

**DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONS
PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE
FALL 2025**

**ACTING: FUNDAMENTALS
MPAET-UE 1050**

3 points

Mondays & Wednesdays, 10:00-11:40am

Location: Pless Hall, Room C10 (Basement Acting Lab)

Instructor Name: Crystal Lucas-Perry MFA, MA, LCAT-P, RDT

Instructor Pronouns (optional): she/her

Preferred Method of Contact and Availability:

Email: clp323@nyu.edu

Phone: 347.460.2441

[Google Folder](#) with course materials

Student Office Hours

By appointment – professor will respond 12-24 hours to emails, texts and voicemails

Course description

This course provides a foundation upon which to build the technique necessary to do the actor's job: to live truthfully under the imaginary circumstances of the play. In this Stanislavski/Uta Hagen-based approach, students participate in a guided study of self-observation and apply discoveries to monologues and scene work.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Observe their own physical, emotional, and mental habits, as well as those of others, to enhance their understanding of human behavior and apply these observations to their acting work.
- Demonstrate an understanding of foundational acting techniques, drawn from a variety of practitioners and theorists, including but not limited to Stanislavski and Hagen, and integrate these methods into monologue and scene work.
- Analyze scripts and develop authentic, truthful characters by exploring their motivations, relationships, and emotional lives, while fully immersing themselves in the imaginary circumstances of the play.
- Work collaboratively with scene partners, developing communication, trust, and responsiveness to create dynamic and engaging performances that reflect the principles of ensemble acting.

Prerequisites/Corequisites:

None

Dress

Please remember to dress comfortably for all classes. We will always begin with warm up exercises that involve activating the body, breath, and voice. Consider your comfort level as per the NYU Performing Arts Guidelines regarding COVID.

Course Format:

Instructional time will be highly experiential and on its feet. Each class session will begin with a physical and vocal warm-up (student-led starting in Week 4) and close with a brief reflection or check-out. Activities will include acting exercises, improvisation, monologue and scene rehearsals, and ensemble-based explorations. Students will regularly work in pairs or small groups, with ongoing peer-to-peer and instructor feedback.

There will be opportunities for students to lead the class through warm-ups and to share Actor Theorist Presentations. Reflection will be ongoing through in-class discussion and the required actor's journal. Rehearsal and preparation outside of class are expected, but in-class note-taking will be minimal, as the work is primarily participatory and physical.

Bibliography and Other Required Texts**Required Reading**

- *Freeing the Natural Voice: Imagery & Art in the Practice of Voice* by Kristin Linklater

Recommended Reading

- *Sanford Meisner on Acting* by Sanford Meisner and Dennis Longwell
- *An Actor Prepares* by Konstantin Stanislavski
- *The Lee Strasberg Notes* edited Lola Cohen
- *Respect for Acting* by Uta Hagen
- *Black Acting Methods Critical Approaches* by Sharrell D. Luckett with Tia M. Shaffer
- *The Viewpoints Book* by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau
- *Improvisation for the Theatre* by Viola Spolin
- *Letters to a Young Artist* by Anna Deavere Smith
- *Stella Adler: The Art of Acting* compiled and edited by Howard Kissel
- *On the Technique of Acting* by Michael Chekhov

- *True & False: Heresy and Common Sense for the Actor* by David Mamet – exploring his acting technique of Practical Aesthetics with William H. Macy
- *4Theatre of the Oppressed* by Augusto Boal

Assignments

1. Warm-Up Presentations (15%)

Warm-ups are essential to an actor's practice. Starting in Week 4, you will work in teams to lead the class through a 20–30 minute warm-up drawn from Kristin Linklater's *Freeing the Natural Voice*. Each group is responsible for planning, rehearsing, and clearly explaining their sequence.

The goal is not only to practice leadership but also to deepen your own connection to vocal and physical preparation. You should understand why each exercise matters and how it connects to acting technique.

Due Dates:

- Sept 22 – Nov 19 (Weeks 4–12, rotating schedule)

Rubric:

- Preparation – 30%
- Clarity & Leadership – 25%
- Engagement – 25%
- Accuracy/Connection to Voice Work – 10%
- Professionalism – 10%

Ask Yourself:

- Do I know why I chose each exercise in this warm-up?
- Am I leading with clarity and confidence?
- Is the class engaged and supported by my leadership?
- How does this warm-up connect to the acting work we're doing?

