

**Furman University**  
**Department of Theatre Arts**

THA224-01 Movement for the Actor, 4 Credit Hours  
Spring 2012, TR 1:00-2:15, Studio Theatre at The Playhouse

Instructor: Maegan McNerney Azar  
Office Location: Green Room at The Playhouse  
Email: maegan.azar@furman.edu

Office Hours: MF 11:00-12:00 noon  
Office Phone: (864) 294-2127

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Exploration and development of the actor's physical expression for the stage. Includes: stage combat, period styles, mask work, and other methodologies that can be applied to theatrical performances.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Attain a deeper understanding of the particular physical self and define it theatrically.
- Develop a fuller, more powerful sense of space and the ability to affect space in performance.
- Gain a greater physical confidence to take action on stage.
- Break habitual patterns.
- Develop greater freedom in exploring extreme characterizations.
- Create a personal physical warm-up.
- Establish an informed vocabulary to critically assess movement technique.

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

- Wangh, Stephen. *An Acrobat of the Heart*. (WANGH)
- Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of King Lear*.

*You will also need to find various plays in the library or elsewhere from which monologues and scenes can be chosen.*

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS & EXCERPTS ON MOODLE:**

- Bogart, Anne and Tina Landau. *The Viewpoints Book*. (BOG)
- Potter, Nicole. *Movement for Actors*. (MA)
- Suzuki, Tadashi. *The Way of Acting*. (SUZU)
- Yakim, Moni. *Creating a Character*. (YAKIM)

**CLASS POLICIES:**

**ATTENDANCE:** You are allowed 2 absences. Any subsequent absence will lower your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. Tardiness is not tolerated, it is a disruption to you and your classmates' processes. Three tardies equal an absence, and therefore a significantly lower grade. If you arrive after 20 minutes from the beginning of class, you are considered absent and will not be graded for the day's activities. **If you are going to miss a presentation day, you must let me and your partner know at least twenty-four hours in advance or receive a grade of zero on the assignment.** For the purpose of this course, there is no difference between an excused absence and an unexcused absence.

**CLOTHING:** Dress appropriately for the situation at hand, the class calendar will outline daily activities. Days that are reserved for presentations and exercises require clothing that allows for free movement. Refrain from tight, restrictive clothing and excessively baggy clothing. No jeans. Appropriate footwear is also necessary; no flip flops, sandals, or high heels. No jewelry. Pull hair back, out of the face. Hats are not permitted at any time in the acting studio. *Appropriate clothing is important for preparing your mind and body to work. Those that are not dressed appropriately will receive 10 points off their class participation grade for each day of inappropriate dress. Come to class ready to participate.*

**MISCELLANEOUS:** Part of learning the acting process is also learning how to act professionally. Unprofessional conduct will not be tolerated. Furthermore, in order to fully explore the acting process, you

are encouraged to take risks in a safe environment. Grotowski suggests that “One must create an atmosphere, a working system, in which the actor feels he can do anything, and that nothing he does will be mocked, that all will be understood,” (*Les Lettres français*). Any student that destroys the safe zone of the acting studio will be asked to reconsider their choice in taking this class.

- No food or drinks are permitted in the acting space.
- Turn off your cell phones; if your phone rings in class, you will receive a tardy for the day.
- Respect your acting space - whether in class or in rehearsal, **strike your furniture**.
- No photography, audio or video recording is permitted without permission from the instructor and each student in class. Posting of these items to the internet requires written permission from all involved.

PERFORMANCE ATTENDANCE: THA224 students are required to attend University Theatre Arts productions. There are two productions during the semester. You are also required to see one of the other productions listed below. **A writing assignment on the production will be completed in your journal and is to be turned in as such.** Do not wait until the last minute to get your tickets. The Furman box office is open Monday through Friday 9:00-5:00 the week prior to the show, ticket prices are \$8 for students.

