
Syllabus for *Acting for Film and Video*

Course Information

<i>Course Number/Section</i>	THEA 4301.501
<i>Course Title</i>	Acting for Film and Video
<i>Term</i>	Spring, 2026
<i>Days & Times</i>	Tuesdays 4:00 – 6:45 pm

Professor Contact Information

<i>Professor</i>	Fred Curchack
<i>Email Address</i>	curchack@utdallas.edu
<i>Office Location</i>	JO. 4.906
<i>Office Hours</i>	Tuesdays, 3 – 3:45 pm (or by appointment)

Course Description

We will study and practice principles of acting for film and video, including script analysis, building a character, creating a role, monologues, scene study, freeing the voice, movement, imagination, improvisation, and creating original performances.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

1. To master principles of film and video acting through exercises, improvisation, and scene study.
2. To experience the craft of acting - its ideas, aesthetics, literature, psychology, politics, economics, history, work ethic, and practice.
3. To challenge oneself intellectually, emotionally, and physically through the practice of acting, individually and in relationship with others.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Required Texts:

[*The Stanislavsky Technique: Russia: A Workbook for Actors*](#) by Mel Gordon

[*Acting in Film*](#) by Michael Caine

[*Chekhov: Four Plays*](#) – (paperback) translated by Carole Rocamora

or [*Chekhov: Four Plays*](#) – (Kindle edition)

Required Materials

Appropriate clothing for exercises and for performing scenes.

Students will be responsible for finding their own props, set units, locations, and costume elements for performances.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Assignments are subject to change. Weekly acting assignments will be given.

Check each week for assignment updates.

Scenes, readings and handouts will be assigned.

Scenes must be memorized.

Late assignments and performances will not be accepted without the approval of the professor.

Students who are absent are required to e-mail the professor for updates for the following week's assignment.

For each reading assignment, write a response paper (minimum 1-page).

Written assignments should be submitted on eLearning.

Note: Assignments are due on the dates listed. These assignments are subject to change. Links to videos of class performances will be posted weekly. Watch all videos of your own work and write a brief reflection (minimum 1-paragraph) on what worked or how you might improve it. Specify the date of the video with your reflection.

January 20 Introduction.

January 27 No class due to weather conditions.

February 3 Prepare a short monologue (approximately 1–minute). It should be well-rehearsed and memorized. The monologue can be taken from any source/script or it can be an original creation. Write an analysis of the monologue (minimum 1-page). Analysis should include discussion of your character, their aim/intention/objective, their motivation, and the actions that they take to fulfill their aim.

It's never too early to start reading *Acting in Film* by Michael Caine and start watching the video (response paper to the book and the video will be due on March 31).

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZPLVDwEr7Y>

Read: *The Stanislavsky Technique* “First Studio Exercises” (p. 57–71 in the paperback or click on chapter on the Contents page in the Kindle edition).

Write a response to the chapter. Also, do some of the exercises and write about your experience (minimum 1-page).

Optional, for Extra Credit: Read the text from the beginning until “First Studio Exercises” and write a response (minimum 1-page).

February 10 Rehearse and be prepared to perform another monologue. It can be as long as you wish (1-5 minutes). It can be taken from any source (film, TV, play, book, your own writing).

Read: *The Seagull* (Rocamora translation only). Read Rocamora's introductory essay about Chekhov and read the entire play.

Watch the video of your monologue from last week and be prepared to discuss your thoughts about it.

No assignments to submit today.

February 17 [WATCH THE SEAGULL](#) (Royal National Theatre production with translation by David Hare – 2:09:00)

After today's class, choose a brief monologue from *The Seagull* (Rocamora translation only). Rehearse it, memorize it, and be ready to perform it next week (February 24).

Also, choose one scene (or more) that you might like to perform with a partner in two weeks (length is optional). In next week's class, we will choose scene partners. Cross-gender casting is possible.

Watch the video of your second monologue from last week and be prepared to discuss your thoughts about it.

No assignments to submit today.

February 24 Perform a monologue from *The Seagull*.

[READ THE GISTER/ALBERTI HANDOUT](#).

Write a response to *The Seagull* - text and video (minimum 1-page).

Write a separate response to the Gister/Alberti handout including an analysis of your monologue based on Gister's method (minimum 1-page).

Submit both responses in one paper with clear headings for each.