2. Monologues (15%)

Monologue work is the foundation of this class. Over the semester you will prepare two contrasting pieces: one earlier in the term, one later. These assignments are about practicing the essentials of truthful acting from classical, dramatic, contemporary or comedic texts. You will work on identifying clear objectives, making bold choices, listening to yourself, and connecting to the given circumstances.

The first monologue is due in Week 6. This will be your first chance to put our warm-up work, self-observation, and rehearsal habits into performance. The second monologue is due in Week 12, after you've gained more experience in scene work and ensemble exercises. You are expected to read the entire play from which the monologue derives, rehearse consistently outside of class, come fully memorized, and incorporate feedback from class sessions into your preparation.

Due Dates:

- First Monologue → Oct 14 & 15 (Week 7)
- Second Monologue → Nov 17 & 19 (Week 12)

Rubric:

- Preparation & Memorization – 25%
- Objective/Action – 25%
- Truthfulness & Presence – 25%
- Vocal/Physical Choices – 15%
- Professionalism – 10%

Ask Yourself:

- Do I know what my character wants, moment to moment?
- Am I making clear, playable choices with tactics and objectives?
- Am I truly present, or just “performing” my monologue?
- How does this piece challenge me to grow as an actor?

3. Scene Presentation (15%)

Scenes give you the chance to work directly with a partner, which means listening, responding, and trusting your ensemble. The first round of scene presentations is informal, work-in-progress showing during Week 9. The goal is not polish, but growth: you should bring in choices, test them in front of the class, and remain open to coaching and feedback.

You and your partner are responsible for scheduling outside rehearsals and arriving prepared for in-class coaching. These presentations are about practicing collaboration and learning how to sustain truthful behavior in relationships.

Due Date:

- Scene Presentations → Oct 27 & 29 (Week 9)

Rubric:

- Collaboration – 30%

- Clarity of Objectives/Tactics – 25%
- Truthfulness & Ensemble Energy – 25%
- Growth Between Rehearsals – 10%
- Professionalism – 10%

Ask Yourself:

- Am I listening and responding to my partner, or waiting for my turn?
- How are my choices helping — or blocking — my partner's work?
- Do I know the given circumstances of this scene fully?
- Am I taking risks, or playing it safe?

4. Final Scene Presentations (15%)

Your final project is a culminating performance of your scene, presented on the last day of class. This is your chance to bring together everything you've learned: applying technique, sustaining a character, responding truthfully to your partner, and committing to the stakes of the moment.

Unlike the midterm scene presentations, this showing should feel complete and confident. You are expected to demonstrate growth from earlier rehearsals, integrate notes, and take ownership of your process.

Due Dates:

- Final Scene Presentations → Dec 8 & 10 (Week 15)

Rubric:

- Integration of Technique – 30%
- Character Development – 25%
- Connection & Ensemble – 25%
- Polish & Commitment – 10%
- Professionalism – 10%

Ask Yourself:

- How has my work grown since my first scene showing?
- Am I fully committing to the stakes of the moment?
- Do my choices feel embodied and specific, or general?
- Am I showing technique, or living truthfully in the circumstances?

5. Actor's Journal (15%)

Your journal is your private rehearsal room on paper. This is where you track discoveries, reflect on exercises, and notice your own growth. Use it to record observations about yourself, your classmates, and the rehearsal process. Think of it as evidence of your evolution across the semester.

The **final five minutes of each class will be reserved for journaling**. You may use this time to capture immediate reflections, observations, or questions that surfaced during the day's work. These in-class notes can later be expanded into your formal typed entries.

At the end of the semester, you will submit **at least 10 entries** (1–2 pages each, minimum). Entries should not simply summarize class; they should reflect how the work is landing on you, what you're struggling with, and how you're applying the tools.

While entries should normally be typed, you are welcome to include up to **three creative entries**. These may take the form of drawings, collages, poetry, or other artistic responses that capture your process in ways beyond text. Creative entries must still clearly connect to class content and your growth as an actor. So when it comes to the breakdown of assignments, I feel like you've put to see in preparation for the final scene and for the regular season, but the idea is that it's just one thing they're obviously being graded throughout the semester with their seating presentations, but the greatest for the final see

Due Date:

- Final Actor's Journal → Dec 10 by 11:59pm

Rubric:

- Depth of Reflection – 40%
- Process Documentation – 30%
- Clarity & Organization – 20%
- Submission Guidelines – 10%

Ask Yourself:

- Am I reflecting honestly, or just reporting what happened?
- Can I see evidence of growth from my first entry to my last?
- What questions do I still have about my process?
- How am I applying class discoveries to rehearsal or performance?