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|---|--|
| <b>Furman’s <i>Circle Mirror Transformation</i></b> | February 8-11, 15-18 at 8:00 pm, matinee Feb 12 at 3:00 pm |
| Centre Stage’s <i>Rumors</i>                        | February 16-19, 23-26, March 1-3 (tickets are \$15)        |
| The Warehouse Theatre’s <i>Merchant of Venice</i>   | March 16-18, 22-25, 29-31 (tickets are \$20)               |
| <b>Furman’s <i>Beyond Therapy</i></b>               | April 12-14, 18-21 at 8:00 pm, matinee April 15 at 3:00 pm |
| Clemson Players’ <i>Proof</i>                       | April 16-22 (tickets are \$6)                              |

WRITTEN WORK: All papers and assignments **must be handed in on time**. For each class that the assignment is late, you will receive 5 points off the final grade. You have **one week** to turn in an assignment (with exception for the final paper, which must be completed on time), after that you will receive a grade of zero. Papers must be typed, stapled, and 1.5 or double spaced. Please use Times New Roman or Garamond 12 point font in black ink. Please no title pages. Papers should be free of spelling, grammatical, and compositional errors. Include bibliographical material, annotated where appropriate. MLA style.

PRESENTATION WORK: You are expected to prepare and rehearse scenes and monologues outside of class for in-class evaluation and discussion. Rehearsals are your time to work with partners and share problems that you may be having; those who let their partners down will be let down in the end. **If you are not prepared for in-class presentation, you will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.** Those who have an unexcused absence on the day of a presentation will receive a zero for the assignment, but will be required to make-up the assignment for their partner’s sake. If you know you are going to be absent on the day of a presentation, schedule a session ahead of time to present your piece for a grade. You must let me know **twenty-four hours** in advance if you are to be allowed to make-up the presentation for a grade. Also, learning how to constructively interpret classmates’ work is vital. You are required to be in attendance on presentation days, even if you are not performing. **Those not in attendance on presentation days will receive 10 points off their class participation grade. Also, you must attend THA224’s Finalpalooza night. No exceptions.**

TUTORIALS: THA224 students must meet at least once during the semester with the instructor for a 15- to 20-minute private tutorial. Use this time to discuss your progress in the course, difficulty with acting issues, or concerns regarding specific scene work. It is your time, so be prepared with specific material and/or concerns. Furthermore, your scenes must have at least one out-of-class rehearsal each with the instructor. Feel free to make additional appointments or rehearsals with the instructor throughout the semester to work pieces or discuss grades.

STAGE COMBAT INTENSIVE: THA224 students are required to attend the Furman Theatre Stage Combat Intensive sessions held on April 20 and 21. Journal entries must be completed on these sessions.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Students at Furman University are held to the highest standards of academic integrity. All acts of dishonesty in any work including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, and unacceptable collaboration are violations of Furman's academic integrity standard. The Academic Integrity Policy will be followed in any case of violations. This policy is outlined in *The Helmsman* and the academic integrity portion of the Furman University website.

**SENIOR SYNTHESIS MATERIALS:** All Senior Theatre Arts majors (beginning with the graduating class of 2013) will be required to complete a Senior Synthesis project. Graded materials from this course may be used and should be saved for these projects.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

An open mind, and the courage to explore it in public.

No talking in class, unless it is in direct response to class work. Nothing your neighbor says could possibly be more important than your own education.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** This grade is based on your commitment to activities and discussion in class, the creation of a safe working environment for fellow classmates, your carte blanche, your warm-up presentation, your tutorial and out-of-class coaching attendance, your attendance on presentation days, and your preparedness for presentations and daily exercises.

**REHEARSAL:** Students are expected to prepare and rehearse scenes and monologues outside of class.

**PRESENTATION:** You will have 2 monologues (60- to 90-seconds in length) and 2 scenes (3-4 minutes in length) to present in class, plus various other items for exercises (carte blanche and warm-up presentation). One monologue will be chosen from *The Tragedy of King Lear*, the other will be chosen from an absurdist or anti-realistic play of your choice. Both monologues must be gender appropriate. The scenes will be of your choosing (within parameters set by the instructor). Each piece will be evaluated several times so that your process as well as your product can be considered. Scenes and monologues will be evaluated on preparation, commitment, characterization, physical sphere and range, incorporation of technique in performance, growth, and ability to incorporate notes into presentation.

