Instructor: Maura Tighe
Location: Perlman Seminar room in Farber Library
Contact: 617-448-4765
Office Hours: Monday 5-6pm

Course Description:
This course will be experiential. Much of the learning will happen in class as students explore the technique needed to adapt the craft of acting to the screen. Previous experience and learning in acting and/or film is critical to understanding the concepts that will be explored. Students will learn how to create a natural, believable performance for film and television by using the essential acting skills of listening, impulse/instinct, character objective, relationship and environment and adapting these skills for the camera. The work in each class will be digitally recorded. Students will be required to access video via online site and critically reflect on one’s own work and the work of others as part of the learning process.

Course Objectives:
The goal of this course is to help students develop foundational knowledge and skill about acting techniques for film, audition technique and essential understanding of the business of acting. Upon completion of this course, students will know and be able to:

- Take risk in acting choices for film and television auditions.
- Develop strong cold reading techniques for auditions.
- Create truthful believable choices about character, objective, relationship and environment when preparing a film scene.
- Articulate and write about the skills present in evocative and powerful acting choices.
- Critique the work of self and others using professional language that delineates specific skills rather than reinforces general value statements, such as “I believe that” and “that was good”.
- Identify basic camera angles, shots and composition and how these elements help to define character and tell the story.
- Understand the business of acting and what tools are needed to pursue a career as an actor in the film and television business.

Texts:
The New Business of Acting, Brad Lemack
A Practical Handbook for the Actor, Bruder...Zigler

Writing and other Assignments:
Homework assignments will include short reflections, memorization, research and analysis on film scripts/clips and group projects. There will be one final writing assignment that will reflect your observations/discoveries and goals in relation to the work we have done. Details will be
handed out in class. See course calendar for specific due dates, details and expectations about group work. There are 6-8 informal reflection/response writing assignments.

**Performance Projects:**
Each student will prepare one film monologue and one two-character scene for a final grade. Students will work together on the text in class and will be given time to develop their work with feedback. The material must be from a film or television script and must be memorized and digitally recorded for assessment.

**Requirements**

**Attendance**
- Attendance is mandatory and students will not progress if they are late or absent. It is essential that students commit to coming on time and being present at every class. This course requires a present and alert mind, a relaxed and supple body and a willingness to take risk.
- Three unexcused absences from this class will result in failure. An absence is considered excused when:
  - You are sick (you should be really sick)
  - Religious obligation not recognized by Brandeis calendar.
  - Family emergency
All absences will be considered excused at the discretion of the instructor. Absences must be communicated with me prior to class via text or email. My cell phone is available, and students should text/email at least 1/2 hour before class if there is an issue.

**Late policy:**
Being late disrupts the class and corrodes the culture of seriousness in the class. Two late arrivals are equal to one unexcused absence. Two unexcused absences result in failure of the class. It is essential to respect the work that is happening in class. If you do arrive late, do not enter the class if a fellow student is presenting work, or we are recording work. Recognize that you are entering a room where work is happening and be respectful of that work. Remain outside the classroom until you can be certain your entrance will not disrupt the work.

**Assessment:**
Commitment to class work and participation 55%
Major Projects/Presentations 25%
Writing and critique assignments 20%

**Commitment to class work and participation:**
What does this look like in our work together? We will talk about it and create some agreements in our first session, but students will be asked to take risk, honor the risk of others, come to class prepared to engage, question and reflect, and practice together with the understanding that acting takes courage. Courage needs validation, respect and support and an artist truly grows when a safe space to explore is offered.

**Criteria for Major Projects/Presentations:**
Students will help generate assessment criteria for all major projects, based on our learning together in class, and using skills that have been introduced. Students should be prepared to present work on the due date. There will be one final writing assignment that will reflect your
observations/discoveries and goals in relation to the work we have done. Details will be handed out in class.

**Writing and critique assignments:**
Weekly reflections and responses using prompts from class, as well as weekly critique of recorded and archived lessons will be part of assessment. You will get a link after each class with your video. You will often watch your work and other classmates. Your writing and reflection will be a way for me to check on your understanding of key concepts and skills. You will be graded for completion of these assignments by the due date.

**Calendar of major assignments, projects and due dates:**

**MONDAY, SEPT 9, 2019**
*Introduction/Orientation-How we begin and how we work.*
This is an overview class that will include active exercises and framing work to help us all know the work ahead and get excited for it!
Assignment:
- Bring in a clip of your favorite movie/TV scene. It should be your favorite because of the acting.

**MONDAY, SEPT 16, 2019**
*Self Discovery: Who am I as an actor?*
Students will be guided to explore themselves as “the character” through short exercises on-camera interviews.
Assignment:
- Watch posted clips and write response/reflection.

**MONDAY, SEPT 23, 2019**
*Acting, Listening and Responding - What the camera sees.*
Students will practice listening and ‘sensing’, and explore acting as ‘doing’. What are the differences between stage and film acting, using the camera lens?
Assignment:
- Read **PH** - Chapters 1,2, 3
- Watch posted clips and write response/reflection
- Please bring in a short film monologue to explore next class.

**THURSDAY, OCT 3, 2019 (BRANDEIS MONDAY)**
*The film Monologue - applying truth, listening and action to monologues*
Students will apply lessons and techniques to the monologue in workshop. What is the character doing? What is the character’s goal or objective?
Assignment:
- Read **NBA** - Chapter 1,2
- Watch posted clips and write response/reflection
MONDAY, OCT 7, 2019

*Developing Character and Objective*

Students will develop monologues that show clear character choices and objective, these essential acting skills translate from stage to film.

Assignment:
- Monologue memorized for class workshop by this date
- Assignment: Read PH, Chapters 7,8,9,10.
- Watch posted clips and write response/reflection

TUESDAY, OCT 15, 2019 (BRANDEIS MONDAY)

*Film Monologue Performance*

Students will perform their monologues for presentation and be assessed on rubric

Assignment:
- Read NBA, Chapter 6, 12, 13
- Bring in your current headshot and resume, if you have one.

MONDAY, OCT 28, 2019

*Understanding storytelling using a camera lens.*

Students will experiment with camera shots and angles and learn to create a shot list.

Assignment:
- Bring in a two-person scene from a movie to share (Details described in class).
- Choose a two-person scene and a scene partner.
- Watch own performance of monologue and submit self-assessment

MONDAY, NOV 4, 2019

*Relationship/Environment*

Students will explore relationship/environment in film acting technique, Students will begin work on 2-character scenes.

Assignment:
- Read handout: *Acting for the Camera*, Barr

MONDAY, NOV 11, 2019

*Audition Technique*

Students will be introduced to cold reading techniques for monologues and scenes. Students will practice auditioning.

Assignment:
- Film scene memorized and shot list due.
- Read handout: *Audition*, Shurtleff.

MONDAY, NOV 18, 2019

TBD.
MONDAY NOV 25, 2019

The Business of Acting This class will be a seminar format. Overview of the Film/Television business as it relates to the actor.

Assignment:
- Read NBA- Chapters 14, 15, 17
- Final paper/project assigned (details to be given in class via handout)
- Rehearsal period for final scenes. Students should finalize location and memorize scenes by this date

MONDAY DEC 2, 2019

Film scene Performance.

Students will perform their scenes for presentation and be assessed on a rubric.

MONDAY DEC 9, 2019

- Watch posted film scene and submit self-assessment
- Final Presentations due.
- Final Paper due.
- This is the last class. There will be no final examination during the final exam period.