6. Actor Theorist Presentations (15%)

Acting is built on many different traditions and approaches. In groups, you will research one major acting theorist (such as Stanislavski, Meisner, Hagen, Adler, Chekhov, Boal, or others) and teach their technique to the class. Your presentation should include a brief overview of the theorist's philosophy and one applied activity that lets the ensemble try out the technique in practice.

The purpose of this project is to broaden your toolbox as an actor, and to practice leading your peers in learning.

Due Dates:

- Nov 10 – Nov 12 (Week 11)

Rubric:

- Content Knowledge – 30%
- Clarity & Organization – 25%
- Applied Activity – 25%
- Creativity – 10%
- Professionalism – 10%

Ask Yourself:

- Do I understand this theorist's technique well enough to teach it?
- Am I explaining the concepts clearly, without jargon?
- Does my applied activity help the class experience the method directly?
- How does this theorist's work connect to my own acting process?

7. Participation, Attendance & Punctuality (15%)

This is an experiential, ensemble-based course. Your presence, focus, and consistency directly affect your learning and the learning of your classmates. Participation means being fully engaged in exercises, supporting your scene partners, and contributing to the ensemble with respect and professionalism.

Attendance and punctuality are graded as outlined in the Attendance Policy. Two unexcused absences are permitted; additional unexcused absences lower your grade. Three tardies equal one absence. Excused absences include illness, family emergencies, religious observances, and mainstage production conflicts with prior notice (*see Attendance Policy section for full details on excused and unexcused absences*).

Due Dates:

- Ongoing throughout the semester

Rubric:

- Attendance – 30%
- Preparedness – 25%
- Engagement – 25%
- Collaboration – 10%
- Professionalism – 10%

Ask Yourself:

- Am I showing up consistently, on time, and ready to work?
- Am I actively engaged during warm-ups, exercises, and partner work?
- Do I contribute positively to the ensemble atmosphere?
- Am I balancing my own growth with responsibility to my peers?

Policies on Late Assignments

Work for this course must be completed by or submitted on the dates listed/chosen. For late assignments, participants will lose one letter grade for every day an assignment is late, unless alternative arrangements have been negotiated with the instructor, in advance of respective deadlines.

Grading and Rubrics**Rubrics**

See Assignments section for grading criteria per assignment

Grading Weight

- **Warm-Up Presentations – 15%** (Sept 22 – Nov 19)
- **Monologues – 15%** (First due Oct 6 & 8; Second due Nov 17 & 19)
- **Scene Presentation – 15%** (Due Oct 27 & 29)
- **Final Scene Presentations – 15%** (Due Dec 8 & 10)
- **Actor's Journal – 15%** (Due Dec 10 by 11:59pm)
- **Actor Theorist Presentations – 15%** (Nov 10 – 19)
- **Participation/Attendance/Punctuality – 15%** (Ongoing)

TOTAL: 105%

(No extra credit offered since the additional 5% is already built in.)

Determination of Final Grade

Example Letter Grade	Example Numerical Value
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	65-66
F	64 and below

Attendance Policy

This course is experiential and ensemble-driven, which means the learning depends on the people in the room. Each class builds on shared exercises, rehearsals, and discoveries that can't simply be repeated later. Your consistency matters — for your development as an actor and for your partners — which is why attendance and punctuality are 15% of your grade (see *Assignments & Grading Breakdown* for details)..

- **Expectations:** You may have up to 2 unexcused absences without penalty. Each additional unexcused absence lowers your grade (3 tardies = 1 absence).
- **Excused Absences:** Religious observance, illness, family emergencies, and approved NYU mainstage production conflicts count as excused absences. Please give advance notice whenever possible.
- **No Remote Attendance:** This is a fully in-person course. NYU policy does not allow students to “Zoom in” if they are unwell. If you're sick, stay home, but you'll be marked absent.
- **Responsibility:** If you miss class, you must let me know in advance and follow up with your partner(s) to stay on track. All assignments are still due on time.
- **Ensemble Commitment:** We will often break into pairs or small groups. Your absence impacts not just you but the entire ensemble. Consistency, reliability, and respect for your peers are central to this class.

