



UNSW
A U S T R A L I A

School of the Arts and Media

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

ARTS2125

Acting and Performing on Stage

Session 2, 2016

Course Outline

Staff Contact Details

Position	Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Convener	Meg Mumford	m.mumford@unsw.edu.au	Wednesdays 9.30-11.30am - please book a slot in advance	Room 112, Level 1, Robert Webster Bldg	9385 4865

Contact Information

Room 312, level 3 Robert Webster Building

Phone: (02) 9385 4856

Email: sam@unsw.edu.au

Website: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au>

Attendance Requirements

A student is expected to attend all class contact hours for a face-to-face (F2F) or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.

A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.

If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should seek permission from the Course Authority, and where applicable, their request should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.

A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance. A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied a student will still be able to meet the course's learning outcomes and/or volume of learning. A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.

For more information about the SAM attendance protocols, see the SAM policies and guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

Essential Information

All SAM students must make a serious attempt at all assessments in order to pass the course.

For essential student information relating to: attendance requirements; requests for extension; review of marks; occupational health and safety; examination procedures; special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure; student equity and disability; and other essential matters, see the SAM Policies and Guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

Subject Area: Theatre and Performance Studies

This course explores theories and practices of acting and performing in text and non-text based theatre. It focuses on the work of key actor trainers in twentieth-century Western theatre and the ways in which their approaches to training and public performance embody distinct responses to the pressing cultural and political issues of their day. Trainers under consideration may include Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Brecht, Grotowski, and/or Boal. The course concludes with a consideration of how modern(ist) modes of acting have been modified and challenged by postmodern performers. The course combines lecture and tutorial teaching with studio-based workshops, and culminates in a performance event that showcases each practitioner's approach to rehearsal process.

At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to

1. demonstrate an understanding of the way the actor's (i) approach to aspects of text (character and plot in particular) and (ii) their psycho-physical work embody specific responses to the actor's historical and cultural context
2. demonstrate an ability to identify the ideological nature of different approaches to the relation between actor/character/spectator
3. demonstrate an awareness of the changes and continuities in a practitioner's approach over time to the theory and practice of acting, as well as an ability to locate moments of convergence and divergence between that practitioner's theory and practice
4. demonstrate an ability to engage in both cognitive linguistic and embodied learning; and an ability to reflect on the relation between ideas, contexts and bodies
5. the development of independent research and analysis skills, as well as skills relevant to the establishment of an organized, harmonious and constructive ensemble team

Teaching Strategies

Content Rationale

ARTS2125 is 1 of 6 Level 2 courses in the Theatre and Performance Studies (TPS) undergraduate curriculum at UNSW. It extends work you may already have undertaken in ARTS1120 Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies on the practitioners Stanislavsky and Brecht through introducing and exploring in depth the ideological and historically-specific nature of some of their approach(es) to actor training and rehearsal as well as those of successors such as Grotowski and Forced Entertainment. The end of the course, which reflections on postmodern challenges to modernist ideas of acting, extends work undertaken in the core course ARTS2121 Critical Perspectives in Theatre and Performance Studies, through its emphasis on the preparatory work of some contemporary performers. Like many other mixed-mode courses in the TPS curriculum this course encourages learning through a combination of theory and practice, especially student-led research performances.

Learning and Teaching Approach

ARTS2125 is structured as a combination of lecture, discussion, practice based and student-led learning processes. Weeks 1-8 are relatively teacher-led and alternate lecture/tutorial teaching formats with practical workshops. Week 9 is a Reading Week intended to help you make the transition from cognitive linguistic to embodied learning as it gives you the opportunity to finalise your essay submission and turn to your practical performance project. Weeks 10-13 foster your skills in self-directed and group-based learning through a series of student-led rehearsals, culminating in a performance presentation and forum.

Assessment

Please see the course Moodle for detailed information on course assessments.