**JOURNALS:** Journals should be kept in a bound or spiral notebook. These notebooks will be collected three times throughout the semester. They should be an account of your personal experiences in class and during rehearsals. This is also another opportunity to communicate with your instructor. **No late journals will be accepted.** Journals must include --

- a list of every day's activities/exercises and your response to them (this includes responses to your classmates' scenes/monologues on presentation days and the Stage Combat Intensive)
- guided journal entries and Moodle posts
  - You must **respond** to each forum discussion topic on Moodle. Responses are due each week by 1:00 pm on Thursday. Poor responses may say, for example, "I hated/was bored by/didn't understand/loved this text" and don't give any reason why. This should not be a summary. Better responses will react to an issue in the text or raise a question about the topic *and* try to pose an answer to it. Late responses will not be accepted.
- an account of your out of class rehearsals
- personal analysis of your presentation work
- response to theatre performances

**PLAY RESPONSES:** You will write a response to the 3 productions that you view. This 1-page (2-pages if hand-written), thoughtful response to the production must be based on what you view and hear. The specific topics of the paper on the University Productions will be determined by the instructor. The topic of the outside production is your choice. These responses are due in the Journal following your attendance of the performance. **You must turn in your ticket stub with your response.**

**TOPICS IN MOVEMENT RESEARCH PAPER:** You will choose a topic based on any of the methods (Wangh, Grotowski, Yakim, Laban, Suzuki, Viewpoints, period styles, or masks) studied in this course on which to research. This is to be a well-researched, well-written paper detailing the theory and principles applicable to a physical actor's approach to the topic. Include bibliographical material, annotated where appropriate. MLA style. (4-6 pages; minimum of 3 sources: at least 1 book, only 1 of the required 3 sources may be an internet source; there will be an outline, first, and final draft due)

**PLAY CARDS:** It is important for an actor to have a library of monologues from a variety of writers. You are required to turn in 6 monologues throughout the semester. You should read a play (full-length, non-musical) that applies to the movement style we are studying that week and choose a monologue from the material for either you or one of your classmates. These assignments are written assignments and should be completed as such. Play title, playwright, character name, and brief synopsis (4-6 sentences) of the play should be at the top of the page. Type the monologue below. Try for one page please.

**STAGE COMBAT FLOW CHART & ANALYSIS:** Once you have choreographed your scene, you will create a flow chart detailing each aspect of the fight in relation to your scene. Further, you will analyze your process in choreographing the scene and the impulses upon which your fight was created, as well as a detailed analysis of your rehearsal process and work with scene partner (use your journal to synthesize this work). You may collaborate with your partner on this assignment, but each person must complete their own chart and analysis. This assignment, in its entirety, should be no more than four pages long.

**GRADING/EVALUATION:**

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Class Participation                            | 100 points         |
| 3 Journal Collections @ 25 points each         | 75 points          |
| 6 Play Cards @ 15 points each                  | 90 points          |
| 3 Play Responses @ 25 points each              | 75 points          |
| Movement Topics Research Outline, Draft, Paper | 125 points         |
| Monologue Presentation One                     | 20 points          |
| Monologue Presentation Two (Element/Animal)    | 40 points          |
| Monologue Presentation Three (Laban)           | 50 points          |
| Monologue Presentation Four (Suzuki)           | 50 points          |
| Mask/Styles Scene Presentation One             | 50 points          |
| Mask/Styles Scene Presentation Two             | 75 points          |
| Stage Combat Scene One                         | 75 points          |
| Finalpalooza Stage Combat Scene Presentation   | 100 points         |
| <u>Flow Chart &amp; Analysis</u>               | <u>75 points</u>   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                   | <b>1000 points</b> |

**GRADE SCALE:**

|             |             |             |             |          |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| 98-100 = A+ | 88-89 = B+  | 78-79 = C+  | 68-69 = D+  | 0-59 = F |
| 93-97 = A   | 83-87 = B   | 73-77 = C   | 63-67 = D   |          |
| 90-92 = A - | 80-82 = B - | 70-72 = C - | 60-62 = D - |          |

**DISABILITIES:**

To request disability accommodations, please contact the University's Disability Services Coordinator at (864) 294-2320 or visit [www.furman.edu/disability](http://www.furman.edu/disability). After initial arrangements are made with this office, contact this course's instructor.

