LONDON DRAMATIC ACADEMY

Course Descriptions and Syllabi

Fordham University, Spring 2018
Fordham University
LONDON DRAMATIC ACADEMY (LDA)
CONSERVATORY ACTING PROGRAM

In an intensive fourteen week semester, the LDA Conservatory Acting Program offers students actor training for classical and contemporary roles in theatre. The fundamentals of imagination, story-telling and text analysis are core as well as physical and vocal training for the theatre.

You will have the opportunity to train your voice and body to express a writer’s words and intentions and embody character. The physical instrument requires daily training and development; in time choices are made artistically and not merely from habit.

As well as physical and imaginative development an actor needs to understand the world; in particular history and literature, to learn how to observe people and discuss/write about the work of other artists.

London now is an extraordinary mix of cultures from around the globe; traditional British values and people live side by side with immigrants from every corner of the world. London is recognised as the most multicultural and diverse city in the world. The observation of contemporary culture enables theatre professionals to make classical plays live for our time. In turn the contemporary artist draws inspiration and skill from that which has come before.

The British heritage of theatre and actor training is recognised as a cultural gift to the world; it is built on the heritage of Shakespeare and his contemporaries and the pre-eminence of language. Modern British actor training embraces practitioners such as Stanislavski and LeCoq. Britain is known for training actors with great emotional and physical expression as well as linguistic expertise and intelligence. Our British faculty (of actors, directors, teachers and physical theatre artists) works together to help students move towards that goal.

The four main courses consist of the following classes:
Acting, Acting Shakespeare, Audition Speeches; Movement, Stage Combat, Physical Theatre, Period Dance, Alexander Technique; Voice, Speech and Dialects; Space, Place and Text (a London site specific study of theatre history and dramatic literature) and Dramatic Criticism.

In order to maximize individual instruction, some classes in Audition Tutorials and Alexander Technique are one to one, all other classes are taught in small groups of 5-14 students.

Each term LDA includes 12-14 play visits, which are a mandatory part of the Dramatic Criticism module. Students will also go on a day trip to Stratford-upon-Avon combined with seeing a play at The Royal Shakespeare Theatre. Spring ‘18 will have the opportunity to work in association with the Royal Palaces.
GENERAL GUIDELINES

Actor training clearly requires daily attendance at all classes. The classroom often resembles a rehearsal room more than a classroom, each individual depends on the other for inspiration and learning. Missing a class causes problems for others and yourself and makes it difficult to catch up.

1. Students are expected to attend every class of every course for which they are registered. Serious illness, injury or emergency are, with proper documentation, the only acceptable excuses for lateness and absence.

2. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class and punctuality is a must. Being more than 10 minutes late will be considered as an absence. Arriving 5 minutes early will allow you to be ready to start on time.

3. Absence from class must be reported as soon as possible by the individual student to the London Centre office, and appropriate documentation submitted.

4. As assessment is partly based on the student’s progress throughout the term, more than two unexcused absences will have a negative impact on the final grade.

5. Any student who has been excessively absent from a course (for any reason) may be required to withdraw from that course without receiving credit.

6. Participation is a crucial element of all classes: students are expected to bring their full attention to each moment and when appropriate actively contribute in class, as well as work on several group projects that may be shown within the class or to an invited audience. It is a requirement that every member of the class is respectful of the opinion and performances of their classmates.

7. The LDA follows academic policies (including the grading system as well as academic integrity policy) outlined in Fordham University’s Undergraduate Bulletin (https://www.fordham.edu/UndergraduateBulletin/).

8. Theatre visits and cultural excursions organised by LDA are considered scheduled contact time. These are part of the program and attendance is mandatory.

9. Eating and drinking is generally not allowed in class.

10. Lack of personal discipline will be referred to the LDA Director.
# FORDHAM UNIVERSITY - NOTES ON GRADING

The information below is taken from the Undergraduate Faculty Handbook.

The entire document is available on the following website: [http://www.fordham.edu/info/24145/undergraduate_faculty_handbook](http://www.fordham.edu/info/24145/undergraduate_faculty_handbook)

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## 3.2.1 Grades Given by Course Instructors

The most common grades, given by instructors, are letter grades representing levels of academic achievement. These letter grades, their description and their quality points are indicated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent; Honors-level Work, Outstanding.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Still Excellent.</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Very Good; High Level of Performance.</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good; Solid and Above Average Level of Performance.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Good; Still Above Average.</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Average Level of Performance.</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory; Acceptable Level of Performance.</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Minimally Acceptable.</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Passing, But Unsatisfactory; Below Average Performance.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure. Inferior performance.</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While circumstances may vary, a consistent pattern of giving predominantly very high grades will be viewed with concern. Grade inflation hurts students by undermining the University’s reputation with graduate and professional schools. For further information on grades visit: [Explanation of Transcript](http://www.fordham.edu/info/24145/undergraduate_faculty_handbook) . NOTE: The use of approximate percent is at the discretion of the instructor.