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Length	Due Date	Submission
Major Essay	45%	2,000 - 2,300 words (= c. 34hrs preparation)	Before midnight on Friday 30 September (end of mid-session break)	Refer to Moodle
Group Performance	40%	c. 20 minutes	At Group Performance event on Monday 24 October 1 to 4pm (Wk 13)	If you fail to attend your Group Performance event in the 12th week of the course, and are not able to show good cause, you will receive a fail mark both for the Group Performance (20%) and for the Individual Contribution to the Group Performance (20%). If you can demonstrate good cause for absence from your Group Performance event you will need to apply for Special Consideration. If that application is successful you will be given an alternative assignment.
Character Interpretation	15%	600 words (= c. 15hrs preparation time)	Before midnight on Friday 12 August (Wk 3)	Refer to Moodle

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Major Essay

Details: 2000-2300 words. Students will be provided with a rubric indicating level of performance against each assessment criteria; written formative feedback; and percentage grade. Late essays will receive rubric and percentage grade only.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin, students do not see Turnitin similarity reports

Learning outcomes:

- demonstrate an understanding of the way the actor's (i) approach to aspects of text (character and plot in particular) and (ii) their psycho-physical work embody specific responses to the actor's historical and cultural context
- demonstrate an ability to identify the ideological nature of different approaches to the relation between actor/character/spectator
- demonstrate an awareness of the changes and continuities in a practitioner's approach over time to the theory and practice of acting, as well as an ability to locate moments of convergence and divergence between that practitioner's theory and practice
- the development of independent research and analysis skills, as well as skills relevant to the establishment of an organized, harmonious and constructive ensemble team

Assessment 2: Group Performance

Details: In a group of between 6-12 people, devise a performance of no more than 20 mins in length. The Group Performance presentation is worth 20% and the Individual Contribution to the Group Performance is worth 20%. At the performance event you must submit a Self-Evaluation and Peer Review form. This mandatory form will be used to assist in the assessment of both the Group Performance presentation and the Individual Contribution to the Group Performance. This is the final assessment task. Students will be provided with a rubric indicating level of performance against each assessment criteria; and a percentage grade.

Turnitin setting: This is not a Turnitin assignment

Learning outcomes:

- demonstrate an understanding of the way the actor's (i) approach to aspects of text (character and plot in particular) and (ii) their psycho-physical work embody specific responses to the actor's historical and cultural context
- demonstrate an ability to identify the ideological nature of different approaches to the relation between actor/character/spectator
- demonstrate an awareness of the changes and continuities in a practitioner's approach over time to the theory and practice of acting, as well as an ability to locate moments of convergence and divergence between that practitioner's theory and practice
- demonstrate an ability to engage in both cognitive linguistic and embodied learning; and an ability to reflect on the relation between ideas, contexts and bodies
- the development of independent research and analysis skills, as well as skills relevant to the establishment of an organized, harmonious and constructive ensemble team

Assessment 3: Character Interpretation

Details: 600-word analysis. Students will be provided with a rubric indicating level of performance against each assessment criteria; written formative feedback; and percentage grade.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin, students do not see Turnitin similarity reports

Learning outcomes:

- demonstrate an understanding of the way the actor's (i) approach to aspects of text (character and plot in particular) and (ii) their psycho-physical work embody specific responses to the actor's historical and cultural context
- demonstrate an ability to engage in both cognitive linguistic and embodied learning; and an ability to reflect on the relation between ideas, contexts and bodies
- the development of independent research and analysis skills, as well as skills relevant to the establishment of an organized, harmonious and constructive ensemble team

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Students are expected to put their names and student numbers on every page of their assignments.

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au. Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally in SAM there will no longer be any hard-copy submission; assessments must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible it will be stated on your course's moodle site with alternative submission details.

Late Assessment Penalties

An assessed task is deemed late if it is submitted after the specified time and date as set out in the course Learning Management System (LMS).

The late penalty is the loss of 5% of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part thereof the work is late. Lateness will include weekends and public holidays. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.

Work submitted fourteen days after the due date will be marked and feedback provided but no mark will be recorded. If the work would have received a pass mark but for the lateness and the work is a compulsory course component a student will be deemed to have met that requirement. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.

