

**Syllabus**  
**Improvisation**  
Porter 41I, Summer 2025

Instructor: Bob Giges  
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Office hours by appointment.

The course will explore improvisation across the performing art disciplines through readings on dance, music, and theater improvisation, by viewing 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 develop a variety of reading-based and acting improv assignments:

- You meet weekly with 3-4 classmates to do improv exercises (90 minutes minimum).
- You also view one improvisation performance every week, approximately 60-90 minutes.
- You write a brief response to a prompt on each of the above to demonstrate that you have fulfilled the assignments, and you also write a weekly response to the readings assigned.
- In the last week of the class, you turn in your improv manifesto integrating the assigned readings of the course.

A note about attendance: While I would like you to be part of 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 in class gives you an A+ for the class component of your attendance grade.

Grades will be computed as follows:

20% attendance in class meetings

30% participation (level of engagement, rather than performance ability) including status/alter-ego assignments and 4 written rehearsal responses.

50% other written work:

4 readings responses (20%)

4 shows synopses (12%)

Manifesto (18%)

**Texts/Readings (all are required):**

*Acting on Impulse* by Carol Hazenfield

Readings on Canvas (excerpts from *Improvise* by Mick Napier and misc. articles)

Improv show recordings, including one requiring access to Netflix streaming.

**Co-Creating a Safe Space**

To achieve the goals for the class, we need to build a classroom space that is inclusive and safe for all. Towards this end, students are encouraged to develop characters and scenarios that resist stereotypes, particularly those that demean others based on ethnic, gender, or sexual identity. Students are encouraged to perform roles and scenes that are expansive and inclusive, portraying relationships that work against the constriction of an individual based on their identity.

**Recording:**

Out of respect for your fellow students' privacy, recording of class proceedings is prohibited.

**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.

### Summer Session Deadlines

Session 1:

Drop: Monday, July 1 (tuition reversed)

Request for "W": Sunday, July 14 (no tuition reversal)

Change Grade Option: Sunday, July 21

Summer is unique. You will not be dropped for non-attendance or non-payment. You must drop yourself. Dropping before the deadline results in a 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/studentlife/index.html> For questions about dropping, requesting a W grade for a course, or withdrawing from the summer quarter, email [summer@ucsc.edu](mailto:summer@ucsc.edu).

### DRC Remote Accommodations:

The Disability Resources Center reduces barriers to inclusion and full participation for students with disabilities by providing support to individually determine reasonable academic accommodations. If you have questions or concerns about exam accommodations or any other disability-related matter, email the DRC Schedulers at [drc@ucsc.edu](mailto:drc@ucsc.edu) for an appointment.

### Generative AI Policy

You may not use ChatGPT or any other generative AI platform or technology, including (but not limited to) Co-Pilot, Gemini, Claude, DALL-E, Grammarly Premium, StudyBuddy, predictive/suggestive text, etc. as a substitute for your own thinking and writing for class assignments, including those about class readings, the final paper (manifesto) and of course class rehearsal assignments. You may use AI in editing for grammar, writing mechanics, and punctuation.

### 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 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](http://titleix.ucsc.edu). The Title IX Office is actively responding to reports and requests for consultation. If you are not currently working with someone in the office and want to make a report/request a consult, you can expect the fastest response by using our [online reporting link](#). For more information please visit the [Title IX Operations under Covid-19](#) page.

**Schedule**  
Improvisation  
Porter 41I, Summer

Monday June 24

Introduction

Establishing a foundation for collaborative work

Developing the physical instrument

Tuesday June 25

**Upload 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.

Wednesday June 26

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

WEEK 1 Readings (Part 1): Reader pp. 1-29

Napier Chapter 11 “Exercises to Do at Home”: do 3 exercises of your choice

**In class: Arrange meeting time with your group to do weekly exercises.**

Introduction to character development

Status

**Weekend**

**1) Improv show #1: due Saturday 7 PM**

2) Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 6-8

WEEK 1 Readings (Part 2): Reader pp. 31-54, 68-72, “Systemic Racism”

**Readings assignment on these and last Wednesday’s readings due Sunday 2 PM**

**3) Rehearsal assignment #1: due Sunday 7 PM**

Monday July 1

Endowing a partner

Reincorporation in scenes

Wednesday July 3

Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 10 and 12

WEEK 2 Readings (Part 1): Reader pp. 55-60, 68-72

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

Status-oriented scenework

**Weekend**

**1) Improv show #2: due Saturday 7 PM**

2) Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 4-5 and 17

WEEK 2 Readings (Part 2): Reader pp. 73-82, 83-89, Napier Ch. 3 and 4

**Readings assignment on these and last Wednesday’s readings due Sunday 2 PM**

**3) Rehearsal assignment #2: due Sunday 7 PM**

Monday July 8  
Deepening character work

Wednesday July 10  
Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 11  
WEEK 3 Readings (Part 1): Reader pp. 61-68, 95-8 and the articles in the  
“Racism Sexism in Improv in the 2020s” folder

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

Space object work/defining environments  
Alter-Ego scenes

**Weekend**

**1) Improv show #3: due Saturday 7 PM**

2) Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 9  
WEEK 3 Readings (Part 2): Reader pp. 99-110

**Readings assignment on these and last Wednesday’s readings due Sunday 2 PM**

**3) Rehearsal assignment #3: due Sunday 7 PM**

Monday, July 15  
Platforms and tilts (working with plot)  
Scenework

Wednesday July 17  
Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 15 and 16  
WEEK 4 Readings (Part 1): Napier Ch. 6  
Working with objectives

**Weekend**

**1) Improv show #4: due Saturday 7 PM**

2) Prepare *Acting on Impulse* Ch. 13  
WEEK 4 Readings (Part 2): Napier Ch. 7

**Readings assignment on these and last Wednesday’s readings due Sunday 2 PM**

**3) Rehearsal assignment #4: due Sunday 7 PM**

Monday July 22  
Putting it all together: CROW (Character Relationship Objective Where)  
Working with multiple scenes  
Protagonist-driven storylines

Tuesday July 23  
**Manifesto incorporating class readings due**

Wednesday July 24  
Final class: Long Form Improv

Friday July 26  
**Self-evaluation due**