

Whose Line Is It  
Anyway?

YOURS .



# Improvisation

UCSC Summer Session I  
Porter 80I  
Bob Giges, Instructor

The course will explore improvisation in the performing arts through readings on dance, music, and especially theater improvisation, by viewing live performances, and by engaging in the practice of improvisation in the theatrical tradition. **The emphasis will be on acting improv.** No prior experience is required.

Questions? Contact Bob Giges: [otom\(at\)ucsc.edu](mailto:otom(at)ucsc.edu)  
General Education Codes:  
PR-C, A, T4  
**Enrollment is limited**

**Syllabus**  
**Improvisation**  
Porter 80I, Summer 2014

Instructor: Bob Giges  
Email: otom@ucsc.edu  
Office: inside the Porter College Main Office. Office hours by appointment.

The course will explore improvisation across the performing art disciplines through theoretical readings on dance, music, and theater improvisation, by viewing live performances, and by engaging in the practice of improvisation in the theatrical tradition. **The emphasis will be on studying and doing acting improv.**

You are expected to **come to class on time** and prepared. Since much of our class time will center on improvisation training, focused and sustained engagement with in-class exercises will be essential. In addition to participation in exercises and discussions I lead, you will develop a variety of reading-based and acting improv assignments including both group and individual presentations. You will be expected to attend three live improvisation performances (or attend two live + screen two performance videos) and write scene analyses in response. You will also write two short papers integrating the assigned readings of the course.

A note about attendance: While I would like you to come to *all* class meetings, I understand that illness, emergencies, etc. may preclude perfect attendance. You should know, however, that **you must attend eight of our ten class meetings in full** to earn any credit for the class because so much of the substance of the course occurs in class. Naturally, any absence will affect your grade for the course; on the other hand, perfect on-time attendance gives you an A for the attendance component of your grade.

Grades are computed as follows:

50% attendance/participation

50% written work

This may be a very different grading rubric than you are used to if you usually take classes that privilege exams or papers over attendance/participation. While many students enjoy and benefit from this change, others prefer to exercise their option to take the class pass/no pass.

**Texts/Readings:**

*Acting on Impulse* by Carol Hazenfield

*Improvise* by Mick Napier

*Whose Improv is it Anyway?* by Amy Seham (a free eBook)

*Course Reader*

The books and reader are available at the Bay Tree Bookstore on campus.

Guests/Visitors:

Because of the nature of the work we do with each other that relies on mutual trust developed over time, guests/visitors are not permitted in this class.

Accommodations Requests:

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me as soon as possible, preferably within the first week of the Summer Session. Contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at [drc@ucsc.edu](mailto:drc@ucsc.edu) for more information.

**Schedule**  
Improvisation  
Porter 80I, Summer 2014  
MW 6-9 PM Baskin Arts Seminar Room

Monday June 23

Introduction

Establishing a foundation for collaborative work

Soundscapes

Developing the physical instrument

Endowing a partner, scenes

Wednesday June 25

**Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Intro-Ch. 3 (pp. 3-36)**

**Reader pp. 1-29**

**Napier Ch 11: do 3 exercises of your choosing**

**Turn in a description of what you know about improv, your experience to date (if any), and your goals for the class.** Maximum one double spaced page, but half as much is AOK, depending on what you have to say.

**Sign up for the readings you will present (in future classes)**

More on the physical instrument

Status/status shifts

Beginning character development

Readings discussion: introductory articles on history and theory of improv

Monday June 30

**Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 6-8 and 12**

**Reader pp. 31-54, 68-72**

**Napier Ch 11: do 3 exercises of your choosing**

**Group presentations, Part I: lead discussion/workshop on your assigned chapters (which all of us will have read) referring to examples from our improv work to date. Every member of your group should have a specific job to do in the presentation.**

Space object work/defining environments

Expanding the physical instrument: silent scenes

Platforms and tilts (working with plot)

Wednesday July 2

**Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 10 and 17**

**Reader pp. 55-60, 73-82**

**Napier Ch 11: do 3 exercises of your choosing**

**Show your work in class in response to Status assignment**

Deepening character work

Scenework

**THIS WEEKEND: see Improv Show #1**

*CONTINUED OTHER SIDE...*

Monday July 7

**Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 4-5**

*Whose Improv?* pp. xi-30 (preface, intro. Ch. 1)

**Reader pp. 83-89**

**Napier Ch. 3-4 and Ch 11: do 3 exercises of your choosing**

**First scene analyses of improv performance due (see detailed assignment)**

**Group presentations, Part 2: lead discussion/workshop on your assigned chapters (which all of us will have read) referring to examples from our improv work to date. Every member of your group should have a specific job to do in the presentation.**

Choices relating to emotion

Wednesday July 9

**Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 11**

*Whose Improv?* pp. 115-22, 156-8, Ch. 6, conclusion (Ch. 4 is optional: you might enjoy learning about Mick Napier's company Annoyance Theatre)

**Reader pp. 61-68, 90-8**

**Napier Ch 11: do 3 exercises of your choosing**

**Show your work in class in response to Alter-Ego assignment**

Putting it all together: CROW (Character Relationship Objective Where)

**BY THIS WEEKEND: see Improv Show #2**

Monday, July 14

**Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 9 and 16**

**Reader pp. 99-110**

**Napier Ch 11: do 3 exercises of your choosing**

**Group presentations, Part 3: lead discussion/workshop on your assigned chapters (which all of us will have read) referring to examples from our improv work to date. Every member of your group should have a specific job to do in the presentation.**

Using objectives

Wednesday July 16

**Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 13 and 15**

**Napier Ch. 6, 7 and Ch 11: do 3 exercises of your choosing**

**Group projects on Improv Show #2 due**

Working with multiple scenes

Protagonist-driven storylines

**BY THIS WEEKEND: see Improv Show #3**

Monday July 21

**Read Napier Ch. 9**

**Short paper on class readings due**

**Manifesto incorporating class readings due**

Longform improvisation I

Wednesday July 23

**Turn in your self-evaluation**

**Second scene analyses of improv performance due**

Longform improvisation II