Work submitted twenty-one days after the due date will not be accepted for marking or feedback and will receive no mark or grade. If the assessment task is a compulsory component of the course a student will automatically fail the course.

Special Consideration Applications

You can apply for special consideration when illness or other circumstances interfere with your assessment performance.

Sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond your control may:

- * Prevent you from completing a course requirement,
- * Keep you from attending an assessable activity,
- * Stop you submitting assessable work for a course,
- * Significantly affect your performance in assessable work, be it a formal end-of-semester examination, a class test, a laboratory test, a seminar presentation or any other form of assessment.

For further details in relation to Special Consideration including 'When to Apply', 'How to Apply' and 'Supporting Documentation' please refer to the Special Consideration website: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit. It also applies to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without referencing and a student's own analysis to bring the material together.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices;

Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management

Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

Course Schedule

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 25 - 29 July	Lecture	Introduction to the course, and consideration of the following issues: What is acting? What is a character? What distinguishes modernist approaches to acting? What is 'ideology' and how does it inform acting theory and practice?
	Play Reading	Group reading of excerpts from key course playtext: Bertolt Brecht's 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle' (available in ARTS2125 Study Kit).
Week 2: 1 - 5 August	Lecture (Webster 327: 1-2.30/3pm)	In what ways was Stanislavsky's approach to acting influenced by late nineteenth-century forces of modernization in Europe, including 'new sciences' such as positivism and psychoanalysis? How does his work relate to both Romanticism and Naturalism? In what ways was his work underpinned by nineteenth-century liberal humanist ideology? What was the nature of his vision of the psyche and of 'nature'? And in what ways were his beliefs and worldviews reflected in his approach to the analysis and building of a scripted character?
	Tutorial (Webster 332, 334 & 335: 2.30-3-4pm)	In small groups come up with a set of key units and objectives/tasks for selected characters in selected excerpts from 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle'.
Week 3: 8 - 12 August	Workshop (Rm 334: 1-4pm)	Part One: Relaxation and 'getting into the right frame of mind'; work on Given Circumstances, Affective Memory, and Objectives/Tasks; the Action vs Activity distinction. Part Two: Stanislavskian textual analysis of part of the bathtub episode (Scene 4) in 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle'
Week 4: 15 - 19 August	Lecture (Rm 327: 1-2.30/3pm)	What was the nature of Brecht's response to some of the scientific and artistic legacies of modernization – Naturalism, Sociology and Marxism. What is the nature of the relation between Stanislavsky's psychological realism and Brecht's socialist realism? What aspects of Marxism influenced his approach to playtext interpretation and the relations between actor/character and spectator? Why was contradictory comportment and 'spectActing' so important in Brecht's theatre? How does his actor combine both an empathetic and socially critical attitude to her character?
	Tutorial: (Rms 332, 334 & 335: 2.30/3-4pm)	Read part of the scene 4 bathtub episode from 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle'. Then, in small groups, discuss how you would interpret and stage this scene today so that it produced some Historicization effects.
Week 5: 22 - 26 August	Workshop (Rm 334: 1-4pm)	Part One: Comportment and situation scenarios; creating V-effects – cross-cast interview; showing social circumstances – taxi ride; framing customs – greetings and farewells; Part Two: Rehearsing a Brecht text – Arrangement of the rape trial scene (scene 5) from 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle'
Week 6: 29 August - 2 September	Lecture (Rm 327: 1-2.30/3pm)	This lecture introduces Grotowski's 'poor theatre' and later investigations into, for example, paratheatre and objective drama. It asks: how did Grotowski respond to aspects of his socio-political context, including post-War Communism and Polish Catholicism? Why did his approach to performance emphasise self-transcendence and inter-human communion? It focuses particularly on how the latter were pursued through an array of strategies for peeling away the life mask(s), including forms of bodily training designed to release the performers from inhibitions and social conditioning. The lecture also explores the impact of Grotowski's attention to release and communion on the spectator/performer binary, and on contemporary performance.
	Tutorial: (Rms 332, 334 & 335:	Group work on Christopher Innes reading

