

COURSE SYLLABUS
DRAM 3372-001
Advanced Improv
The University of Texas at Dallas

Course: Dram 3372-001

Instructor: Kathy Lingo, Office 3.514, 972-883-4152

Semester: Fall 2016

Course Start/End Date: Aug 22 (Monday) – Dec. 7 (Wednesday)

Course Place and Times: Rehearsal Hall M/W 5:30 – 6:45 p.m.

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Course Information

Course Description and Rational

If you are in this course you should know and be able to execute the basic rules of Improv and Acting covered in the Improv I course. All 14 basic skills are listed in this syllabus. Now that you can execute these skills you must master them. This course is designed to take those basic skills and develop them into quality scene work. This course will examine and refine your skills in timing, execution, scene work, delivery, vocal quality, movement and the creative development of characters.

Our Improv classes are the funniest classes on campus; however, in this course we will take some time to explore the Dramatic Improv, as well.

Prerequisites:

College level reading and writing skills are a must, but this is only the beginning. A good actor must possess self discipline, self-respect and respect for others, gracious manners and a respect for protocol and process.

Learning objectives:

Ability to strategically analyze information, verbally and nonverbally.

Ability to strengthen listening skills.

Ability to assess what information most accurately and reliably responds to the needs of the character, the action and the audience.

Ability to interpret information/messages from different perspectives

Ability to understand how play stimulates the mind and enhances personal knowledge of one's self

Ability to work with others in groups
Ability to take criticism in a positive progressive manner
Ability to experience and explore spontaneity

Instructor Information

1. Contact information: 972.883.4152, Office JO 3.514
2. Web site: klingo@utdallas.edu

Course Materials

1. Required and recommended texts and materials

Impro: *Improvisation and the Theatre*, Keith Johnstone, Routledge, N.Y., N.Y., 1990. (If you didn't read it in Improv I)

Watch: Saturday Night Live (Old and New) specific artists will be discussed
Whose Line is It? Remember they get to rehearse
YouTube: These will be discussed
Raising Hope (television series)
British Comedies (channel 13, Netflix, Hulu)

Listen: To accent recordings (Youtube and Internet)
Vocal cadence and patterns

Students must bring a notebook and writing materials to every class (or computer). Criticism should always be noted and then typed and turned in when asked and should be a section of your journal.

2. Other resources or tools

Students must sign a talent release form.

If your performance is filmed in class, you must bring the instructor a flash drive to procure a copy of your performance.

Clothing: Students must wear comfortable, flexible clothes to class. We will be working with our minds and our bodies, therefore the body must be unconstrained and free to form without worry of inappropriate exposure of body parts. We will be moving from the floor to the rafters.

Shoes must be comfortable, flexible and protective. No flip flops or sandals allowed. You may wear them to class, but cannot perform in them. Hard heeled or other shoes are only allowed through costuming.

If classes are held in the rehearsal hall, no shoes are allowed on the dancer's floor. So, be sure to wear specific soft dance shoes or bring socks if you do not choose to be barefoot.

Textbooks and some other bookstore materials can be ordered online through [MBS Direct Virtual Bookstore](#) or [Off-Campus Books](#) online ordering site. They are also available in stock at [UTD Bookstore](#) and Off-Campus Books.

Course Policy

1. Make-up exams: ***Exams will be in the form of performed assignments and will only be allowed if official emergency documentation can be proved.***
2. Extra Credit: ***Students will be given due dates and assignments in advance. Extra Credit work will not be given.***
3. Late Work: ***refer to make-up exams to whom the curtain is held for***
4. Participation: ***We will be doing in class activities and participation is a must, as well as part of the student's grade.***

Technical Requirements

Must be able to use email and word processing.

Student Assessments

Grading Information

List point values and weights for all assessment tasks

Participation	40%
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Participation may also be measured by the amount of physical energy and attention you put into class time. A good student of Improv must be physically and mentally engaged at all times. Improv is Energy! The use of cell phones or computers during class time should only be for taking notes. Checking your emails or texting is highly discouraged in this class and may cost you participation points.

Character and Improv Skill Growth: 40%

This will also include other assignments given in class throughout the semester. Your attendance can seriously affect your final grade. Please read below under attendance policy.

Journal Assignment: 20%

Journal Assignment:

All students are to create and maintain a journal. Each week different topics will be discussed and employed in class. Each entry should cover two weeks of class work and assignments. I will require a minimum of two journal entries covering two consecutive weeks each. So, choose your weeks carefully. Choose the weeks that you feel truly represents your work, struggles and accomplishments in this class. These will be due Nov. 14 (Monday).

Here are some questions to ask yourself before you write your entry:

- any handouts or notes (If you missed class this needs to be noted.)
- what was worked on in class those weeks (subject and/or goal)
- what you did in the activity or what character did you play?
- what did you do to create this character? (Where did the character come from?)
 - did you study others?
 - did you watch documentaries, films, etc?
 - did you speak with others or use observation skills?
 - did you do physical research (i.e.. Studies on disorders, etc....)
- what made it difficult and/or easy for you?
- what is the importance of knowing this information or doing the exercise?
- what other research did you do for these assignments and/or activities?
- what do you think you accomplished these weeks (your strength)?
- what do you need to work on (your weakness)?