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ACTING (LODA-3010) – 6 credits

This course has three modules:

I. Acting Shakespeare
II. Acting
III. Audition Tutorial

ACTING SHAKESPEARE

Course overview:
This course is designed to give students a strong, dynamic, practical approach to acting Shakespeare, enabling them to grow in confidence, openness, precision, understanding and skill. Students will work as a group on exercises which reveal ways of responding to Shakespeare’s verse, and by doing both speeches and scene work will have ample opportunity to explore, in both verse and prose, the rhetorical devices, imagery, and muscularity of language which make Shakespeare so satisfying and rewarding to act.

Course aims and objectives:
It is a commonly held belief in British training that ‘if you can do Shakespeare you can do anything’. The dual aims of the course are to give the student a deep practical experience of how to approach acting Shakespeare and for the student to deeply enrich all their acting work through this encounter. All aspects of the student’s approach as an actor will be strengthened and clarified, and the course will give each individual the opportunity to put into practice the core principles of working on Shakespeare’s texts, in a highly supportive collaborative atmosphere.

Course description:
Students meet with the instructor for a total of four hours per week, split over two days. They are expected to rehearse together and individually in their own time. There is significant accurate memorisation of text required.

The course will begin with group work, games and exercises through which students will absorb and explore ideas and techniques which will form the basis of the work throughout the semester. The aim is to create a very strong, nurturing environment of creative endeavour in which each individual can work to their greatest potential. Through group play, each actor will develop as an individual and simultaneously as a member of the ensemble. Key approaches to Shakespearean text will be introduced, investigated and reinvigorated. A shared vocabulary will be established.

Out of this exercise and game based work, students will be assigned speeches from a variety of plays, on which they will work in detail, both inside and outside of class. These pieces will aim to build on the strengths of the individual actor whilst challenging and extending their facilities. All work will be shared and there will be a consistent recognition and appreciation of the strength and value that the individual derives from this communal exploration. Even whilst the focus shifts on to the individual actor and their specific developmental needs, the atmosphere will remain one of dynamic, generous attentiveness, where the full engagement of each member of the class is imperative, and where group work is consistently returned to throughout the process.

The class will move on to explore collectively one or two of Shakespeare’s plays (as chosen by the course leader) and all students will do detailed work on one or more scenes with a scene partner(s) which will develop very naturally out of the work methods and text approaches established earlier in the semester. These scenes will be performed at a showing to faculty, both as a conclusion to the semester and as a significant part of experiencing the process of serious commitment to a rehearsal experience. Emphasis will be on responding with increasing skill and dexterity to the intrinsic demands of the text, understanding character in terms of use of language, and playing...
dynamically and honestly with one’s scene partner in a way that honours the immediacy, high stakes and muscularity of the writing.

Throughout the semester students will need to be highly motivated about rehearsing both inside and outside the class, with a progressive demand upon the student for out-of-class homework, memorisation and preparation. The approach throughout will be to create a highly dynamic, positive space for work that is both challenging and immensely enjoyable, and which will prove very enabling for the student.

Please wear loose/comfortable movement type clothing (no jeans!) for the early stages of the semester. In the second part of the term men will need hard-soled shoes, jackets and trousers (again no jeans) and women will need practise skirts and heels.

*The Complete Works: The Riverside Shakespeare* will be available through the LDA Library to be checked out and returned by the student.

Specific play texts will be required for purchase if they are not available through the LDA library.

Recommended Reading:
*The Actor and the Text* by Cicely Berry
*Playing Shakespeare* by John Barton

**Assessment:**
Students are assessed on:
- Responsiveness to the demands of the language and verse
- Accurate and timely memorisation
- Ability to be directed and change line readings and choices
- Emotional openness
- Physical expressiveness
- Cooperation and assistance in class and to scene partners
- Remembering changes and notes from one rehearsal to the next
- Doing the required reading and preparation
- Offering positive and appropriate energy and inspiration to the class
- Imaginative acting choices which are based in textual evidence
- Desire, commitment and participation
- Improvement

**Grades:**
Students will be graded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speeches</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene work</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**ACTING**

**Course Overview:**
This acting course has two elements:

i. **Acting Class** — focuses on equipping students with basic skills in acting and enabling them to expand and develop existing abilities by practical work.

ii. **Audition Tutorials** — throughout the semester students work with their special tutorial acting teacher in one-on-one sessions; they practice audition technique as well as prepare at least 2-3 specially chosen monologues/soliloquies which they may use for future audition mater
Course Overview:
This acting course focuses on equipping students with tools for the craft of acting, enabling them to expand and develop existing abilities by practical work.

