

FA 492.01 Spring 2015

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LITERARY CHARACTER ANALYSIS THROUGH ACTING

Course Syllabus and A General Outline

The main purpose of this course is to approach written literature using the tools of acting. In order to achieve this goal, a character chosen from a particular novel will provide the source material. With the help of the acting tools that are going to be introduced, the students will pursue the journey of the character within the novel not as an outsider; instead, they will take a different approach; they will “be” the character and observe the text as the character himself/herself.

Objectives: The students will focus on the actor’s process of the creation of a role, his/her approach to written material and to performance. This course aims to help students develop a certain appreciation of an actor’s work as a craftsman and his/her understanding of a text, in addition to the acquisition of the process that evolves from the written material to the actual performance.

Week 1

Introduction

The students will be briefly introduced to the novels from which they will be asked to choose a character.

General outlines of the class will be talked over. Required materials will be announced.

Week 2

E. M. Forster "Aspects Of The Novel" – People

Who is the "character"?

The definition of "character" in written literature and in the performing arts will be compared.

Objective-Super-objective

Goals and Obstacles

Week 3

Ned Manderino "Transpersonal Actor"-Actions

Action vs. Activity

What is action (inner/outer)? What is activity? A scene will be chosen from the novel and it will be explored through the actions (a list will be handed out). The beats of the scene will be assigned through the objectives and actions of the character.

What does the character want to achieve in the novel? What stops him/her?

How to break down a scene. What is a "beat"?

Breaking down the text into segments through the objectives of the character.

Week 4

Introduction to "Spine"

The students will announce which novel character they have chosen to explore in the class and discuss their reasons why they chose this material.

Week 5

Edward Dwight Easty "On Method Acting" - Creating The Outer Character

Spine of the character (Outside-in approach)

The students will find the physical traits of the character from the novel. The spine of the character (literally) will be formed with the givens. How he/she walks, use of his/her hands, legs, how he/she carries his/her head will be investigated. The student can demonstrate the spine of his/her character in class

Week 6

Picture/Portrait of the character

PICTURE: This could be a photograph or a painting that represents the appearance of the character being worked on depending on the student's perception of the character. It doesn't have to match by all means, only the eyes or the general color or the feeling will do. It needs to "visually" represent the character being worked on, to have a "face" of the character.

Week 7

Edward Dwight Easty "On Method Acting" - Animal Exercises

Animal of the character

ANIMAL: Which animal does the student feel his/her character would have been? Why?

Week 8

Midterm

(Analysis of a scene using the tools of acting)

Week 9

Feedback

Week 10

Edward Dwight Easty "On Method Acting" - Creating The Inner Character

Character Interview

The questions will be answered in the hand-out. If there are no clues on some of the traits of the character in the novel the student is free to fill in with his/her imagination. The questions will be answered as the first person.

Week 11

Sonia Moore "Stanislavsky System"-Tempo Rhythm

Tempo Rhythm

The students will be asked to bring five simple consequent movements (e.g. to get a pen and start to write something, to pick up an object from the floor and look at it etc.) to study in

detail the tempo and the rhythm. The movements will be done in the class with the given tempos.

Explore the character through tempo-rhythm.

Week 12

Edward Dwight Easty "On Method Acting"-Sense Memory

Sense Memory

Which sense of the character is the most dominant? How does it affect the spine of the character and the course of the novel? How he/she holds objects, smells, tastes etc. What sounds does he/she hear? Do the things he/she sees change his/her decision? What are his/her reactions to sensory stimuli?

Week 13

Final

References:

On Method Acting, Edward Dwight Easty

Aspects of the Novel, E. M. Forster

Stanislavsky System, Sonia Moore

Transpersonal actor, Ned Manderino

Suggested Novels:

Franny and Zooey, J. D. Salinger

White Nights, Dostoyevsky

The Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde

Assessment Criteria:

% 30 Attendance-Reading- Class participation

% 20 Mid Term

% 30 Homework material

% 20 Final