

ATLANTIC ACTING SCHOOL

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SCRIPT ANALYSIS

Students work on scenes of increasing length and difficulty in order to learn the steps of analysis and develop their stagecraft. Emphasis is placed on finding clear, compelling objectives, playing those objectives truthfully and learning how to stage scenes effectively. Great attention is paid to developing professionalism, maturity and ensemble spirit in the class groups.

In advanced Script Analysis, students take on a Throughline project in which they analyze the leading role of an entire play. Scenes from the plays are brought in for multiple rounds. In each round, the scenes lengthen and the students learn to deepen their interpretation of the scene and the play. For their final presentations, students address the design aspects of their plays, using their ingenuity to stage the scenes as fully as possible. Advance Script Analysis may focus on canon-specific work such as Chekhov or American Writers.

PERFORMANCE TECHNIQUE

The goal of the first year is to provide students with a set of physical habits that complement those learned in Script Analysis. The actors learn how to implement an analysis through improvisation-based exercises and scene work. The focus is on how to simplify acting and find the parallels between behavior in real life and behavior on the stage, bringing together skills learned in Moment Lab with those learned in Script Analysis.

Advance Performance Technique classes look to explore the integration of skills through their application to media-specific (such as film and television) or canon-specific (such as contemporary female playwrights) work.

MOVEMENT

The Laban/Bartenieff principles are used to explore, describe and analyze movement to promote physical clarity and specificity. The class is designed to develop body awareness, strength, flexibility, and to coach actors toward becoming more physically centered for ease and efficiency in movement. By the year's end, movement exercises are applied to and explored in scene work.

MOMENT LAB

In Moment Lab, actors explore their potential to “act before they think.” They are readied to dive into the given circumstances of a play with impulsive freedom, curiosity, and dynamism. By prioritizing heightened presence, holistic listening, and brave intimacy in their acting, students learn to deepen and expand their improvisational skills, with and without text.

The lab encourages the honest and specific connection to another actor in each and every moment of performance. Using Sanford Meisner’s Repetition exercise as a touchstone to practice heightened moment work, and drawing on ideas and philosophies from various performance aesthetics, actors will focus on the concept of “radical presence” in their acting via a range of exercises, etudes, improvisations, and short scenes.

VOICE

The first semester focuses on creating a strong, flexible instrument to support active choices by employing Chuck Jones’ methodology. Various exercises strengthen and tone the muscles involved in making sound, release excess tension and focus concentration. The class also addresses issues regarding vocal health and the care and maintenance of the professional voice. Students finish the first semester with a dependable warm-up. In the second semester, exploration of the warm-up exercises continues, while various assignments put the voice into action using a wide range of material.

Advance Voice classes introduce the work of Catherine Fitzmaurice and students working on full-length productions are supported with vocal coaching as they would on a professional production.

SPEECH

The first year includes an introduction to the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) with an intense concentration on ‘good speech’ as per the teachings of Edith Skinner. Students’ speech patterns are dealt with through diagnostic recordings. The importance of IPA fluency is stressed as a practical tool for ‘scoring’ classical text and dialect challenges.

During the second semester, poetry and Shakespearean sonnets are introduced as application opportunities for further skill development. Advanced Speech classes also introduce dialect work and can include coaching on full-length productions.

SUZUKI & VIEWPOINTS

The Suzuki Method is a rigorous physical and vocal discipline for actors created by Tadashi Suzuki and his company. Drawing on a unique combination of traditional and innovative forms, the training strives to restore the wholeness of the body as a tool for theatrical expression.

The Viewpoints training is a technique of improvisation that was born out of the Post Modern dance era. In the Viewpoints training, actors explore elements of Time and Space, such as, tempo, repetition, gesture, shape, floor pattern and kinesthetic awareness. This exploration helps the actor to gain physical expressivity and to learn to build work as an ensemble. The Viewpoints training develops in an actor strength in movement, full body listening and the ability to follow a physical impulse.