

MOVEMENT FOR THE ACTOR 2

TPP 4511, 3 credits Prerequisites: TPP 3510 (Movement for the Actor)

Instructor: Lee Soroko
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The mysteries of the soul are revealed through the movements of the body. - - - Michelangelo

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Continued study in developing awareness, freedom, and ease of movement for the stage with direct application of these principals to text and character study. Various theatre movement systems and luminaries will be covered.

COURSE OVERVIEW: All too often the actor performs without an attunement to what their body is saying. Before a word of text is spoken, the actor steps onto the stage and the audience perceives their presence. At this moment, judgment and assumptions regarding the character are not only made, but entrenched in the mind of the audience and this is the true beginning of the performance. This class will help you engage the largest tool you have as an actor - your body. The body is a powerful communicative instrument that should work in direct conjunction with the voice, mind (some say spirit or psyche if you roll that way) to tell a story. However, the story told should be that of the character you are portraying and not your own personal story.

Think of the body as text that is constantly revealing information. How you sit, stand, walk, and gesture carries a significant meaning to the audience that you must be both aware of and in control of so as to enhance your believability and compellingness on stage. All of us in our daily lives are affected by internal and external stimuli on a moment-to-moment basis. As an actor on stage, we need to be open and receptive to the same stimuli within the given circumstances of the character we are portraying. Physical choices and responses to stimuli have meaning. An actor cannot transfer or communicate anything to the audience by internal feeling alone. In our daily lives, internal and external stimuli, even the smallest amount is constantly affecting our entire being. For many actors this phenomenon is hampered or limited when they perform. On stage as in life, the body, voice and soul are transformed with each opinion, each elation and each disaster we experience. To deny these transformations on stage is to deny a good performance. If the body is text of a play, many actors do not know what they are saying. To get at the heart of this issue this semester, we will explore the work of Anne Bogart through Viewpoints and Composition. As graduate students you should be able to engage in a breadth and depth of understanding through application of this exciting work.

“WHAT IS VIEWPOINTS?”—Viewpoints is a physical training system that is designed to access spontaneity by expanding the actor’s kinesthetic awareness and physical responsiveness through experiments with space and time. Viewpoints’ training (along with Suzuki) removes dependence on story, character or text, which releases the actor from needing to be interesting, inventive or judging themselves while in the processes of creating. This is done via stimulating exploration of the exterior world, and our physical responses to it. As you progress in this work, you will develop intended physical actions that evoke dynamic change in an audience. The benefit is that you will deepen your actor’s intuition and instincts. If you find you want a deeper definition of Viewpoints, please see me.

Be advised that this work is physically demanding, so challenge yourself and give yourself the extra warm up time you need prior to getting to class. Don't check out and wonder why we are doing something, do it! Check in and see where the work takes you and move beyond surface endurance and surface performance choices. Please know that physical training is not linear and takes time, so put in the time. Movement training helps to develop body awareness, release unnecessary tension, and create strength and mobility. An actor in movement training develops an easy relationship to the surrounding environment while having an ability to work from an active center. Movement training empowers the actor to be receptive to the immediate moment, to listen with the whole body, to make a spontaneous offer with confidence, to reconnect to imagination and to identify emotional states.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- To enhance the student's movement skills and the body awareness as a means of creative expression.
- For each student to understand their unique physical habitual patterns and body usage.
- To learn a series of physical exercises to promote strength, flexibility, balance and awareness.
- To perform and practice Viewpoints training
- To focus students' attention on elements of dynamic composition
- To explore creating original work using techniques of Viewpoints training via Composition
- To expand beyond the walls of traditional theatre architecture through site specific work;
- To assist in the application of Viewpoint training to the individual interests of the students.
- To explore Suzuki training methodology
- To strengthen awareness to physical stimuli and impulse based reaction.
- To develop the student's knowledge of the physiological aspects of breath in the creative process.
- To develop a sense of trust and ensemble.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Free Play by Stephen Nachmanovitch

A Natural History of the Senses by Diane Ackerman

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Movement clothes (athletic pants, shorts, shirt—blacks would be best)
- We will go barefoot, unless performing in compositions.
- Remove all jewelry
- Secure your long hair so that it is pulled back and away from your face, before class and then leave it alone. If your hair is long you can use it in compositions.
- The room temperature varies so you will want a sweatshirt on hand.
- Bring something to write with and something to write on.

COURSE POLICIES:

- **Attendance Policy Statement.** Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such

as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student's responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such absence. This course is experiential learning and missed work performed in class cannot be make up, however you will not be penalized due to your excused absences as articulated above.

