University Mission Statement:
Our mission is to serve as a leading center of Christian thought and action providing an excellent education from a biblical perspective and global context in pivotal professions to equip Christian leaders to change the world.

School of Communication and the Arts Mission Statement:
Our mission is to graduate emerging leaders and scholars who demonstrate excellence and innovation in thought and action in their respective fields and who, through their educational experiences here, will transform and redeem media and the arts.

Department of Theatre Arts Mission Statement:
Our mission is to educate and train undergraduate and graduate students to incisively examine and effectively communicate, through intellectual analysis and the realization of live performance, the great truths of the human condition as perceived through the lens of a Christian world view.

COURSE SYLLABUS

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION & THE ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS

THE 711
THE MEISNER TECHNIQUE 2
SPRING 2013
LOCATION: COM 128
CLASS MEETS: MW, 3-4:50 PM
INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Scott Hayes
Phone: 757-352-4717
Fax: 757-352-4279
E-mail: shayes@regent.edu
Office Hours: 10-11 am MW, 1-3 pm TR
Office Location: COM 211

PERSONAL GREETING

Welcome to the course! I believe the Meisner approach is the best foundational approach for any actor, particularly those coming from a worldview based on the Christian faith, and it is a great honor to facilitate. Looking forward to it!

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

B.F.A., Acting, University of California, Santa Barbara
M.F.A., Acting, Florida State University/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training
Union Affiliations: AEA, SAG
Memberships: ATHE, ATME, OTA, SETC
Blogs: parabletheatre.wordpress.com, scottmhayes.wordpress.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a continuing study of Sanford Meisner’s Approach to actor training. It takes as its focal point preparing the actor to access and control release of emotion, text work, and character work. Exercise work includes: “Setting the Stage”, “Emotional Preparation”, “Coming Home to Be Alone”, “Coming Home to Do”, “Roommates”, and “The Highest Stakes.” This course continues to build upon the improvisational skills addressed in Acting 1 but shifts focus on working with text and developing a role. Acting 2 has a more demanding scene study component than Acting 1. Scene work will draw upon the dramatic works of Henrik Ibsen and Anton Chekhov.

RATIONALE/COURSE OVERVIEW

Christ taught us, “…and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free” John 8:32. For me, acting, indeed doing theatre, has always been more about presenting truth than pretending; albeit a heightened truth that we don’t come across every day. Indeed, much of the history of humankind has been spent in the search of “truth.” It is my belief, as a Christian artist, that where the truth is there also is God. The Apostle John informs us, “…God is spirit and those who worship him worship him in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24. As actors, our responsibility is to seek out the truths the playwright is attempting to articulate in their script and then to strive to present that truth, via our character, as honestly, and as interestingly as possible within the context of the production’s style, genre, concept, etc. If we present the character truthfully, from their perspective (and remember—the villain is always the hero of their own story), we contribute to the overall truth of the effort—and there also is God. The better workmen we are the more artfully we can reveal (like peeling back the layers of an onion) the often-universal truths the playwright has embedded in our character. The Apostle Paul also encourages us to strive to become the best workmen we can be, “…do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly holding the word of truth.” II Timothy 2:15. The more adept at your craft you are the more effective you will be in telling the truth through your work. This course is designed to equip you with additional tools (and to give you expertise at using them) so as to make you an “approved workman,” that you might more effectively worship God in spirit and in truth through your craft.
INTEGRATION OF FAITH

“...and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free” (John 8:32). All courses taught at Regent have as one of the objectives to address the issues and implications of our Christian faith in regard to the content of the class. All readings and assignments should be considered in light of your personal faith. We should approach all course work like the Bereans – receiving the information with great eagerness and examining it for truth from Scripture (Acts 17:11). I will always invite and encourage you to raise questions and/or offer insights in this area for class discussion.

MFA OUTCOMES

- All MFA in Acting students will demonstrate mastery of objective-driven acting technique at a professionally competitive level.

- All MFA in Acting students will demonstrate objective driven acting as the cornerstone of performance in diverse literary genres.

- All MFA in Acting students will articulate and defend artistic choices in the language of acting craft, ensuring their relevance as informed collaborators in the creative process.

