

AN ACTOR PREPARES

Coordinator: Bruce Smith

An Actor Prepares combines an analysis of acting theories and practices that have evolved in American actor training with in-class exercises, textual analysis and performance. The study group focuses on the Stanislavski system, Strasberg's "method" and adaptations by other teachers who had a major impact on actor training. Each session combines discussions and applications of theory with exercises that develop concentration, sensory perception, playing an objective, physicalization and improvisation. Script study focuses on play interpretation, character analysis and beat-by-beat scene breakdown. Finally, participants develop a scene(s) presentation(s) that is critiqued by their peers.

Note: This study group is designed for people with little or no previous acting training. Participants must rehearse outside of class-time.

Readings and other Required Materials:

Henrik Ibsen; *Ibsen: Four Major Plays. Vol 1*; Rolf Fjelde (translator); Signet Classics; 1965 and 2006; ISBN 978-0-451-53022-6 (\$6.95)

Note: Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* will only be used in demonstrating script analysis. Study Group members will need the Rolf Fjelde translation to participate in textual analysis.

Coursepack: Essays on acting training theory and technique covering Constantin Stanislavski, Lee Stasberg, Robert Lewis, Uta Hagan and other variations on Stanislavski's acting theory and practice. (approximate cost \$25.00)

Play script for scene presentation: TBA (approximate cost \$9.00)

Bruce Smith taught theatre and directed plays for 20+ years at the college level.

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This syllabus breaks down the course into major sections, rather than a meeting-by-meeting agenda. Most sessions during the first seven weeks

include theatre games and exercises that illustrate and develop performance skills.

Part I (Weeks 1-4)

Introduction to the Acting Fundamentals: The coordinator's point of view on actor training and goals for participants' peer learning. Introduction to the Stanislavski acting system and its impact on contemporary acting training. Introduction to the adaptations of Stanislavski's system in the United States including "method acting." Application of these systems to acting training and their use in preparing scene presentations. Exercises that develop concentration, sensory perception, physicalization, playing an objective and improvisation.

Part 2 (Weeks 4-7)

In-depth Script Analysis for the Actor: Interpreting the play as-a-whole and the application of that interpretation on acting choices. Development of a "beat-by-beat" scene analysis for a character and the interrelationship of the beat analysis with the beat analysis for the other characters in the scene. The relation of each beat-by-beat analysis with the interpretation of the play as-a-whole. Exploring how a beat analysis can be used to make choices in performing a scene. Continuation of exercises that develop concentration, sensory perception, physicalization, playing an objective and improvisation.

Part 3 (Weeks 8-9)

Demonstration of Scene Preparation: A sample scene will be used to demonstrate a process for working through the preparation of a scene for presentation.

Part 4 (Weeks 10-12)

Scene Presentations and Critiques: Participants will be assigned scenes drawn from more contemporary, age appropriate, realistic plays to rehearse and present at study group meetings. All participants will contribute to an evaluation of the scene presentations based on the principles and techniques covered in weeks 1-7. If time permits, each participant will present two scenes.

