

Syllabus
Improvisation
Porter 41I, Summer 2018

Instructor: Bob Giges

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Office: inside the Porter College Main Office. Office hours by appointment.

The course will explore improvisation across the performing art disciplines through 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 will be computed as follows:

25% attendance

25% participation (intensity of engagement, rather than performance ability)

50% written work:

Improv Show #1 and #3 short papers (10% each)

Whose Improv Is It Anyway short paper (12%)

Manifesto (18%)

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.

See our course site at **canvas.ucsc.edu for assignments** and some readings.

Accommodations Requests:

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At that time, I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

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.

2018 Summer Session Deadlines

Session 1:

Drop: Monday, July 2

Withdraw: Friday, July 13

Neither Summer Session nor instructors drop students for non-attendance or non-payment. Students must drop themselves. Dropping results in full tuition reversal/refund. Withdraw posts a W for the grade and full tuition is charged (no refund). For all dates and deadlines, including 'change of grade option' (P/NP) and grades due, here is the summer academic calendar -

<https://summer.ucsc.edu/fundamentals/academic-calendar.html>

Academic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree.

All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC.

In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC Academic Integrity policy, he or she may face both academic sanctions imposed by the instructor of record and disciplinary sanctions imposed either by the provost of his or her college or the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript.

For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the [Academic Integrity page](#) at the [Division of Undergraduate Education](#).

Title IX:

The university cherishes the free and open exchange of ideas and enlargement of knowledge. To maintain this freedom and openness requires objectivity, mutual trust, and confidence; it requires the absence of coercion, intimidation, or exploitation. The principal responsibility for maintaining these conditions must rest upon those members of the university community who exercise most authority and leadership: faculty, managers, and supervisors. The university has therefore instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. [Information about the Title IX Office](#), the [online reporting link](#), applicable campus [resources](#), reporting responsibilities, the [UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#) and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can be found at titleix.ucsc.edu. The Title IX/Sexual Harassment Office is located at 105 Kerr Hall. In addition to the [online reporting option](#), you can contact the Title IX Office by calling 831-459-2462.

Schedule
Improvisation
Porter 41I, Summer 2018
TuTh 6-9 PM Arts Seminar Room

Tuesday June 26

Introduction

Establishing a foundation for collaborative work

Soundscapes

Developing the physical instrument

Thursday June 28

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/summary 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)

Introduction to character development

Status

Readings discussion: introductory articles on history and theory of improv

Tuesday July 3

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.

Endowing a partner

Reincorporation in scenes

Thursday July 5

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

Status-oriented scenework

FRIDAY, JULY 6: Improv Playhouse of San Francisco, Center Stage (downtown Santa Cruz) 8 PM

Tuesday July 10

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.

Deepening character work

Thursday July 12

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

Space object work/defining environments

Alter-Ego scenes

BY THIS WEEKEND: see Improv Show #2

Tuesday, July 17

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.

Platforms and tilts (working with plot)

Scenework

Thursday July 19

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

Short paper on *Whose Improv Is It Anyway?* due

Working with objectives

BY THIS WEEKEND: see Improv Show #3

Tuesday July 24

Read Napier Ch. 9

Manifesto incorporating class readings due

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

Working with multiple scenes

Protagonist-driven storylines

Thursday July 26

Turn in your self-evaluation

Scene analyses of improv performance #3 due

Longform improvisation