Course aims and objectives:
The great British actor and director Laurence Olivier once said that the main purpose of any actor training was to start the process of transforming latent talent into real skill. This is ambitious indeed, but no acting class should work for anything less.
The course aims to give students a varied and useful tool bag.

Stanislavski (Teacher Kathryn Pogson):
A clear understanding of the seven basic questions of Stanislavski is explored and ways in which to answer these questions that are most fruitful for the actor.

Meisener (Teacher Bryan Oliver):
Exploring what it is to be an authentic, truthful actor, and how to rid ourselves of inhibiting self-conscious behaviour. We are all special. We are all unique. With the use of your unique imagination, we will do imaginary circumstance exercises that will give you some extra tools to get emotionally connected to scene work and the roles you play. We will do exercises to get you out of your head and focused on your acting partner so that you are able to work moment to moment off their behaviour. You will also learn how to do difficult, urgent, and important activities in public solitude, and through the use of emotional elements we will explore how to present exciting and flexible speeches for audition type situations.

Kubuki Dance, Butoh, Stanislavski, Le Coq and Michael Chekhov (Teacher You-Ri Hikari):
They all look different on the surface but there is something fundamental and common. We use movement, voice and text, and find ways of truthful acting, “Do you really mean it?” The aim is to explore: form in speech, precision in movement, being truthful in words.

The objective is to enable students to work independently and with confidence and to be prepared for any rehearsal process.

Discussion and practical exercises will explore many areas including: research into the world of the play, the characters relationship to that world, text analysis, a physical and an emotional life, preparation for rehearsal. Part of an actor’s responsibility is to become through the rehearsal process the humble expert on the character they are playing and make that a generous focused contribution to the production. A good actor serves the playwright.

Students will be expected to work together as an ensemble with discipline, dedication, rigour and willingness.

Course description:
Warm up games will be used to highlight acting challenges in a light hearted way.
A series of exercises will encourage students to explore the character they know best (themselves) and then to apply this process into developing a character from a play.
Students will study one character for the semester.
The cornucopia of London will be used for research purposes.
Students may be invited to embrace a European experience through the choice of texts.
Physical transformation will be explored through animal work.
There will be varied homework every week.
Text work will be rigorous intellectually and in action.
Work in process may be observed at the end of the semester.
There will be ongoing honest critique and encouragement.
Assessment:
The life of an actor is often hard and filled with uncertainty. Punctuality and preparedness, a mindful engagement, willingness to risk and to play, ego, humility and a generous spirit are essential, also that which cannot be taught but perhaps can be encouraged, imagination.

Unprofessional attitudes and behaviour, persistent lateness and poorly prepared work will be reflected in the mid-term and final grades.

Grade breakdown:
Preparation and participation  40%
Class Exercises  40%
Written Work  20%
AUDITION TUTORIAL

Course aims and objectives:
The audition tutorials aim to equip students with at least three or four speeches they can use as audition pieces, either professionally or for admission to graduate programs in Acting. The goal is for the student to gain confidence and skill in presenting audition pieces, to choose them carefully and appropriately, and have a wide selection easily available.

By the end of the course students will know what it is like to practically experience different styles of dramatic writing; explore characters very different in experience from their own; be able to practise dialects when appropriate; and be able to choose and work on an audition speech with knowledge and understanding.

Course description:
Each student has a 30-minute individual tutorial per week, focusing on developing three speeches from plays of different periods. Concentration will be on Shakespeare’s and English and American plays. Students are taught by British teachers and are therefore encouraged to use the cultural knowledge of these teachers to inform the work.

The course introduces students to a range of English plays and encourages them to familiarize themselves with these. Students read plays, select their speeches and learn text outside of class time. The first speech will be a verse speech from Shakespeare. The class’s projected pace is as follows:

Week 1: The student has chosen a speech and has done some preparatory research work. In-class discussion will focus on the suitability of the speech (which can be changed), on the character, story etc., as well as the text of the speech itself.

Week 2-3: The student has learned the speech. The class focuses on work on the text and physicality, using text analysis, rhythm, phrasing, relationships etc., and the student is encouraged to explore the emotional and linguistic journey.

Week 4: Audition work on speeches continues. The student is encouraged to be as relaxed and "in the moment" as possible; and is given guidance on how to mentally prepare for auditions and concentrate during the process.

Students often develop their own awareness of when it's time to move on to the next speech, so the pace of the class is based on the development of the individual student.

After the three basic pieces, students may read and select other pieces to work on. They receive guidance from the instructor as to the suitability of their choice, but emphasis is placed on the students’ reading, researching and finding a piece for themselves. Having extra pieces is an enormous advantage, as no one piece gets “stale”, but is kept “simmering.” However, only when the three basic selections are adequate, can students move on to the extra work.

