

Course Syllabus
Movement for the Stage

Course Description:

Have you ever sent or received a text message that left you uncertain about its meaning? Or found yourself rewriting an email multiple times to ensure your emotions are clearly understood? Yet, with a close friend or sibling, a single glance or brief eye contact can convey everything you need to say. In those moments, so much is communicated without a single word.

An actor's job is to harness the universally understood, unspoken language of physical movement to enhance storytelling possibilities on stage. A simple gesture, a body position, or a shape in space can change the meaning of words, shift dynamics between performers, and elevate the liveliness of any moment on stage. Developing a keen awareness of one's movement and physical expressiveness is essential for performing on stage or presenting in any public forum.

This course will delve into the principles and tools used to express emotion and story through physical movement. The actor's physical form is a potent instrument for conveying narratives with or without spoken words. We will explore techniques from various mediums of non-verbal storytelling to develop a physical vocabulary that enhances theatrical performance. Performers will study the language of physical movements to build a repertoire that can be applied to all aspects of theatrical work.

This in-depth approach will provide a reliable methodology for using gesture and movement to convey stories, enabling actors to bring courage and responsiveness into their performances and enrich each moment on stage.

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Course Objectives: By achieving these objectives, students will be equipped to use their physicality as a powerful tool in storytelling, enhancing their overall performance abilities on stage

Explore Non-Verbal Storytelling Techniques

- Investigate various principles and mediums of non-verbal storytelling
- Apply these techniques to create more nuanced and expressive theatrical performances

Enhance Physical Awareness and Develop Physical Vocabulary

- Cultivate awareness of one's use of breath to affect movement and convey emotion
- Cultivate awareness of one's movement and physical expressiveness
- Study and practice a repertoire of body positions and gestures to convey emotions and universally understood states of consciousness
- Develop an understanding of how physical movement, breath, and body position communicate emotions and influence storytelling

Foster Creativity and Imagination to Build Confidence and Responsiveness As Performers

- Engage in exercises designed to unleash creativity and imagination through movement
- Experiment with different styles and qualities of movement to expand expressive potential

Integrate Movement and Text

- Explore how physical gestures can alter and enhance the meaning of spoken words.
- Practice integrating physical actions with text to create dynamic and engaging performances

Required Texts and Materials (provided by instructor)

- Selected chapters from *The Moving Body and Theatre of Movement and Gesture* by Jacques Lecoq
- Selected readings on Etienne Decroux
- Selected readings from *Laban for Actors and Dancers* by Jean Newlove
- Selected readings on Disney's 12 Principles of Animation

Materials

- Comfortable clothing suitable for movement - no jeans, and be prepared to roll around on the floor, skirts and dresses are not advised
- Comfortable shoes you can run in
- A journal for reflections and notes is required to be brought to class each session and will be read by the instructor periodically throughout the semester

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Course Schedule

Week 1, Class 1: Introduction to Physical Storytelling and Movement for the Stage

Overview: Course objectives and expectations

Discussion: Importance of developing movement practice and body awareness on stage

In-Class Journal: Reflect on your current relationship to movement and physicality on stage

Homework:

- Readings on Viewpoints and Laban Movement Principles

Week 1, Class 2: The Actor's Body: Self-Awareness Part 1

Exercises: Breath and self-awareness

Discussion: Space, Time, Weight, and Flow

Homework:

- Readings on the history of Viewpoints, Laban Movement, and Étienne Decroux

Week 2, Class 3: The Actor's Body: Self-Awareness Part 2

Exercises: Breath and self-awareness, posturing, and expressing emotion through posture and gesture

Movement Practice: Body posturing

Homework:

- 350-word journal on observations from readings and class exercises

Week 2, Class 4: The Actor's Body: Laban Movement Part 1

Laban Movement: Flow of Movement

Exercises: Body posturing with breath, flow of movement

Homework:

- Create a non-verbal physical story using breath and body posturing, with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Be prepared to perform in the next class.
- Reading: Space in performance

Week 3, Class 5: The Actor's Body: Self-Awareness Part 3 & Laban Movement Part 2

Laban Movement: Space and Flow of Movement

Exercises: Body posturing, flow of movement, and exploration of space

Presentations: Physical stories with one-on-one peer feedback

Homework:

- 300-word self-evaluation on your performance
- 300-word peer evaluation on your partner's performance

Week 3, Class 6: Laban Movement Part 3: Exploration of Weight

Exercises: Body posturing with breath, considering space and weight

Discussion: The role of weight in movement

Homework:

- Readings on Weight and Time

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Week 4, Class 7: Laban Movement Part 4: Exploration of Time

Exercises: Body posturing with breath, considering weight and time

Discussion: The role of time in movement

Homework:

- Readings on Disney's 12 Principles of Animation
- 300-word journal analyzing the connections between these principles and actor's movements

Week 4, Class 8: Laban Movement Part 5: The Diagonal Scale

Exercises: Body posturing with breath, considering weight and the diagonal scale

Discussion: Understanding and applying the diagonal scale

Homework:

- Create a non-verbal physical story using the Eight Efforts of Laban Movement and the Diagonal Scale. Be prepared to perform in the next class.

Week 5, Class 9: Laban Movement Part 6: The Diagonal Scale and Midterm Preparation

Exercises: Body posturing, breath, and diagonal scale

Peer Presentations: Physical stories with one-on-one peer feedback

Homework:

- Prepare for the midterm exam by creating a non-verbal physical story using Laban's Eight Efforts and the Diagonal Scale.