- All MFA in Acting students will demonstrate healthy, effective, character-driven work in the applied disciplines of voice and movement.

- All MFA in Acting students will effectively integrate and apply biblical principles of the Christian faith to their academic and creative work.

COURSE OUTCOMES FOR THE 711 THE MEISNER TECHNIQUE 2

By the completion of the course the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate, in scene-work, comprehension and application of “subtext” and “inner-monologue” techniques;

2. Implement, in scene work, “physicalization of given-circumstances” implicit in a scene;

3. Demonstrate comprehension of the concept of “the moment before” and “antecedent action”— present a score of physical actions, in scene work, revealing behavioral choices made reflecting antecedent action;

4. Demonstrate, in exercise and in scene-work, working with and off of the “other”; the importance of observing, listening, and reacting (communion and adaptation);

5. Demonstrate a deeper more detailed approach to defining a “beat;” various approaches to articulating an “objective, an “obstacle,” and “tactics and strategies” (both to inductive and threat oriented camps). Each student will be able to break a scene down into “beats” in written form;

6. Demonstrate a Meisner oriented approach to reading the scene, re-writing the scene, doing the “mechanical reading,” learning the text, and integrating the text and repetition;

7. Demonstrate a Meisner oriented approach to beat definition that derives from determining “the spine phrase” of the character and it’s relationship to “doings” (actions)

SECTION 2 – COURSE REQUIREMENTS

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Materials:


The student will be responsible for locating/purchasing a copy of the entire play from which their scene and monologue material is chosen:

**Samuel French:** 212-206-8990  
**Dramatists Play Service:** 212-683-8960  
**Drama Book Shop:** 212-994-059

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**A. COURSE WORK**

This course will cover:

1. The impact of Sanford Meisner’s Approach to actor training—including multiple exercises in each component:  
   a. Communion (“listening” and “observing”) and adaptation (“adjusting”)  
   b. Finding the core element of truth that personalizes the emotional stakes inherent in the given circumstances  
   c. Defining the key phrase and key facts  
   d. Developing a personal interpretation to the piece  
   e. Finding the “spine” of the piece  
   f. Allowing the “doings” (actions) to define the character  
   g. Imagery work (creating past memories and the pictures in the mind they evoke).

2. Script and Character Analysis—in the following areas:  
   a. Defining the component parts of the play (exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement);  
   b. Defining the theme or “super-objective” of the play, the scene, and the character—as well as primary “scene-objectives” for each character;  
   c. Defining the primary conflict of the play;  
   d. Creating a character biography (past) and physicalizing those choices;  
   e. Graphing the “dynamics” of a scene;  
   f. Each scene and monologue will be accompanied by written analysis;

3. Improvisation and Exercise Work:  
   a. Practical exercise work focusing on the various components of the Stanislavski System already outlined with extended emphasis on the techniques of Sanford Meisner;  
   b. Warm-ups (both vocal and physical) to foster steady improvement of the actor’s instrument (the body);  
   c. Extensive exploration of techniques developed by Sanford Meisner in an effort to train the actor to work on impulse and seek stimuli in scene partners—allowing the “other” to be a source of inspiration and aid in building characterization.  
   d. Exercise work will now tend to explore the integration of improvisation and text as a means of personalization.

4. Scene work from plays written during the “Modern” period (Ibsen & Chekhov)

Classes will consist of a combination of the following:  

1. Lecture
2. In-class exercises and out of class written assignments
3. Discussion of material covered in the texts
4. Unsupervised rehearsal of scenes
5. Supervised rehearsal of scenes (by appointment with instructor)
6. Viewing of scenes in class accompanied by analysis and discussion

Scene work will consist of two (2) multiple person scenes. Scene partners and choice of material will be chosen in consultation with the instructor. Scenes should not exceed ten (10) minutes in length. All in-progress showings, cumulatively, will be worth a maximum of 100 pts. In-progress showing points will be awarded prior to the final showing of each scene. The final showing of the scene will then be worth an additional maximum of 100 pts. This means it is possible to earn a maximum of 200 points on each scene. All scenes presented in class will be discussed, affording the student ample opportunity for feedback. All scenes must be presented on their scheduled dates. A 50% reduction in points for that round will be applied if you do not perform as scheduled, except in dire emergency. If an emergency arises, the student must contact the instructor BEFORE the class scheduled for performance or the 50% rule will be applied. PERFORM AS SCHEDULED.