February 26-March 1 Optional for Extra Credit: Attend play, [She Kills Monsters](#) at the UTD Theatre. Free. Write a response (minimum 1-page).

March 3 Be prepared to perform *The Seagull* scene with a partner.

Using Gister's approach to scene analysis, write an analysis of your character and scene from *The Seagull* (minimum 1-page).

Watch the video of your *Seagull* monologue from last week and write a brief response.

March 10 Scenes. Second performances of *The Seagull* scenes.

[READ EXCERPTS FROM THE ACTORS CHEKHOV \(HANDOUT\)](#). Write a brief response to each of the actors interviewed (Include synopsis/notes at the beginning by director Nikos Psacharopoulos, and interviews with actors Frank Langella, Blythe Danner, Lee Grant, Louis Zorich - minimum 1-page total).

Watch the video of your *Seagull* scene from last week and write a brief response.

Optional viewing for Extra Credit: [The full production with the director and actors interviewed in the handout](#) (funky video quality). Submit a brief response to the video (1-page)

Optional viewing: [5-minutes of Stella Adler discussing The Seagull](#)

March 17 Spring Break.

March 24 Scenes.

Read: *The Stanislavsky Technique* – Vakhtangov’s Exercises (p. 101–115 in the paperback or click on chapter on the Contents page in the Kindle edition). Write a response to the chapter. Also do some of the exercises and write about your experience (1-page).

Watch the video of the second performance of your *Seagull* scene (from two week ago) and write a brief response.

Optional, for Extra Credit: Read the text prior to “Vakhtangov’s Exercises” in Chapter 3 and write a response (minimum 1-page).

March 31 Scenes.

Write a response to *Acting in Film* by Michael Caine, both the book and video (minimum 1-page): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZPLVDwEr7Y>

If you performed a scene last week, watch the video and write a brief response.

Final Project proposal is due (minimum 1-page). Proposal should discuss what you intend to do for your final project and how you plan to do it. Final project can be performed live or on video. It can be a scene from a film, play, or television, or it can be an original creation.

April 7 Scenes.

Read: *The Stanislavsky Technique* – “The (Michael) Chekhov Technique Exercises” (p. 167–182 in the paperback or click on chapter on the Contents page in the Kindle edition).

Write a response to the chapter. Also do some of the exercises and write about your experience (1-page).

If you performed a scene last week, watch the video and write a brief response.

Optional, for extra credit: Read the text prior to “The (Michael) Chekhov Technique Exercises” in chapters 4 and 5 and write a response (minimum 1-page).

April 14 Scenes.

Read: *The Stanislavsky Technique* – Stanislavsky’s Exercises: The Final Period (p. 213–230 in the paperback or click on chapter on the Contents page in the Kindle edition).

Write a response to the chapter. Also, do some of the exercises and write about your experience (minimum 1-page).

If you performed a scene last week, watch the video and write a brief response.

Optional, for extra credit: Read the text prior to “Stanislavsky’s Exercises: The Final Period” in chapters 6 and 7 and write a response (minimum 1-page).

April 21 Scenes.

April 28 Final Projects. Final papers are due next week.

May 5 Final Projects. Final class. Paper for final project is due.

Grading Policy

Grading will be based on performances, participation in discussions and exercises, response to readings, papers, attendance and punctuality.

Performances must be memorized and well-rehearsed.

All papers must be carefully edited for clarity of thought, grammar, and spelling.

After two excused absences, the final grade will be lowered with each subsequent absence.

Course Policies

Extra Credit can be received by:

1. Writing a critique (1-page minimum) of the acting in approved performances, films, or television shows.
2. Reading any approved book on acting and writing a response (1-page minimum).
3. Writing responses to the chapters that precede each of the exercises assignments in *The Stanislavsky Technique* (1-page minimum).

Class Attendance is particularly critical when one is scheduled to perform a scene. After two excused absences, the final grade will be lowered with each subsequent absence. It is assumed that there are always good reasons for missing class, and there will be no additional “excused” absences.

Classroom Citizenship: In theatre work, it is crucial to be supportive of the work of your colleagues. It is essential to be clear and to fulfill agreements with fellow-actors about rehearsal meetings and class performances.

Field Trip Policies / Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities

Required and recommended events will be announced. A choice of possible dates will be offered when possible.

UTD Syllabus Policies and Procedures

All students are required to read the UTD Syllabus Policies and Procedures website:

<http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change