During the course students receive guidance on choosing a suitable piece as well as on presenting themselves at an audition.

Texts used are available in the LDA’s library or a copy is provided by the instructor, but students are encouraged to purchase their own copies.

Where appropriate, corsets, a tailored jacket, heeled shoes etc. are worn. Students are expected to provide such clothing themselves (corsets and skirts are available at the LDA).
Assessment:
Motivation, participation and attitude are integral to the student’s progress. Grades will reflect hard work and application. Not learning texts or doing research asked for, on a regular basis without a reasonable excuse, will affect grading.

Grade breakdown:
Monologues taken in total: 50%
Effort and taking notes/direction: 35%
Improvement over the term: 15%
THEATRE HISTORY, LITERATURE & CRITICISM (LODA-3020) – 3 credits

This course, which focuses on analysing classical as well as modern plays, has two modules:

I. Space, Place and Text: English Theatre and Culture 1580-1960
II. Dramatic Criticism

SPACE PLACE AND TEXT

Course overview:
Why aren’t we still sitting in amphitheatres? How and why have theatre spaces changed? How has that shaped what audiences see? How have five centuries of European writers been influenced by theatre architecture, and vice versa? How has that affected the way language works in plays? How have these changes been reflected in other art forms? Which writers and theatre-makers have been the big innovators in the time since Shakespeare? What pushed them to be different and why did it stick?

In this module, students study a range of European plays from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century in search of the big answers about Theatre’s evolution and habitat. By the end of this course, students will have developed an understanding of the creation of different stage worlds and performance modes in past and present European drama, and formed an idea of the cultural background against which these developments have taken place.

Although the course is rooted in historical and textual analysis, this is nonetheless a course for practitioners not academics.

The class will meet once a week and involve a mixture of lecture, seminar, presentation of research by students and some close reading of the texts in question. In addition, there will be three walks through key London theatre locations.

Course Objectives:
On completion of this course you will be able to:
• discuss the relationship between plays and the architectural spaces and geographical places in which they are performed
• critically analyse the style of various dramatists and explore how they are responding to the challenges and opportunities presented by their theatre and society
• demonstrate an enhanced understanding of theatre’s place in European literature and culture
• have developed an understanding of the interpretive choices involved in performing and producing plays from different centuries
• mastered a number of transferable skills such as close reading, reviewing, presentation, researching, and critical writing.

Course Methodology:
Course content is delivered through close reading, discussion and field trips, and is fed by the work undertaken in other areas of the course, in particular the Dramatic Criticism module. Each of these activities is mutually enhancing.

Required Readings:
Students will be expected to read and reflect upon the relevant text before each class. There may be small changes to the following list to match the needs of the group, but plenty of notice will be given. Any edition of the plays is acceptable.

| Shakespeare | Mankind / The York Cycle Mystery Plays |
| Shakespeare | The Taming of the Shrew |
| Shakespeare | Macbeth |
Webster  The White Devil
Calderon  Life is a Dream
Wycherley  The Country Wife
Büchner  Woyzeck
Chekhov  Three Sisters / Cherry Orchard
Brecht  Mother Courage
Beckett  Krapp’s Last Tape
Kane  Blasted
Crimp  Attempts on Her Life

“Walking Lectures” (Dates and Times to be confirmed):
  1. Shakespeare’s Bankside and Middle Temple
  2. Drury Lane and Lincoln’s Inns Fields
  3. The West End and the London Coliseum

Course Assessment:
Mid-Term Paper (20%)
Class Presentation (25%)
Final Research Paper (35%)
Attendance & Participation (20%)

Marks are awarded for punctuality, attendance, robust participation in seminars, including completing preparatory reading and research tasks, and meeting deadlines.

DRAMATIC CRITICISM

Course overview:
This class will meet once a week for two hours. There will also be a weekly visit to the theatre. Students will be given a detailed schedule of our proposed theatre visits in advance.

Course aims and objectives:
This course is intended to introduce students to the current British theatre scene in London and to develop and polish their critical skills in respect of drama both as it exists on the printed page and more importantly in performance.

During the semester the class will visit not just the principal publicly subsidised theatre companies who play in London, the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company for example, but also take account of commercial theatre on ‘Shaftsbury Avenue’ and work that is being done away from the West End, work that is innovative and often experimental and which rejects the strong textual base of much of British theatre.

Course description:
Each weekly class will follow a similar pattern. The instructor will talk briefly about the play that the group has seen together during the previous week, endeavouring to set it in an historical, social and cultural context. During the rest of class time, the group will discuss the production that they have attended, hoping to light upon a set of critical perspectives from which to judge the performance, the performers and the play itself. The class will also pay attention to the space in which the performance was given and how that possibly has determined the style of the production. We shall also take due account of design - scenography, costume and lighting.