Grading criteria follows:

1. Overall dramatic impact and storytelling quality 20pts.
2. Effective physicalization of character and environment 10pts.
4. Imaginative choice of intentions/objectives/dynamics 10pts.
5. Appropriate release of emotion 10pts.
6. Imaginative use of the “given circumstances” (physical environment, time, temperature, relationships, etc.) 10pts.
7. Clear use of adaptation and communion with the “other” 20pts.
8. Effective use of the voice (articulation, pitch variation, etc.) 10pts.

Total 100pts.

This is a lab oriented class and all of your work is valuable—not only to yourself but to the class as a whole. You will learn from observing and from being observed. A very large portion of this class will be devoted to the “reality of doing,” and the communion/adaptation techniques developed by Sanford Meisner at the Neighborhood Playhouse in NYC. Observers will learn nearly as much as the participants in any given exercise. At times progress may seem slow and the exercises simplistic. At other times you are going to feel like “I’m never going to get this.” But, to quote Sandy himself,

“It’s really very simple…it just takes a lot of years to learn.”

You will literally be engaged in transforming yourself as a human being. THIS COURSE IS ABOUT CONDITIONING THE ACTOR TO WORK CREATIVELY, IMAGINATIVELY, HONESTLY, AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, INSTINCTIVELY. It’s about seeing more, hearing more, assigning meaning to what you observe, and responding to it while the moment is still alive and breathing. Don’t expect huge leaps. Work for slow steady progress. Plan to attend, observe, and participate with equal energy and commitment.

There will be on-going exercise work, both in and out of class. This work is not only about making you a better actor; it is also about making you a more perceptive, intuitive, and sensitive human being. To instill new and necessary skills sets and habits, you must be committed to practicing consistently and diligently. In fact, this exercise work is a foundation upon which much of the rest of your work over the next three years will rest. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU MASTER THIS FOUNDATION BEFORE YOU MOVE ONTO THE MORE COMPLEX COMPONENTS WE WILL WORK ON IN MEISNER 2. The points you receive for the exercise portion of your participation grade will be a reflection of your willingness and ability to fully apply yourself to all
exercise work assigned, both in and out of class. The exercise work is the PRIMARY FOCUS of the course. IT IS THE CONDITIONING. Total points for commitment to and progress in assigned exercise work: 550 pts.

PARTICIPATION GRADE POLICY
An ensemble environment is necessary if all students are to comfortably explore and experiment. Therefore ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. Absences can be devastating to your personal growth and to the progress of the class in general. Emergencies occur. Should that be the case, pick up the phone and call the instructor BEFORE YOU MISS CLASS. If you want your absence to be CONSIDERED for “excused” status, you must contact the instructor BEFORE class. Under no circumstances will contact AFTER class be considered for “excused” status. Each student is allowed one (1) absence. Two (2) absences may result in the lowering of the student’s final grade by one full letter grade. Three (3) absences MAY be grounds for dismissal from the course. The student may be awarded, at the discretion of the instructor--and due to the student’s demonstrated commitment to regular attendance, a positive attitude, and enthusiastic participation throughout the semester--up to: one hundred and fifty (150) points.

B. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

1. Each student must submit a written analysis on two (2) of the three (3) fall Regent Main Stage productions. If involved in the production you may write from an “inside” perspective. TAKE NOTES. Analyses are to be a maximum of three (3) pages in length and should focus on the acting exhibited in that production—SPECIFICALLY HOW THE ACTING RELATES TO THE MEISNER TECHNIQUES WE HAVE COVERED IN CLASS to date. REVIEWS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN MIDNIGHT, ONE WEEK AFTER THE PRODUCTION CLOSES. Each analysis is worth a maximum of 50 points each for a total of 100 possible points.

2. Each student will turn in a written analysis of scene two (2). The analysis is due when the scene performs for the final time at the end of the term. The instructor will supply a format for the analysis. THIS ANALYSIS MUST BE TURNED IN AS SCHEDULED. LATE ANALYSIS SHEETS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Carefully thought out and well-articulated analysis will net maximum points. This analysis is worth one hundred (100) points.