CLASS CALENDAR

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

ASSIGNMENTS

**WEEK ONE** – *Guided: Carte Blanche Interview*

T Jan 10 Course Introductions/Syllabus & Get-to-Know-You  
 R Jan 12 **Present Carte Blanche**, Begin Warm-up

WANGH Pre & Intro

**WEEK TWO** – *Moodle: Lear...*

T Jan 17 Plastiques, **Present Lear Monologue (1)**  
 R Jan 19 Plastiques

WANGH 3-42  
 WANGH 75-135,  
**Play Card #1**

**WEEK THREE** – *Guided: Chart what you eat and how much you exercise this week (7 days). When the week is over, answer these questions: Are you taking care of your physical instrument? How can you better care for yourself or give yourself a break?*

T Jan 24 **Present anti-realism Monologue (1)**, Character/Elements  
 R Jan 26 Elements of Nature

WANGH 236-237  
 YAKIM 79-118,  
**Play Card #2**

**WEEK FOUR** – *Guided: Using the animal categories in Yakim’s reading (Water Creature, Reptile, Insect, Bird, and Mammal), find a picture of an animal from each category. Glue all 5 pictures into your journal and write 10 descriptive words for each. Have this done for Tuesday’s class.*

T Jan 31 Animals  
 R Feb 2 Animals [Research Topic Due]

YAKIM 119-141

**WEEK FIVE** – *Moodle: Laban...*

Furman Theatre’s *Circle Mirror Transformation* opens February 8

T Feb 7 **Present Monologues (2)**, Laban  
 R Feb 9 Laban

MA 73-84  
**Journal #1**

**WEEK SIX** – *Guided: List five things you are not allowed to do: scream in church, quit school, steal a purse, etc. Now do that thing on paper. Write it, draw it, paint it, collage it.*

T Feb 14 Laban [Research Outline Due]  
 R Feb 16 **Present Monologues (3)**, Suzuki

Centre Stage’s *Rumors* opens February 16

**Play Card #3**  
 SUZU 3-24

**WEEK SEVEN** – *Moodle: Suzuki...*

T Feb 21 Suzuki  
 R Feb 23 Suzuki [Scene Approval Deadline]

**Research Draft**

**WEEK EIGHT** – *Guided: List five things you like to do. Answer these questions for each item: Does it cost money or is it free? Expensive or cheap? Alone or with somebody? Physical risk? School related? Fast-paced or slow? Mind, body, or spirit?*

T Feb 28 **Present Monologues (4)**, Viewpoints  
 R Mar 1 Viewpoints, **Research Paper Due**

BOG 3-20  
 BOG 21-34

Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC) March 7-11 in Chattanooga, Tennessee

T Mar 6 Spring Break  
 R Mar 8 Spring Break

**WEEK NINE** – Moodle: Masks...

The Warehouse Theatre's *Merchant of Venice* opens March 16

T Mar 13 Masks

**Play Card #4,**  
MA 99-104

R Mar 15 Masks, **Scene Presentation One**

**WEEK TEN** – Guided: *If you could live in any period, other than our own, when would it be? Spend a day there and describe it.*

T Mar 20 Masks/Period Styles

**Play Card #5,**  
MA 144-152

R Mar 22 Period Styles

**Journal #2**

**WEEK ELEVEN** – Guided: *List 10 changes you would like to make to your physical sphere or the way you use it. Can you accomplish each? How?*

T Mar 27 Period Styles, **Scene Presentation Two**

WANGH 169-235

R Mar 29 no class due to Furman Engaged!

**WEEK TWELVE** – Moodle: Stage Combat...

Louisiana Tech University "Crawfish Boil" Stage Combat Workshop April 6-7

T Apr 3 Unarmed Stage Combat [Scene Approval Deadline]

R Apr 5 Unarmed Stage Combat

**Play Card #6**

**WEEK THIRTEEN** – Guided: *Finish this phrase in 5 different ways: I think I have nice... Comment on this exercise.*

Furman Theatre's *Beyond Therapy* opens April 12

T Apr 10 Unarmed Stage Combat

MA 85-95

R Apr 12 **Present Stage Combat Scene**

**WEEK FOURTEEN** – Guided: *List 25 things you would like to do to improve your acting/performing ability.*

Clemson Players' *Proof* opens April 16

Furman Theatre's Stage Combat Intensive with Cliff Williams April 20-21

T Apr 17 Workshop Stage Combat Scene

R Apr 19 Workshop Stage Combat Scene

**WEEK FIFTEEN – Finalpalooza April 23 & 24 at 7:00 pm**

T Apr 24 **Last Day of Class** – Workshop Stage Combat Scene

**Journal #3, Stage Combat Flow Chart & Analysis, Final Stage Combat due** at Finalpalooza  
**Final and Discussion** Thursday, April 26 12:00-2:30 pm