Class Meeting Schedule

Week 1

- **Mon Sept 1** – No class (*Labor Day*)
- **Wed Sept 3**
 - Instructor-led warm-up
 - Syllabus overview, community agreements, ensemble building
 - Observation intro activity
 - Assign warm-up teams
 - Introduce in class Journaling (last 5 minutes)

Week 2

- **Mon Sept 8**
 - Instructor-led warm-up
 - Uta Hagen Object Exercises: purposeful movement
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
- **Wed Sept 10**
 - Instructor-led warm-up
 - Hagen Object Exercises continued
 - Reflection and discussion
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)

Week 3

- **Mon Sept 15**
 - Instructor-led warm-up
 - Text exploration: cold → coached readings
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
 - **Due:** Select BOTH monologues (first and second)
- **Wed Sept 17**
 - Instructor-led warm-up
 - Scoring text: beats, objectives, tactics
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)

Week 4 — *Student Warm-Ups Begin*

- **Mon Sept 22**
 - Student-led warm-up (Linklater Work Day)
 - Voice/body integration
 - First monologue table work
 - Scenes and Scene Partners assigned
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
 - **Due:** Warm-Up Presentations begin (15% of grade; teams rotate Sept 22–Nov 19)
- **Wed Sept 24**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Contd. monologue table work
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)

Week 5

- **Mon Sept 29**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Monologue coaching (round 1)
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
- **Wed Oct 1**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Monologue coaching (round 1)
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)

Week 6

- **Mon Oct 6**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Monologue coaching (round 2)
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
- **Wed Oct 8**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Monologue coaching (round 2)
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)

Week 7 — *First Monologue Presentations (15%)*

- **Mon Oct 13** – No class (*Indigenous Peoples' Day*)
- **Tue Oct 14 (Legislative Monday)**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - First Monologue Presentations: Set 1
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
 - **Due:** First Monologue Presentation (15% of grade; Set 1)
- **Wed Oct 15**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - First Monologue Presentations: Set 2
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
 - **Due:** First Monologue Presentation (15% of grade; Set 2)

Week 8 — *Scenes Begin*

- **Mon Oct 20**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Scene rehearsal: relationships and objectives
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
- **Wed Oct 22**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Scene rehearsal: objectives, tactics, stakes
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)

Week 9 — *Scene Presentations (15%)*

- **Mon Oct 27**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Scene Presentations: Round 1 (informal workshop)
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
 - **Due:** Scene Presentation (15% of grade; Round 1)
- **Wed Oct 29**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Scene Presentations: Round 2 (informal workshop)
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
 - **Due:** Scene Presentation (15% of grade; Round 2)

Week 10 — 2nd Monologues + Buffer Rehearsal

- **Mon Nov 3**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Improv/Gamesd Day
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
- **Wed Nov 5**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Second monologues; prep/coaching/ Buffer rehearsal
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)

Week 11 — Actor Theorist Presentations (15%)

- **Mon Nov 10**
 - Warm-up tied to assigned theorist
 - Actor Theorist Presentations
 - Scene/monologue rehearsal integration
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
 - **Due:** Actor Theorist Presentation (15% of grade; Groups 1, 2, 3)
- **Wed Nov 12**
 - Warm-up tied to assigned theorist
 - Actor Theorist Presentations
 - Scene/monologue rehearsal integration
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
 - **Due:** Actor Theorist Presentation (15% of grade; Groups 3, 4 & 5)

Week 12 — Second Monologue Presentations (15%)

- **Mon Nov 17**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Second Monologue Workshops: Set 1
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
- **Wed Nov 19**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Second Monologue Workshops: Set 2 + scene integration
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)

Week 13 — *Final Prep*

- **Mon Nov 24**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Second Monologue Presentations
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
 - **Due:** Second Monologue Presentation (counts toward Monologues 15% grade)
- **Wed Nov 26** – No class (*Legislative Friday / Thanksgiving*)

Week 14 — *Run-throughs*

- **Mon Dec 1**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Final run-throughs: Set 1
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)
- **Wed Dec 3**
 - Student-led warm-up (Work Day)
 - Final run-throughs: Set 2
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes)

Week 15 — *Final Scene Presentations (15%) & Journal (15%)*

- **Mon Dec 8**
 - Quick instructor-led warm-up
 - Final Scene Presentations:
 - Journaling (last 5 minutes — reflection circle)
 - **Due:** Final Scene Presentation (15% of grade; Set 1)
- **Wed Dec 10**
 - Closing Activities
 - Closing reflections /questions
 - **Due:** Actor's Journal (15% of grade; submit by 11:59pm)

Academic Integrity

All students are responsible for understanding and complying with [Steinhardt's policy on Academic Integrity](#). Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do; from taking exams, making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others, and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours. Please see the full policy on for examples, guidance, and the disciplinary process for violations.