3. Small Group Presentations, not to exceed 15 minutes, will be made on selected aspects of mise en scene and the playwrights from whose works scenes have been selected. Each group member can earn up to fifty (50) pts for their contribution to the effort. Research leads the actor to a stronger sense of ownership of the role. Outlines, handouts, and bibliographies are encouraged.

4. Journal Entries. Ten (10) weeks out of the semester, the student will write a reflection, not to exceed ½ page, on his/her perceived progress to date. This reflection should focus on the student’s personal perception of their progress with the exercise work covered, in and out of class, to date. THIS REFLECTION IS TO BE POSTED TO BLACKBOARD NO LATER THAN MIDNIGHT, SUNDAY OF THE WEEK IT IS WRITTEN. It should be progressive (tack on the new reflection each week). There are to be no fewer than ten (10) entries PLUS A FINAL SUMMARY STATEMENT, NOT TO EXCEED ONE (1) PAGE IN LENGTH, REFLECTING THE STUDENT’S THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ON THEIR PROGRESS OVER THE SEMESTER.

   a. Each of the ten (10) paragraphs is worth ten (10) points. Total points possible: 100 points.
   b. Summary Statement is worth up to 25 points.
   c. Total points possible: 125 points.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT Formatting
All written materials must be composed in Times New Roman 12 point. Each document should include a title
sheet that includes your name, the instructor’s name, the time and days the class meets, and the paper’s title. All written assignments should be POSTED TO BLACKBOARD on the assignment page as attachments, no later than midnight on the day the assignment appears as due on the Daily Schedule.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS
Late assignments will be lowered by 10% each day the assignment remains late (including weekends). Spelling, grammar, and composition will be considered when assigning a grade for the effort. If you are to present an exercise in class DO NOT MISS class except in the case of an emergency, and only after contacting the instructor.

EVALUATION AND GRADING
You will be graded according to your effort, progress, and product. Most of what you will do in class has a point value attached to it:

1. Exercise Work
2. Scene Work (2 scenes)
   a. In-progress showing(s) [100 pts. per scene x 2] 200 pts.
   b. Final showing(s) [100 pts. per scene x 2] 200 pts.
3. 2 Play Reviews @ 25 pts each 50 pts.
4. Scene Analysis 100 pts.
5. Journal (4 submissions @ 25 pts. each) 100 pts.
6. Small Group Presentations (2 @ 25 pts. each) 50 pts.
7. Attendance/Participation Grade 100 pts.

Total 1000 pts.

SECTION 3 – POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND RESOURCES

- BLACKBOARD

Blackboard (Bb) has five primary purposes in our course: (1) to provide a means for students to receive timely information about the course in general, assignments, grades, and announcements from the instructor; (2) to promote interaction between the instructor and students and among students themselves as they work through course materials; (3) to provide a means for students to complete quizzes, writing assignments, and other forms of evaluation; (4) to enhance the learning process by providing a variety of materials; and (5) to enable students to check their grades.

Students complete their weekly assignments (if any written assignments are required) as posted/directed in Blackboard. Students are expected to check the Announcements section of Blackboard each week. Students must keep their email address current in Blackboard. Further, all email boxes should be kept well
under “quota” by regularly archiving or emptying unanswered mail, mail left in message folders, etc. Students are expected to check their Regent email daily to ensure timely receipt of messages from the professor. Please use your regent.edu address, as it appears in Genisys when corresponding with your professor. Outside email may become lost in my Junk folder!

- **SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

All submitted assignments should be in MS Word Document (.doc) format. Each student should label their assignments including their last name and the type of assignment. For example, I would submit a paper regarding an essay by Meisner as SHayes-Meisner Essay.doc). All files will be returned with markings from the Word Comment function – so please note these markings.

All assignments (unless otherwise instructed) for this course should be submitted via the Blackboard assignment link as an attachment. Every assignment must have your name on it, and, if it is more than one page, each page must have your last name and the page number in the upper right hand corner, for example: “Smith 2, Smith 3,” etc. To do that, you will need to know how to use the Header and Footer option under the “View” button in Microsoft Word.

Losing computer access, a crashed computer hard drive, USB drive, or anything of this sort will not excuse lack of participation in the course. All monetary burdens for computer equipment, maintenance, and viable online access are borne by the student.