This is similar to your Improv I journal, but focus on what you have learned and how you have changed from Improv I. You know the basic now and you know how to use them, but now we need to ask what is the importance of these skills and how they have benefited your performance or added to your skills. Focus on the development of these skills and the refinement in their use.

These journals are to be typed, well-organized and should be approximately two pages per entry. Analyze your work and choose your words carefully. Superficially filling the pages with shallow or repeated jargon will not satisfy the requirements for this assignment. I want depth in

your personal analysis. It must be college level writing and I must be able to understand your points of analysis as well as your prescription for improvement.

We will discuss the details in class.

At the end of the weeks' journal entry you must scan and attach all written assignments for those weeks.

Your journal must be submitted to me in hard copy. If you have printer problems please solve them before the assignment is due. Do not come to class the day they are due with this excuse. "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." I know "things" happen in life, but please do not try to do your assignment the night before they are due. "Things" may happen so give yourself time to take care of them.

Characters and Improv Skills: can be determined by some of the following factors:

Skills students must have acquired before taking this class.

Executes basic rules of Improv students should know and work to master.

- 1. Do not say NO**
- 2. Listen to what others say and do not speak over them.**
- 3. Project and develop vocal skills**
- 4. Do not block others when performing/be aware of physicalities**
- 5. Use physical levels and positions for staging discussed in class**
- 6. Use and develop different characters**
- 7. Do not hog the Improv or let others do all the work**
- 8. Respond to action on stage when not speaking**
- 9. Be original and try new things**
- 10. Understanding of timing**
- 11. Sensitivity and respect to others**
- 12. An understanding of when to lead and when to develop background**
- 13. Staying focused in character at all times**
- 14. Developing trust with others and with your work**

Students should have a variety of characters that they can easily execute by the end of the semester. These characters should be distinctive and well developed. The development of only one or two "good characters" will not allow you to pass the course. You must have a minimum of three or more "good characters" developed by the end of the semester.

List grade criteria for course:

Scaled Score	Letter Equivalent
90 -100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D

Your instructor also keeps an old-fashioned grade book. Due to past technological misfortunes, some operator errors and some systems errors with WebCT and other systems used, your instructor chooses to use elements of both, maintaining the whole organization of the class in written format. You may always set an appointment with me to discuss your grades, if assignments are not posted on the web. The instructor will let you know in class if there are postings.

Participation

How can one take an improvisation course and not participate, mentally and physically, at all times? Theatre is a collaborative art. Participation in this course is a physical and mental activity. Students must be able to handle criticism with a positive attitude and work to incorporate those critiques/suggestions into future performances.

Participation includes contributions and reactions to classroom and studio work, verbal expression of ideas to others, enthusiasm for topic in those expressions and overall involvement/behavior in class activities. Students must speak up, but do so appropriately. It is also the ability to accept criticism in a positive light and work to improve on those observations

Absences are taken seriously and only two “free get out of jail” cards are given per semester if your class meets twice a week, ten points will be taken off your participation and performance grade for each absence that follows. If your class meets once a week, students receive one “free get out of jail” card and 20 points will be taken off their participation and potentially their performance grade with each absence that follows. Only absences where emergency/medical documentation is provided or University sponsored field trips/events will be excused. Theatre requires discipline. Use your absences wisely!

Please do not come to class ill. Remember, it's a collaborative event and we don't want to create a tragedy or comedy of errors with others health. Please bring me a copy of your medical documentation to avoid serious penalty.

Assignments

This is a performance-based course. Performances will be graded in written and oral forms at the discretion of the instructor. Performances will be discussed openly in class for learning purposes. Students are to take detailed notes of criticisms and comments made by the instructor and others during critique sessions.

Exercises, rituals and improvisations require physical involvement. There will be individual assignments, but most will involve groups of people. Theatrical and improvisational work is collaborative. Actors must learn to work, listen and literally feed off other people. Therefore, theatre games and physical types of exercises will be employed throughout the semester. Students will be expected to research and lead in such exercises.

We will be playing lots of theatre games in this class, as long as time allows. These games require group work and are a part of your participation grade. These games may also be incorporated into specific group projects of performance. I.e. Critique groups maybe formed to work on character development in a peer review type of setting.

Assignment submission instructions: Again, this is a performance-based class and you will be critiqued orally in class. You will be responsible for keeping up with those comments and grades. In other words, keep every critique and grade sheet you are given until you receive your final grade. I recommend this for any class you take.

Class Policies:

Aristotle Paraphrase from the “Poetics”: Drama is man at his best. Comedy is man at his worst.

We will deal with adult language and situations in this class. Many times in comedy and drama we are not always politically correct and harsh words can be used. Stereotypes may occur in character development and sexual tension or situations can be a funny treatment for a topic. However, if you are offended or feel compromised please speak with me. Students must work in groups and create each scene. Groups maybe changed and/or other solutions maybe explored. Silence is acceptance. It is your right to speak up.