Written work
Students are required to write two short pieces of work for this course, each of which should be no longer than 1000 words. These are likely to be extended critical reviews of one or two of the plays that the class will have seen
together. However, it may be that students will be able to write about shows that they have seen outside class. This will be at the discretion of the instructor.

In both papers students are required to demonstrate that they have acquired the necessary critical skills to review theatre from a variety of perspectives that include performance, design and the wider cultural context that informs any production in the theatre.

The first paper will be researched and written outside class and must be submitted before the mid-semester break. The second paper, which students will also prepare in their own time outside class, must be submitted during the final week of the semester. There will be tutorial help if required for both papers.

Theatre Journal
As well as this paper, students will need to keep an informal weekly theatre journal in which they record their impressions of the theatre that they are seeing both for class and under their own initiative. So, not just what the group visits together for class but other performances and events that students find for themselves.

In these journals students should record:
- Initial impressions of a show – was it a successful production or not
- Take a view of the performances within the show
- Consider the choices made by the actors and the director
- Review the design elements within the production - scenography, costume and lighting
- Review the themes and ideas that seemed to underpin the production
- Avoid the use of poor English which includes clichés and lazy descriptions – the word ‘awesome’ has no place in a good theatre journal and any student who is ‘blown away’ should seek immediate medical treatment
- Students should always seek to polish and to extend their critical vocabulary, looking for the right word or phrase to convey their impression
- Pay particular attention to detail in a performance or a production in what they describe from what they have seen. Theatre is an ephemeral art: dramatic criticism helps us to ‘fix’ what may disappear.

The instructor will want to see these journals twice during the semester, two weeks before the mid-semester break and again in the penultimate week of the term.

Assessment:
Students will be graded as follows:
- Journal: 20%
- Two papers: 50%
- Attendance and contribution to class discussion: 30%
PHYSICAL TRAINING FOR ACTORS (LODA-3030) – 4 credits

This practical course has five modules:
I. Period Dance
II. Physical Theatre
III. Stage Combat
IV. Movement
V. Alexander Technique (required but non-credit bearing)

Note: The above listed classes often involve physical activities focusing on strength, balance, endurance, flexibility. If you have a chronic physical condition (with knee, heart, back or lungs (like asthma), or a condition requiring medication) which might be aggravated by intense physical activities (stretching, falling, tumbling, twisting or running), please notify the instructors in advance so that adjustments can be worked out.

PERIOD DANCE

Course overview:
This course will give an overview of the different styles of dance that developed through Europe and later worldwide using the earliest written dance notation from the renaissance to the early 20th century with a view to building the background knowledge needed by an actor in approaching the drama of different periods and placing dance in context.

Course aims and objectives:
Learning key dances from the Renaissance to the early 20th century, students will develop greater musicality, bodily awareness and improved posture. Through these dances, students are put in touch with period style in a practical way. The students will also explore how dance and movement style was embedded in the drama and social interaction of each period widening their understanding of the texts.

Course description:
This class meets once a week. Students learn and practice a repertoire of dances from the Medieval to 20th century Ragtime and Charleston. This will culminate in a final presentation that will include the rehearsed dances and researched extracts from texts placing the choreographies in context. Students are also encouraged to include their own musical talents to enhance the showing.

During the semester, students will be required to submit 2 assignments and a supporting investigation. Topics and handing - in dates will be provided across the weeks along with detailed choreography and period style notes. All of this will be collated in the course files.

Preparation
Please come equipped with a loose leaf display file (with transparent pockets) where you can keep your research, written pieces and images etc. You may want to divide according to period. Bring images of dance for the periods the course will be looking at: Ancient Greece, Medieval, 1450 - 1540, 1550 - 1640, 1650 - 1800, 1815 - 1900, Early 20th Century. For example, for each of those periods you could bring a male and a female image showing dress/fashions of wealthy people, and one of the peasant or working classes. In one sense, the more images the better, to give an overview of the times not just in dance but via fashions, manners and deportment.
**Required Course attire**

*Men* - white shirt; black movement trousers; fitted/buttoned waistcoat; black jazz shoes (thin soles, **NOT** sneaker-type); hard soled, formal shoes—ideally character shoes with a low cuban heel however a normal smart shoe with clean sole will suffice.

*Women* - thin white/black top (to be worn under corset (corset supplied); ankle length, full black skirt (supplied); jazz/ballet shoes; character shoes

**Important note**

Students are required to attend classes ready - dressed to start and the time - table allows 10 minutes for this.

**Assessment:**

Assessment will be based on understanding of style in performance, grasp of figures, partnering, and group awareness.

Students will be graded as follows:

Focus & retention 20%

Progress 20%

Style & partnering 20%

Group & spatial awareness 20%

Written assignments & musicality 20%

**Course requirements:**

1. Punctuality. Please appear, correctly dressed, including corset and skirt for girls.

2. Learning the skills required for dancing needs a disciplined approach and full concentration in order to absorb, learn and improve the dances.