- **EMAILING YOUR INSTRUCTOR**

The subject line of all email messages related to this course should include the course number (e.g., THE 710), the section of the course (e.g., .01, .02) and the name of the student (Example: THE 710.01 ScottHayes). Following these directions enables the professor to quickly identify the student and course, facilitating a timely response. Students should always include their first and last name at the end of all email messages.

Because instructors often need to reach students, all students are required to keep their mailing address, email address, and telephone numbers up to date in GENISYS.

- **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

The instructor reserves the right not to accept late assignments. Late assignments accepted by the instructor may be penalized up to 10% per day for each day late (including weekends). Legitimate emergencies will be addressed on an individual basis. (Being “overwhelmed” is not considered an emergency.)

**UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC HONOR CODE**

Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating involve the intention to deceive, mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying representing actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. As such, use of another author’s material must always be properly documented and clearly cited. It is also expected that all work turned in during the semester will be the result of that semester’s scholarship. Academic dishonesty, in any form, may constitute failure of the course. Every student is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship and research.
Students are expected to be familiar with the university’s policy on academic integrity found in both the University Student Handbook and School of Undergraduate Studies Catalog (http://www.regent.edu/general/catalog/) and to follow it. As an academic and Christian community, Regent University takes seriously the call for integrity and penalizes breaches of academic integrity.

Students should be aware that submitted papers may be checked using Safeassign (Blackboard’s plagiarism detection feature). This feature will determine the percentage of the submitted paper that matches other sources and will generate a report. Scores below 15% include quotes and few common phrases or blocks of text that match other documents, these papers indicate no evidence of the possibility of plagiarism. Scores between 15% and 40% include extensive quoted or paraphrased material or may include plagiarism and will require further review. Scores over 40% indicate a high probability the text in the paper was copied from other sources and should be reviewed for plagiarism. The professor or instructor will contact the student if plagiarism is a concern.

**STUDENT CONTACT INFORMATION**

Because instructors often need to reach students, all students are required to keep their mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers up to date in GENISYS.

http://www.regent.edu/general/student_orientation/tutorials/genisys.cfm

**DISABILITY STATEMENT**

The student is responsible for contacting Director of Student Life at 757.352.4867 to request accommodations, provide necessary documentation, and make arrangements with each instructor. The following website is designed to help our disabled students learn of their rights and responsibilities with regards to disability services. The site also has resources for faculty to become better informed of their responsibilities towards the disabled students in their classes.

http://www.regent.edu/disabilities

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Please review the following links for additional information regarding University policies and other helpful resources:

- **Academic Calendar and Registrar Information**: http://www.regent.edu/admin/registrar/academiccalendar.cfm
- **University Bookstore**: http://www.cbamatthews.com/regent/
- **Plagiarism Policy**: http://www.regent.edu/acad/schedu/pdfs/honor_code.pdf
- **Regent Library**: http://www.regent.edu/lib/
- **Student Services**: http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/
- **Technical Support/University Handbook**: http://www.regent.edu/it/helpdesk/

**SECTION 4 – COURSE SCHEDULE AND EVALUATION**

**COURSE SCHEDULE (WEEK-BY-WEEK)**

*THIS WILL BE UPDATED CLOSER TO THE SPRING SEMESTER START DATE.*

**STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS**

At the conclusion of the semester, each student will have the opportunity to evaluate and comment upon the effectiveness of the course. If the student has, in their opinion, a legitimate grievance related to the course they are encouraged to follow the steps outlined in the Grievance Policy posted on the departmental website and included in the Departmental Handbook. As Christians we are instructed to go to each other one-on-one, and express our concerns (Matthew 18:15). I look forward
and encourage my students to talk with me anytime throughout the semester regarding the content and/or instruction of this course.

This syllabus is subject to change without notice.

Last updated: 10/24/12

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THE 710.01
MEISNER TECHNIQUE 2
SPRING 2013

All students are required to read and have a thorough understanding of the syllabus. Any questions or concerns need to be addressed to the instructor.

Please sign here to indicate that you have read and understood the requirements outlined in this syllabus

_________________________________    _________________________
Student signature                          Date