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.

Assignments
Texts:
Audition, by Michael Shurtleff
Respect for Acting, by Uta Hagen

Writing and other Assignments:
Homework assignments will include short reflections, memorization, research and analysis of 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.
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.

Two unexcused absences from this class will result in failure. An absence is considered unexcused if no attempt was made to communicate with me about missing class. My cell phone is available and students should text at least 1/2 hour before class if there is an issue. I wish to be informed before class if you are going to be absent. The only absences that will be considered excused are illness (doctor’s note, please), emergency (discretion of teacher), and religious obligation.

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 archived lessons will be part of assessment. 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:

Wednesday, January 20, 2016 (Brandeis Monday)
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!

Monday, January 25, 2016
UNIT 1- Self Discovery: Who am I as an actor?
• Students will be guided to explore themselves as “the character” through short exercises and on-camera interviews.
• Assignment: Please read Respect for Acting, Part One, Intro and Chapters -10.
• Watch your taped interview and submit reflection.

Monday, February 1, 2016
UNIT 2- Acting, Listening and Responding - What the camera sees.
• Students will practice listening and ‘sensing’, and explore acting as ‘doing’, and experiment with the differences between stage and film acting, using the camera lens
• Assignment: Please watch posted film clips and write reflection on prompt.
• Please bring in a short film monologue to explore next class.

Monday, February 8, 2016
UNIT 2- Con’t.
• Students will apply listening and sensing to film monologues.
• Students will start work on objective in film acting.
• Assignment: Read Respect for Acting, Part Two, Chapters 11-20

Monday, February 15, 2016
No class. Winter Break

Monday, February 23, 2016
UNIT 3 Developing Character and Objective
• Students will develop monologues that show clear character choices and objective, and how these essential acting skills translate from stage to film.
• Assignment: Final monologue choice for assessment due. Monologues must be memorized.
• Read Audition, Prologue and Chapter 2-The Twelve Guideposts

Monday, February 29, 2016
• Monologue Presentations Due
• Assignment: Written reflection of work presented in class due.

Monday, March 7, 2016
Unit 3- 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 clip from a movie to share (Details described in class).
• Assignment - Choose a two-person scene and a scene partner.
• Watch assigned videos (link to these given in class) and answer writing prompt.

Monday, March 14, 2016
Unit 4 - Relationship/Environment
• Students will explore relationship/environment in film acting technique
• Students will begin work on 2 character scenes.
• Assignment: Please read Audition, Chapter 1, 3 and 4 and The Business of Acting
• Writing assignment.

Monday, March 21, 2016
Unit 4 - Cont
• As students work on scenes, concepts and techniques will be reinforced with in class exercises.
• Assignment, written reflection on archived work. Memorize script.

Monday, March 28, 2016
Unit 5 - Audition Technique
• Students will be introduced cold reading techniques for monologue and scenes.
• Students will practice auditioning.
• Film scene memorized and shot list due.

Monday, April 4, 2016
Unit 6 - The Business of Acting
• This class will be a seminar format. Overview of the Film/Television business as it relates to the actor. Guest speaker TBA.
• Assignment: Final paper (details to be given in class via handout)

Monday, April 11, 2016
• Rehearsal period for final scenes. Students should finalize location and memorize scenes.

Monday, April 18, 2016
• Final Presentations due.

Monday, April 25, 2016
No class. Spring Recess

Monday, May 2, 2016
Last day of class.
• Final presentations
• Final paper due.