3. Respect for one’s partner is very important, as is an outgoing and helpful attitude to the whole group.

4. Performance of each dance should be taken as an acting exercise, with good eye-contact and characterization, based on the manners and dress of the day.
PHYSICAL THEATRE

Course aims and objectives:
This course, in relationship with Movement classes, aims to develop acting through bodily impulse. Students are introduced to an approach to theatre that is based on movement and improvisation, where the actor is also encouraged to be a creator. The course draws on the Jacques Lecoq School (Paris) exercises. Students will refine their movement, co-ordination and improvisation skills and also learn how “acting” can start with impulses from the body and not just the head. Students are given examples of application of these skills to the classical approach to theatre and are encouraged to apply what they learn in their other courses as well as to the theatre productions they see.

Course description:
Classes take place over ten weeks, meeting once a week for 1.5 hours.

Students begin with playing complicity/group bonding games and with study of different movement qualities in order to start opening their imaginations to the possibilities of physical theatre. Students observe how different qualities of movement can completely alter the same situation. Mask work introduced with use of character and neutral masks.

Course structure and activities:

- **Working with the 8 states of tension**
  Playing with the amount of tension held in the body, a very playful period during which students explore the theatrical possibilities of a purely physical provocation. The work involves improvisational situations in which students create their own short sketch using the 8 states of tension.

- **“Being in the moment” improvisation games**
  Improvisation exercises using a strong physical provocation. Work includes complicity between actors, the art of listening and accepting, learning awareness of the audience, spontaneity and timing.

- **Mask work and half mask work**
  Mask work will focus on both neutral mask and character half mask. Neutral mask will help identify performance habits and tendencies as well as develop visual imagination, and balance and calm in the body. It will help find a neutral platform from where the actor can build. Half mask work focuses on creating character through mask, the extreme physicality necessary for mask work, and how to make them communicate with and without verbal language.

It is important to note that the course structure is flexible depending on student/tutor needs and responses and may not necessarily cover all the above areas.

Please make sure to wear movement clothes i.e. joggers or leggings and t shirts - black is preferable but neutral is important i.e. no emblems etc.

Recommended reading:
*The Moving Body* by Jacques Lecoq (Methuen) available from bookshops specialising in theatre and in the LDA library.

Course requirements:
1. Punctuality.
2. A playful approach to the work is required. In order to help establish this ambience each week a game will be played. It is crucial not to confuse this requirement with a lack of seriousness. All excellent actors take their work very seriously, even the funniest ones.
3. Full focus throughout the class. (No distracting private conversations.)
4. Support for fellow students is essential.
Assessment:
Grading will be based on attitude/participation (40%) and ability and progress in interpreting physical provocation (60%) throughout the course.

STAGE COMBAT

Course overview:
This course focuses on the exploration of armed combat fundamentals with an emphasis on safety and technique. It helps students acquire skills in armed and unarmed combat that are useful in producing convincing stage effects especially in classical performance.

Course aims and objectives:
The course introduces students to the underlying principles of safety and performance of stage combat with weapons. Emphasis is placed on enhancing positive partnering skills by emphasizing teamwork, adaptability, and the principles of safety in all partnering exercises. Students will improve their physical conditioning (strength, balance, endurance, flexibility) through warm-ups and stage combat activities. Students will develop an understanding of the safety techniques involved in stage weapon work, confidence in performance with weapons, and the competency needed to safely perform a choreographed fight.

Course description:
Students work with the instructor once a week during a 2 hour session. During the first few weeks, students learn basic sword technique and footwork. Once these are satisfactorily mastered, classes work towards the performance of a choreographed sword fight within the context of a theatrical scene, which the students perform at the end of the term. Regular attendance and punctuality is vital because this class centers on the idea of building trust with a partner and on the concept of teamwork.

Course attire/physical requirements:
Students are required to wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing and suitably athletic footwear (trainers/sneakers), which allows for complete freedom of movement. Please note that students wearing inappropriate clothing or footwear will be excluded from class, due to safety considerations.

Assessment:
Students will be graded on their progress throughout the term as well as on their final performance.

Safety: 30%
Technique: 20%
Intention & Reaction: 20%
Overall Performance: 20%
Classwork: 10%

This is based on continuous assessment of each student's progress throughout the term culminating in their final performance.
MOVEMENT

Course overview:
This class will focus on strengthening and stretching the body to enable students to carry, lift and support each other. They will then be encouraged to use these skills creatively in a context of their own choosing. A practical introduction to Laban’s analysis of dynamic qualities will help to inform this work and encourage the mind-body connection.

Course aims and objectives:
The classes aim to develop physical confidence, imaginative use of the body in a dramatic context and the ability to work creatively in a partnership.

