

THEA 80A-Theory and Technique of Acting for the Camera
Spring 2025
De Anza College

Instructor: Liz Stimson
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Class Meets: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-12:15 in MLC 226
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:15-12:45 in MLC 226 & by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will introduce students to the basics of on camera acting. We will cover vocabulary, behind the scenes work, performance preparation, on camera performance and basic auditioning. Through on camera interviews, auditions, improvisations and scene study the student will develop an understanding of the actor's relationship to the camera.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Recognize the process by which actors are interviewed, auditioned, and cast for all forms of media production.
2. Practice and distinguish effective body movement and voice modulation as it pertains to camera acting styles, camera angle and shot size and continuity of takes.
3. Demonstrate the basic skills in the practice and performance of scripted work for the camera and the subsequent critiquing of the work including self evaluation.

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

1. Demonstrate a knowledge of the camera media from an actor's perspective.
2. Analyze, rehearse and perform scripted material on camera.
3. Develop an awareness of studio layout, studio personnel and vocabulary.
4. Learn the skills to create, develop and perform a character.

Recommended Text: *The Science and Art of Acting for the Camera* by John Howard Swain (2017)
(Available in De Anza library reserves and [eBook Link](#))

POLICIES:

LATENESS

“If you're early, you're on time. If you're on time, you're late. If you're late, you're fired.”

This is especially true in the world of acting, an art form that involves both craft and discipline.

- Email me before class has begun if you are going to be late.
- If you are more than ten minutes late (and you have not contacted me prior to the beginning of that day's class) you will observe class that day and not participate.
- If lateness becomes a problem, participation points will be deducted.
- If you are more than ten minutes late (and you have not contacted me prior to the beginning of that day's class) you will observe class that day and not participate.
- This will become very challenging once we have begun rehearsing for the midterm and final. Plan accordingly.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

- First two absences (excused or unexcused) no points taken off from participation. As this is a performance class, participation is required. Points will be deducted after two absences. Participation points can be made up, if needed (illness, for example).
- You will **not** pass the class if you miss more than 6 class meetings (for ANY reason).

LATE WORK

- Assignments are due on the date listed in the syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to reach out to the instructor (email or office hours) **prior to the due date**, if an extension is needed.
- Late assignments will **not** be accepted after midnight on June 18th (week 11).

Dropping: It is the student's responsibility to add or drop the class. Please see [How to Drop a Class](#) for specific dates.

Disabilities: Students with disabilities, including invisible ones, are encouraged to communicate with the instructor their needs and appropriate accommodations. [De Anza Disability Support Services](#)

Participation: Please wear clothing which does not restrict movement. Expect to be physically active.

HELPFUL SERVICES:

De Anza College Library Website: [De Anza College Library](#)

Online tutoring and workshops available at: [De Anza Student Success Center](#)

Your Guide to the Quarter: [Student Support Services](#)

IMPORTANT DATES:

April 20

Last day [add 12-week classes](#)

April 20

Last day to [drop classes](#) without a W

May 24-26

Memorial Day Weekend - no classes, offices closed

May 30

Last day to [drop classes](#) with a W

June 19

Juneteenth Holiday - no classes, offices closed

June 23-27

[Final exams](#)

June 29

[Graduation](#)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students who present the work of others without giving proper credit (citation), will receive an "F" grade for that assignment which cannot be made up. If you feel that you are having trouble with an assignment and require assistance please meet with me during my office hours or schedule an additional time to meet.

[Academic Integrity De Anza College](#)

ASSIGNMENTS:

Recording #1	40 points
Recording #2 (Midterm)	60 points
Recording #3 (Final)	100 points
Character Analyses	50 points total (2 @ 25 points each)
Film Review	50 points
Participation	100 points
Total Points	400 points

GRADING:

Grade	Numerical Equivalent
A	400-372
A-	371-360
B+	359-348
B	347-332
B-	331-320
C+	319-299
C	298-280
D+	279-268
D	267-252
D-	251-240
F	239-0

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE: THEA 80A–Spring 2025

In Class	Assignments (available in Canvas)
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Week 1 (4/8, 10)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome, syllabus review, etc• Warm-ups and Improvs (back to one)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete Discussion in Canvas• Read articles in Canvas
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Week 2 (4/15, 17)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warm-ups and Improvs• Slate introduction• Recording #1: Slate & Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read articles in Canvas
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Week 3 (4/22, 24)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phasic Relaxation• Basic Shots• Commercials Assigned	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Character Analysis: Commercial–due 4/29 in Canvas: no analysis = no rehearsal
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Week 4 (4/29, 5/1)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warm-ups & Improvs• Rehearsals: Memorization Strategies, Imagination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cold Reading Commercials–bring hard copy to class• Final Scene Selection Hard copies (3) (due 5/13)
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Week 5 (5/6, 8)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warm-ups & Improv Sense Memory• Rehearsals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commercial memorized/off book– (5/6)• Final Scene Selection Hard copies (3) (due 5/13)
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Week 6 (5/13, 15)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recording #2: Commercial• Discuss Final Scene Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recording #2: Commercial• Final Scene Selection Hard copies (3) (due 5/13)
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Week 7 (5/20, 22)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cold readings, rehearsals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Character Analysis--Scene--due 5/20--no analysis = no rehearsal• Assignment: Film Review (due 6/5)
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Week 8 (5/27, 29)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eyeline, Hitting your mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assignment: Film Review (due 6/5)
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Week 9 (6/3, 5)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blocking, Business/Activities• Rehearsals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Memorized/off book (due 6/5)
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Week 10 (6/10, 12)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rehearsals• Off book• Recording #3: Final Scene	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recording of final scene
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Week 11 (6/17 ONLY)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recording #3: Final Scene	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recording of final scene
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Week 12 (6/24 only)

Final: Tuesday June 24th: 9:15-11:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Viewing of final scenes
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