	2.30/3-4pm)	
Week 7: 5 - 9 September	Workshop (Rm 334: 1-4pm)	Exercises will include: a series of loosening rotations arising from Grotowski's exercises plastiques and vocal exercises such as 'The choir' used by the Grotowski-inspired International Theatre Research Group, Kiss. The workshop will conclude with an exploration of Grotowski's work with text, using one of the playtext excerpts in the Study Kit as exercise material.
Week 8: 12 - 16 September	Lecture (Rm 327: 1-2.30/3pm)	How does Michael Kirby distinguish simple and non-acting from complex acting, and how does he account for the increased interest post 1960s in forms of performance other than complex acting? Why did many practitioners of the late 20C become ideologically disgruntled with hierarchical truth-telling text-based theatre? How does the challenge to text-based acting from the Artaud-Grotowski line differ from the challenge from the post-Brechtian line?
	Tutorial: (Rms 332, 334 & 335: 2.30/3-4pm)	Divide into 3 groups. Each group should prepare a short performance that demonstrates one of the following of Michael Kirby's points: 1) the difference between nonmatrixed performing and nonmatrixed representation; 2) the difference between received acting and simple acting; 3) a moment when simple acting becomes complex acting and/or vice versa.
Week 9: 19 - 23 September	Rehearsal 1 (Rms 332, 334, 335, Studio 1, Io Myers)	Demonstrate Research into and a Group Response to the Set Problem(s): 1. Demonstrate evidence of research into the chosen practitioner/company's approach to acting/performing and rehearsal; 2. Explain what aspects of the chosen practitioner/company's approach you will be focusing on and why; 3. Justify your ideas about interpretation and staging of your given scene.
Week 10: 4 - 7 October	Public Holiday - no class this week	
Week 11: 10 - 14 October	Rehearsal 1 (Rms 332, 334, 335, Studio 1, Io Myers)	Present a Plot Synopsis and Design Concept to Meg and CPL: 1. Outline the actions and movements in your performance. Explain the sequence of events and who is carrying out what (c. 1x A4 page). 2. Outline how the space and materials are going to be treated. For example, spatial arrangements (including where the spectator will be positioned) and props and costumes (c. 1x A4 page); 3. Outline Technical Requirements: lighting, sound, av (projection, tv, slides) (c. 1x A4 page).
Week 12: 17 - 21 October	Rehearsal 1 (Rms 332, 334, 335, Studio 1, Io Myers)	Blocking Rehearsal: Stage a walk-through of the performance (its sequences, arrangements and effects) with staff (Mark, Meg and Paul) as spectators/assistants
Week 13: 24 - 28 October	Dress & Technical Rehearsal (Io Myers)	Monday 24 October 9-12
	Performance Event & Wrap Up (Io Myers)	Sequence of 4 performances (1-3pm): Forum discussion of performances (3-3.40pm) Course Evaluation (3.40-4pm)

Resources

Prescribed Resources

- Playtext:
Bertolt Brecht, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, trans. James and Tania Stern (London: Methuen, 2005). [Available from UNSW Bookshop]
- Other: ARTS2125 Study Kit [Available from UNSW Bookshop]

Recommended Resources

- In the *Study Kit* you will find an extensive list of further reading suggestions.
- Moodle contains model student work.
- Website:

Do check the UNSW library's Theatre and Performance Subject Guide, which can be accessed via the Library main page at: <http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/arts>

Do also consult the main library catalogue that hosts an extensive collection of materials on actor/performer training.

Course Evaluation and Development

At the end of the course I will be using UNSW's Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI)

Process form. For further information on CATEI see: <https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/catei>

During the week 13 Forum, there will also be an informal verbal feedback event.

Many aspects of this course are the fruit of innovative student feedback from previous years – especially with regard to the nature and sequence of readings and assessment tasks. For example, the Performance task, which students have repeatedly praised, but also regarded as difficult to complete within the given time frame, has been significantly refined and streamlined.

I welcome constructive feedback – especially written feedback (emails, notes etc.) on the subject of course content, structure and assessment methods – not only at the end of the course, but as we go along.