In this course students should learn how to work safely and effectively. They should also be physically confident and able to combine their technical knowledge with the creative so that the work they produce is embodied and skilful.

Course description:
The first part of the movement class will focus on strengthening and stretching the body – the degree of difficulty will increase as the student’s ability increases. Students will learn how to carry, lift and support each other’s body weight and to use these skills in a dramatic context. A practical introduction to Laban’s analysis of dynamic qualities will help to inform this work and encourage the mind-body connection.

The class will meet for 1.5 hours per week. Students should have a note book in which to write down the content of the class and what they have learnt.

Additional Guidelines:
Students should wear loose, comfortable clothing and have bare feet. Knee pads are not compulsory, but useful.

Students should always be punctual and ready to work. If they have any injuries they should inform the instructor before the commencement of the class. If they are unable to participate in the class, they should watch and take notes. Students are expected to attend ALL classes.

Assessment:
Students will have a practical movement assessment and feedback at the end of the term.

Grading criteria:
1) Work ethic/attitude 25%
2) General improvement/effort 25%
3) Creative/imaginative ability 25%
4) Technical ability and understanding 25%
ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE (required but not a credit-bearing component)

Course overview:
This technique, developed by an actor F.M. Alexander, has been an integral part of all major acting programs in the UK for the past 50 years. Performers use it to improve stamina, increase clarity of perception, free up spontaneity and reduce stage fright. Learning the technique enables them to rediscover a state of balanced poise and more freedom of movement, which are invaluable to making their acting more natural and fluid. Many vocal and breathing issues can also be addressed in the long term. LDA students receive one-on-one instruction.

Course aims and objectives:
As a result of the work in this course students are expected to:
  • learn the basic principles of Alexander technique;
  • improve awareness of their particular physical pattern of movement;
  • recognize whether these are helpful or unhelpful to their desired end;
  • apply these principles in their daily lives and consequently in their performances.

Course description:
Establishing good dialogue and a relationship based on trust and integrity between instructor and pupil is integral in this class. Students engage in a weekly, one-on-one session, during which they are shown “how” to develop quietness in movement through a variety of simple activities which help to develop fluidity and ease. Students are encouraged to continue the work outside the classroom, guided by self-observation. Articles and handouts are given at different stages, which students reflect on and discuss during the sessions; some written work is also required. The pace of the work varies based on the needs of the individual student.

Students are not graded. The assessment is a weekly, ongoing process, with an overall appraisal at the end of the term.
VOICE TRAINING FOR ACTORS (LODA-3040) – 3 credits

This practical course has two modules:

I. Speech / Dialect
II. Voice

SPEECH AND DIALECT

Course overview:
In this course, students will develop speech articulation in their own voice as well as investigate a British voice for performance through the nuance of Received Pronunciation (RP). RP is an accent historically referred to as ‘Queen’s English’ or ‘BBC English’, and has long been studied in drama schools for its clear, dexterous, and precise quality of articulation. Students will build their facility in RP through practical exercises, the application of the International Phonetic Alphabet as well as discussing how the cultural aspects of Britain influence vocabulary, rhythm and intonation and other elements of speech.

Course aims and objectives:
The course aims to enable students to communicate clearly on stage in their own accent, and to provide students with the practical opportunity to learn standard Received Pronunciation. The course also aims to expose students to two non-RP English dialects through practical exploration.

At the end of the course, students are expected:
- To have a clear understanding of the anatomy of the vocal tract;
- To have developed greater awareness and control of the actions of the jaw, and moveable articulators;
- To have an understanding of how to modify speech patterns to meet the acoustic requirements of a stage space;
- To be able to speak in Received Pronunciation and to recognise other variants of UK dialects.

Course description:

Students will meet in class for 2 hours, once a week.

The course will focus mainly in practical exercises. Initially, we will investigate vocal anatomy and the capability to adjust speech quality through manipulation of resonance in the vocal tract. We will look at the fundamentals of dialect work and investigate consonants, vowels and their representative symbol in the International Phonetics Alphabet.

The class will investigate the Standard RP fundamental features such as the articulatory set-up, resonance, hesitation sound, tone and direction. Class time will focus on accurately modelling RP features. Subsequent classes will identify unique sound features of RP such as the variants of rhoticity and light and dark l’s.

As the course progresses, it will explore the variety of RP vowels, diphthongs and the pattern of their usage. In each class there will be practical exercises to put into habit new sound patterns and qualities of rhythm.

After the mid-term break, the class will begin to investigate more complex features of the RP that govern rhythm, intonation and running speech assimilation and elision. These features will make the accent sit more naturally in the students’ own voice and become more believable in performance.

The final few weeks will investigate the accent in communication. The class will look at monologues, short scenes and duologues so students have an opportunity to perfect the accent for repertoire, audition or performance.

