

THEA 304

Advanced Acting: On-Camera Performance

Model contributed by Carin Silkaitis

Students develop the skills, terminology and etiquette for performance in the on-camera environment. This combined class works with television and/or film directors to collaborate in rehearsal, performance, capture and post-production processes. Students learn how to prepare for auditions and on-camera performances by taking an active role shaping their own performances in relation to text, character, presentation and performance context. Students also consider how to be compositional 'within the frame', how to maintain continuity, and how to make discoveries from take to take.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To familiarize students with on-camera acting techniques.
- To demonstrate the differences between stage and film acting.
- To expose students to single-camera acting techniques for acting in film and television.
- To develop actors' skills for a master shot, medium shot, and close-up shot.
- To develop actors' skills with on-camera blocking, business, subtext, and reactions.
- To develop students' creative tools and expressiveness for the camera.
- To prepare students for on-camera auditioning.
- To give students practice doing both self and peer critique.

Class schedule and format

The following is an example of a hybrid instruction plan I could implement for an Acting on Camera class with 16 students. I imagine the class would meet Tuesdays and Thursdays – 50/50 Hybrid.

Course-specific organization, examples and ideas

- Split the class into two groups of eight
- Meet with Group A on Tuesdays – Group B is watching via Zoom (live-streamed)
- Meet with Group B on Thursdays – Group A is watching via Zoom (live-streamed)
- There will be 7 in person meetings with each group.

Notes

- Start the course with everyone together in a Zoom session. Go over the syllabus with the entire class – so instructor has time to answer questions about format, live stream, and technology.
- In-person critique is paramount to this course. Students must be able to see each other's work, and comment on what they are seeing on screen, therefore, we need to make sure that the student's watching via Zoom are able to see the screen in the classroom.
- Instructors have been concerned with repetition – having to repeat lessons. If students are live-steamed, this won't be an issue because all students will get the same lesson each day – allowing the instructor to move forward at the same pace as they would in a regular semester

Possible Modifications

- Have asynchronous meetings for the "off-group" so we don't have to worry about live-streaming.

- Alternate assignments for the “off-group” including additional genres & self-tapes which have become the industry standard.
- Move to modular scheduling instead, so Group A and B are remote every other week for Zoom session, including camera scene work and self-taping. There is a tremendous benefit to self-taping for an on-camera class, considering that most of the industry auditions are self-tape these days. Zoom sessions would employ breakout rooms for scene work – and instructor would give live feedback and written feedback on scenes/self-tapes.

Example Week

Tuesday – 8 Students are F2F (Group A) and 8 Students are Live-Steaming Synchronously (Group B). The assignment was a piece of commercial copy. The instructor posted 20 different commercials to Canvas and students could choose any commercial to memorize. The 8 F2F students record their Commercials live in class and then the instructor begins play-back, stopping to talk/comment/give notes/solicit feedback. Students over Zoom are also providing feedback. The instructor will need to keep an eye on Zoom as well as live students raised hands (raising hands in Zoom or raising hands live is the way to give feedback). Students can also give feedback in Zoom chat. After all 8 students have received feedback – they re-record. If there’s time, we watch the second take, and look for changes/improvements.

Thursday – Group B is F2F and Group A is Live Streaming Synchronously. Now Group B records their commercials and we repeat the exact same process as we did on Tuesday. It’s not the same lesson, however, because the instructor would never have had time to get through 16 students with notes (and re-recording). It always takes more than one class to get through this material.