Online Tests/Quizzes

Exams and quizzes are in the form of performances.

Final Examination

Your final in this course will be a formal assignment with specific requirements to be fulfilled. It will be a piece of work that should demonstrate all the skills you have acquired throughout the semester. It maybe a continuation of a previous work explored in class or a specific project developed between the student and the instructor or your final performance in the end of the semester show. All students must attend the end of the semester show, whether they are performing in a scene or not. Detailed requirements will be given in class based upon individual and class needs.

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Course Evaluation

As required by UTD academic regulations, every student must complete an evaluation for each enrolled course at the end of the semester. An online instructional assessment form will be made available for your confidential use. Please look for the course evaluation link on the course Homepage towards the end of the course.

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Course Outline/Schedule

This course outline and schedule is purely tentative. It is a form of organization that is intended to help the instructor reach the objectives of the course, but when dealing with human elements and development, there are always variables. The instructor has the right to change the dates, times and assignments, as she deems necessary. Instructions will be clearly discussed in class and students are required to take notes of all class discussions.

WEEK	STARTIN G DATE	TOPIC/LECTURE	ASSESSMENT / ACTIVITY
1 (First class day)	Aug 22 (Monday)	Welcome Syllabus Review Begin the importance of exercises and focus	Basics of Improv reviewed.
2	Aug 29	In the Moment Focus and mirror work Review of skills Energy Levels	In class exercises -Man vs. Machine -Man vs. Animal - 3X bigger -Pick up your

			feet, etc... -Showing and sharing energy with the entire body (use of isolations)
3	Sept 5 Sept 7	Labor Day Holiday Use of metaphor	No Class .in class exercises
4	Sept 12	The Narrator vs. the players.	Students need to come to class with topics and story lines
5	Sept 19	The Enviironment: Building it visually for your audience and players.	Silent scenes to build environment Scenes with specific environments to work in.
6	Sept 26	The difference between comedy and drama	In class improves from discussion
7	Oct. 3	Dramatic Scene work	
8	Oct. 10	Impersonations -vocal work	Students will come to class with an impersonation of their choice to work on in and out of class.
9	Oct. 17	Review all before break	Student will work on a variety of

			scenes and review
10	Oct. 24		.
11	Oct. 31	Using everything workshop	
12	Nov. 7	Working on Scenes for show	Students will develop more detailed scenes
13	Nov. 14	Choosing Final Scenes	Students will perform in class
14	Nov 21	Thanksgiving Holiday	
15	Nov. 28	Final Performances	Performance and Participation
16	Dec. 5	Final Performances	

These timelines and descriptions are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

Sharing Confidential Information

Students considering sharing personal information in email, in person, or within assignments or exams should be aware that faculty members and teaching/research assistants are required by UT Dallas policy to report information about sexual misconduct to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Per university policy, faculty have been informed that they must identify the student to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Students who wish to have confidential discussions of incidents related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should contact the Student Counseling Center (972-883-2527 or after hours 972-UTD-TALK or 972-883-8255), the Women's Center (972-883-8255), a health care provider in the Student Health Center (972-883-2747), the clergyperson (or other legally recognized religious advisor) of their choice, or an off-campus resource (i.e., rape crisis center, doctor, psychologist). Students who are sexually assaulted, harassed, or victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, or stalking, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the UT Dallas Police Department at 972-883-2222 or to the Title IX Coordinator at 972-883-2218. Additional information and resources may be found at <http://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/title-ix/resources>.

Student Conduct and Discipline

The University of Texas System (Regents' Rule 50101) and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UT Dallas online catalogs (<http://catalog.utdallas.edu>). The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the Student Discipline and Conduct, UTDSP5003 (<http://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5003>). Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SSB 4.400, 972-883-6391) and online at <http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents>.

A student at the University neither loses their rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating its standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

Academic Dishonesty: The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Academic dishonesty can occur in relation to any type of work submitted for academic credit or as a requirement for a class. It can include individual work or a group project. Academic dishonesty includes, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and collaboration/collusion. In order to avoid academic dishonesty, it is important for students to fully understand the expectations of their professors. This is best accomplished through asking clarifying questions if an individual does not completely understand the requirements of an assignment.

Additional information related to academic dishonesty and tips on how to avoid dishonesty may be found here: <http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents/maintain>

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. All official student email correspondence will be sent only to a student's UT Dallas email address and UT Dallas will only consider email requests originating from an official UT Dallas student email account. This allows the University to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of each individual's corresponding via email and the security of the transmitted information. The University of Texas at Dallas furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources provides a method for students to have their UT Dallas mail forwarded to other email accounts. To activate a student UT Dallas computer account and forward email to another account, go to <http://netid.utdallas.edu>.

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Syllabus Addendum

Prof's notes on dishonesty:

Performances can be plagiarized by the cutting selected, movements copied and mimicking. Your performances must be your own. Imitating someone else's performance is cheating. Don't use someone else's work. Make your own decisions, cut your own work and incorporate your own talents.

"As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Other policies:

Questions about hand gun carry policies, procedure and policies please refer to the UT Dallas Syllabus, Policies and Procedures webpage.

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