NOTE: All sessions will include a vocal and articulatory warm up.
Assessment:
Students will be graded on their participation, and achievement in classroom exercises.

Participation and achievement in class: 65%
Mid-Term and Final Quiz: 35%

Note: It is the student’s responsibility to catch up on any work missed due to absence, and to find out about any homework assignments that have been set.

If a student is late for a class, this will be counted as an absence. Poor attendance will negatively impact your grade. After an initial absence, any subsequent absence will have a consequence for your grade for this class.

VOICE

Course overview:
This course is an introduction to professional voice work; an exploration of voice as an act of our whole body. It looks at how simple, practical techniques can free our body and voice and the importance of such craft work to the process of working as a professional actor.

Course aims and objectives:
The course aims and objectives are the following:
- To lay the foundation for the development of a healthy, flexible, strong, natural and expressive voice.
- To explore the interdependence of body, breath and voice.
- To develop connections between voice, speech and the expression of thought, emotion and imagination.
- To encourage personal responsibility in the development and application of vocal techniques.
- To provide the student with an awareness of the difference between the habitual voice and the free voice.

Course description:
The class meets for 2 hours each week. The course is practical and physical, exploring how voice is a product of our whole body, a physical act. The course is based around the three foundation stones of voice work - body, breath and the free, placed voice.

In the initial stages of the course, we explore relaxation, release and alignment - enabling the students to enhance their awareness of their own bodies and how any habits or tensions may be affecting their ability to vocalise freely.

As the term progresses, we will explore the various ways of releasing and then harnessing our breath. Through a series of practical, focused, simple exercises, students will have the opportunity to engage with a low, supported breath. In its simplest sense, we will be aiming to relearn what we once knew by instinct - how to breathe freely.

As the students’ technique and familiarity with the work deepens, we will widen our frames of reference to include the various areas of range, resonance and placing the voice. Throughout the classes, there is discussion of the practical application of the work and how it can inform and aid the students’ work as actors.

This work will be applied to a range of texts, utilising techniques and exercises from a variety of practitioners. Students will work to strengthen the integration of voice and acting.
The classes are taught as a group, but each student will receive individual attention and feedback in relation to their own needs. At the end of the course, students will leave with an enhanced understanding of their own bodies and voices and with a series of exercises designed to maintain good practice in future.

The classes are physical, practical and focused on learning through doing, so students need to wear appropriate, loose clothing and should be prepared to work in bare feet. No text needs to be purchased specifically for this class, though a recommended reading list will be provided for those who wish to explore the subject further. Handouts detailing fundamental exercises will be given to students towards the end of term.

Assessment:
Students’ assessment is based initially on the vocal progress they make over the term (40%). A combination of observing them in class, tutorial work, and their achievement in their final assignment will be used to assess progress.

Students are also assessed on their professional conduct and attitude to the work in class (40%); this is as important as their vocal improvement. Note is taken of how well they work on their own, their engagement with the process and their responsiveness to their fellow students.

A portion of the total grade (20%) will be based on a final assessment in class. As part of the assessment the students will be asked to warm themselves up as if they were preparing for a performance. Each student will also be assigned a passage of text to work on and present to the group, according to a specific brief (focusing on the individual voice usage).
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment criteria:</th>
<th>Professional Attitude</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Individual Achievement</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard of discipline, readiness, time-management, personal organisation skills; health, well-being and safety of self and group.</td>
<td>Ability to develop values, attitudes and processes that progress the work of the group and the individual.</td>
<td>Competence in vocal techniques; appropriate knowledge and understanding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commended</td>
<td>Reliable, regular and punctual attendance; evidence of thorough preparation and initiative; high standard of personal organisation skills; safe and supportive practices.</td>
<td>Ability to work independently, imaginatively, courageously and creatively to progress across a range of demanding work.</td>
<td>Fusion of appropriate knowledge, understanding, cognitive and technical skills; creative exploration in a range of work.</td>
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<td>Grades A,A-,B+</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Reliable, regular and punctual attendance; evidence of preparation, both assigned and independent; safe and supportive work practices.</td>
<td>Demonstration of appropriate values, attitudes, practices and processes across a range of demanding work.</td>
<td>Demonstration of appropriate knowledge, understanding, cognitive and technical skills; ability to apply and explore these in a range of work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grades B,B-,C+, C,C-</td>
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<td>Underachieving</td>
<td>More than one unexcused absence or late arrival; lack of preparation; unsafe or unsupportive work practices.</td>
<td>Insufficient demonstration of appropriate values, attitudes, practices and processes appropriate to a range of demanding work.</td>
<td>Limited demonstration of appropriate knowledge, understanding and technical skills; limited ability to apply these.</td>
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<td>Grades D, F</td>
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