES: At the University of Denver, we protect the intellectual property of all our faculty, and safeguard the privacy of all our students in online learning environments. To this end, students may not record, reproduce, screenshot, photograph, or distribute any video, audio, or visual content from their online courses. Keep in mind that if any student is identifiable in an online class recording, this may constitute a violation of the educational record protections provided under FERPA. Students who violate this policy will be reported to [The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) and may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under *Student Rights & Responsibilities Policies*.

RESEARCH CENTER SERVICES: The University Libraries Research Center (<http://libraryhelp.du.edu>) answers research questions seven days a week by phone, email, in-person, chat/IM or text. One-on-one research consultations in the Anderson Academic Commons are also available on a drop-in basis or by appointment. Consultations help students at any stage of the research process, from refining a topic, to finding books and articles, to creating a bibliography. Telephone and Zoom video consultations are also available by request for distance students. Ask a question or make an appointment by calling 303-871-2905 or visiting <http://libraryhelp.du.edu>.

WRITING CENTER SERVICES: The Writing Center provides writing support for undergraduate and graduate students at all levels, on all kinds of projects, and at any stage of the process: from generating ideas to learning new editing strategies. Consultants take a collaborative approach, working with you to help you develop your writing in light of your specific goals and assignments. The Writing Center provides online writing support for graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in online courses at all levels, on all kinds of projects, and at any stage of the process: from generating ideas to learning new editing strategies. In our Zoom video conferences, consultants take a collaborative approach, working with you to help you develop your writing in light of your specific goals and assignments. To make an appointment for a free, 45-minute Zoom consultation, call 303-871-7456 or go to MyWeb > Student > Writing Center. Visit our website (www.du.edu/writing/writingcenter/) for hours and additional information.