Week 5, Class 10: Midterm Exam

1. **Performance Exam:** Presentation of Physical Stories
2. **Written Exam:** Draw and label the Diagonal Scale, define the 8 Principles of Laban Movement

Week 6, Class 11: Exploration of Character Movement Part 1: Transforming Text into Movement

Exercises: Body posturing, breath, and diagonal scale

Discussion: Transforming written words into physical movement

Homework:

- Research and select a text (around 5 sentences) to create a physical performance. Bring to the next class.

Week 6, Class 12: Exploration of Character Movement Part 2: The Physical Monologue

Exercises: Body posturing, breath, and diagonal scale

Improvisation: Transforming text into movement with onomatopoeia

Homework:

- Prepare a non-verbal monologue
- Submit a breakdown of how you transformed the text into movement

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Week 7, Class 13: Exploration of Character Movement Part 3: The Physical Monologue

Exercises: Body posturing, breath, and diagonal scale

Presentations: Non-verbal monologue

Homework:

- Prepare to incorporate sound into your movement monologue
- Journal entry of selected text broken down into sounds

Week 7, Class 14: Exploration of Character Movement Part 4: The Physical Monologue with Sound

Exercises: Body posturing, breath, and diagonal scale

Presentations: Onomatopoeia movement monologue

Homework:

- 300-word self-evaluation of your Onomatopoeia movement monologue
- Prepare for the final exam: Spoken text performance with physical movement

Week 8, Class 15: The Actor's Body in Relationship to Others Part 1: Mirroring, Opposing, and Responding

Group Exercises: Body posturing with breath and diagonal scale

Discussion: Partner exercises for mirroring, opposing, and responsiveness

Improvisation: Movement battle

Homework:

- Work with a partner to create a movement battle. Prepare for the final exam.

Week 8, Class 16: The Actor's Body in Relationship to Others Part 2: Movement Battle

Group Exercises: Body posturing with breath and diagonal scale

Presentations: Movement battle

Homework:

- 300-word peer evaluation of the movement battle
- Prepare for the final exam: Spoken text performance with physical movement

Week 9, Class 17: Exploration of Character Movement Part 5: The Physical Monologue with Language

Exercises: Body posturing with breath

Presentations: Spoken text performance with physical movement

Homework:

- 300-word peer evaluation of spoken text with movement performance
- Continue preparation for your final exam

Week 9, Class 18: The Actor's Body in Relationship to Others Part 3: Swapping Places

Partner Exercises: Body posturing with breath and diagonal scale

Improvisation: Movement scene work, telling a story with sound and movement

Homework:

- Continue preparation for your final exam

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Week 10, Class 19: The Actor's Body in Relationship to Others Part 4: Swapping Places

Partner Exercises: Body posturing with breath and diagonal scale

Improvisation: Movement scene work, telling a story with spoken text and movement

Homework:

- Prepare for your final exam
- 600-word journal entry on how your relationship to movement and physicality on stage has evolved over the semester

Week 10, Class 20: Final Exam

1. **Final Exam Performance:** Movement Monologue with Language

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Grading Structure

2%	<u>Week 2, Class 3</u>	<u>Homework:</u> 350-word journal on observations from readings and class exercises
5%	<u>Week 3, Class 5</u>	<u>In-Class Presentations:</u> Physical stories with one-on-one peer feedback
2%	<u>Week 3, Class 5</u>	<u>Homework:</u> 200-word self-evaluation on your performance 200-word peer evaluation on your partner’s performance
2%	<u>Week 4, Class 7</u>	<u>Homework:</u> 300-word journal analyzing the connections between these principles and the actor’s movements
5%	<u>Week 5, Class 9</u>	<u>In-Class Peer Presentations:</u> Physical stories with one-on-one peer feedback
12%	<u>Week 5, Class 10</u> Midterm Exam	In-Class Presentations Exam: Physical Stories
12%	<u>Week 5, Class 10</u> Midterm Exam	Written Exam: Draw and label the Diagonal Scale, define the 8 Principles of Laban Movement
2%	<u>Week 6, Class 12</u>	<u>Homework:</u> Submit a breakdown of how you transformed the text into movement
5%	<u>Week 7, Class 13</u>	<u>In-Class Presentations:</u> Non-verbal monologue
2%	<u>Week 7, Class 13</u>	<u>Homework:</u> 300-word Journal entry on how you broke your text into sounds
5%	<u>Week 7, Class 14</u>	<u>In-Class Presentations:</u> Onomatopoeia movement monologue
2%	<u>Week 7, Class 14</u>	<u>Homework:</u> 300-word self-evaluation of your Onomatopoeia movement monologue
5%	<u>Week 8, Class 16</u>	<u>In-Class Presentations:</u> Movement battle
2%	<u>Week 8, Class 16</u>	<u>Homework:</u> 300-word peer evaluation of the movement battle
5%	<u>Week 9, Class 17</u>	<u>In-Class Presentations:</u> Spoken text performance with physical movement
2%	<u>Week 9, Class 17</u>	<u>Homework:</u> 300-word peer evaluation of spoken text with movement performance
5%	<u>Week 10, Class 19</u>	<u>Homework:</u> 600-word journal entry on how your relationship to movement and physicality on stage has evolved over the semester
25%	<u>Week 10, Class 20</u> Final Exam	Final Exam Performance: Movement Monologue with Language