Use of AI

This course assumes that work submitted by students – all process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, final works – will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups as directed by class assignment instructions.

Students are only allowed to use AI tools, such as ChatGPT or Dall-E, on assignments in this course with advance permission. Students must submit a written request with an explanation of how they will use a particular tool in their assignment, and use is not permitted without written approval.

Note you are responsible for all parts of an assignment; if an AI tool provides incorrect information, it is your responsibility to find and fix the error before submitting. Note too that overreliance on AI can hinder independent thinking and creativity. (edited from NYU and University of Vermont syllabi)

Student Accessibility

New York University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity and participation for all students, and academic accommodations are available for qualified students who disclose their disability to the Moses Center. Students requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center for Student Accessibility as early as possible in the semester for assistance (telephone: 212-998-4980 / website: www.nyu.edu/csa / email: mosescsa@nyu.edu).

Mental Health & Wellness

If you are experiencing undue personal and/or academic stress during the semester that may be interfering with your ability to perform academically, The NYU Wellness Exchange (212 443 9999) offers a range of services to assist and support you. I am available to speak with you about stresses related to your work in my course, and I can assist you in connecting with The Wellness Exchange. The [Wellness Exchange](#) offers drop-in services on campus on a regular basis. Additionally, if you anticipate any challenges with completing the assignments, readings, exams and other work required in this course, I encourage you to register with [the Moses Center](#) in advance so that you may be granted the proper academic accommodations.

Commitment to an Inclusive Classroom Community

We are committed to supporting our students and fostering an inclusive and equitable classroom environment where individuals of all backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, religious and political affiliations, and abilities are treated with respect. It is our intent that all students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. If you feel that this course is falling short of that commitment, please feel free to speak with me.

Diversity, Inclusion, & Equity at NYU

NYU is committed to building a culture that respects and embraces diversity, inclusion, and equity, believing that these values – in all their facets – are, as President Andrew Hamilton said, “...not only important to cherish for their own sake, but because they are also vital for advancing knowledge, sparking innovation, and creating sustainable communities. They should be indispensable elements of an NYU education on all of our campuses. A diverse population encounters and appreciates all perspectives of an issue with a wealth of different approaches to confront it. The result is a higher quality of debate, and a more excellent and advanced academic enterprise.

In New York and on its campuses and locations throughout the world, NYU is committed to:

- *fostering intellectual inquiry, research, and artistic practices that respectfully and rigorously take account of a wide range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences.*
- *promoting an inclusive community in which diversity is valued and every member feels they have a rightful place, is welcome and respected, and is supported in their Endeavors*
- *developing and supporting programs and policies that measurably improve NYU's record of attracting and retaining students, as well as hiring and promoting faculty, administrators, and staff from historically underrepresented communities.*
- *building structures that promote inclusiveness and equity for all members of the NYU community, especially our colleagues from marginalized groups.*

NYU offers a wide array of [resources](#) to uphold and advance our commitments:

[Family Educational Rights and Guidelines](#)

[Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedures for Students](#)

[Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment](#)

Religious Accommodations

[NYU's Policy on Academic Accommodations for Religious Holidays and Observances](#)

states that students may, without penalty, excuse themselves from academic obligations and otherwise receive reasonable accommodation when required for religious and spiritual holidays and observances. You must notify me in advance of religious holidays or observances that might coincide with exams, assignments, or class times to schedule reasonable alternatives. Students may also contact religiousaccommodations@nyu.edu for assistance.

Additional Resources

[Steinhardt Writing Center](#)

The Steinhardt Writing Center offers comprehensive writing support for Steinhardt students at every stage of the writing process—from brainstorming and overcoming writer's block to outlining, drafting, revising, and even transforming a paper into a presentation. Schedule an appointment for a writing consultation or sign up to attend a workshop through the [Steinhardt Writing Center website](#).

[NYU Writing Center](#)

The Writing Center welcomes all student writers from across the NYU community to work collaboratively on writing, from first to final drafts. Schedule in-person and online appointments through the [Writing Center website](#).

Additional Considerations

[Electronic Devices](#)

TBD in class