- **Punctuality and Attendance.** Being late or absent hurts the ability of the class to proceed quickly with the topics we are learning. On time is being early. Be on your feet and in a circle at the start of class. Lateness and absences are not acceptable. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class you are absent (based on my watch). Excessive tardiness will seriously affect your grade (three times tardy equates to one absence). Every absence past your 2nd will lower your grade one full letter You are responsible for all information and assignments given when you are absent.
- **Sitting Out.** Are you ill?—then go to the health center and get better. If you need to sit out more than three times in the semester, then you are not doing A level work. Your job is to listen to your body. Push yourself to achieve at a higher level, yet keep strong active and healthy.
- **Attention to deadlines.** If you are absent when a project is due without accepted cause, you will fail the project.
- **Active Engagement** (open and sincere participation). Required of all students every day. Bring probing questions, open minds, consideration, and respect to every class. Failure to do so will severely affect your Active Engagement grade. Not being present in class will factor a zero into your level of positive active engagement for that day. If you are not physically able to participate in this work due to injury, you must see me privately so as to ensure the educational demands of the material are met.
- It is your responsibility to check Canvas and that you check your email for this class on a regular basis.
- Be sure your telephone is in airplane mode. If it goes off I will ask you to leave and you will earn an absence. If you have an i-watch or fit-bit, take it off prior to class. If you check your phone during class, I will ask you to leave and you will have earned an absence. It is rude to check your phones while others are working. Period.
- Proper Attire is required for each class and failure to have the proper attire will inhibit you from participating that day and you will receive an absence for that day.
- Workspace. Food and drink are not permitted in the rehearsal studio (water is highly encouraged).
- MLA format must be used in all written work. Failure to follow this **specific writing protocol** will result in a significant deduction of your grade for this assignment. For MLA help visit http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html#General. It is understood that [A] level written work operates from a supported thesis statement where seminal points are buttressed by textual support.
- It is your responsibility to retain an e-copy of all written work for this course.

- **E-mail.** Be advised that I do not check e-mail after 3:00PM on Friday. E-mail is impersonal and I can better help you succeed in person so please take advantage of this and see me during my scheduled office hours or by appointment.
- **Touch.** There is physical contact required in this course. Students should expect to be touched at various times in the semester by other students and by me. This physical contact is never intended to be sexual in nature nor demean the student in any way. I will always ask permission prior to touch. You have the right to say no and this will not affect your grade. However, we will then have to work together to discover another method to communicate what is most often a kinesthetic and tactile experience.
- **Courage.** The classroom is a safe space. Be brave. Be ridiculous. If you are “tired” when we are working, KEEP GOING! Stretch yourself. Risk!
- **Disability Policy Statement.** In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodation due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU’s campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at www.fau.edu/sas/.
- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center.** Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to www.fau.edu/counseling/.
- **Code of Academic Integrity Policy Statement.** Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001.

GRADING SCALE:

A	93-100%	B-	80-82%	D+	67-69%
A-	90-92%	C+	78-79%	D	63-66%
B+	88-89%	C	73-76%	D-	60-62%
B	83-87%	C-	70-72%	F	59% or below

- [A] interesting and provocative choices that demonstrate intent, specific moment-to-moment action with clear communication to the audience. Highly polished with virtually no surface errors. EXCELLENT WORK
- [B] clarity of thought and clear, specific choices, emotional commitment to exploration, perspectives; polished, but some surface errors persist. SUPERIOR WORK
- [C] obvious preparation, complete presentation with beginning, middle and end with a

tendency to remain at the surface level of ideas and performance. ADEQUATE WORK
[D] poor preparation, no commitment to exploration, less than adequate work marked by superficial thinking, poor execution, memorization in performance, and sloppy work
[F] work not performed, unprofessional demeanor, work that fails to meet any of the stated objectives; contains misunderstandings of basic concepts, sloppy, unfocused, lines are fed

GRADED PROJECTS:

Active Engagement and Attitude	10%
Paper, <i>Free Play</i>	10%
Paper, <i>Natural History of the Senses</i>	10%
Compositions	25%
Class Room Explorative Exercises	25%
Final Composition	<u>20%</u>
Total Percent Possible	100%

GRADED PROJECT CRITERIA:

Active Engagement

- As a collective, you and your classmates set the tone, the speed, and the environment in which we work. Make it a positive tone that inspires joy. Your level of sincere active engagement in the course is evaluated each day and you are awarded a score [1-10] at the end of each class. Attending class with an adequate level of interest and commitment is a [7], unprepared OR not positively engaged [5]. Failure to attend class is a [0], maximum score when tardy is [7]. Mathematically a Zero significantly reduces your overall score in this grading opportunity.

Paper, *Free Play* by Stephen Nachmanovitch

- You are to write a 5 page paper that should synthesize in exciting ways the knowledge you've gained from what you have read.
- Start with a thesis statement (your idea boiled down to a singular arguable statement).
- [A] level work is supported textually and properly via (MLA).
- Due Thursday, October 12

Paper, *A Natural History of the Senses* by Diane Ackerman

- You are to write a 5 page paper that should synthesize in exciting ways the knowledge you've gained from what you have read.
- Start with a thesis statement (your idea boiled down to a singular arguable statement).
- [A] level work is supported textually and properly via (MLA).
- Due Thursday, November 16

Class Room Explorative Exercises: You will be evaluated on your daily routine and development in the classroom on your commitment and understanding of:

- Sun Salutations, Running, High Jumps, Five Images, Run to Center, Twelve/Six/Four
- Viewpoints
- Discussion

Composition

- Composition is the practice of selecting and arranging the separate components of theatrical language into a cohesive work of art for the stage. It is “writing on your feet” but you are using your body (like a painter does with paint, color form and line), but you are using the language of the theatre.
- It is a method for generating, defining and developing the theatre vocabulary that will be used for any given piece. In Composition we make pieces so that we can point to them and say: “that worked” and then ask “why?” so that we can include this in future work and at this stage build our understanding of this methodology.
- Composition is an assignment given to the ensemble so that it can create short, specific theatre pieces addressing a particular aspect of the work. The assignment will include an overall structure and a list of ‘ingredients’, which must be included in the piece.

CLASS ATMOSPHERE

- Stop judging, laugh, create, forgive yourself and others.
- Work to be an acrobat of the human heart, start by being generous.
- I can see when you are phoning, catch yourself and stop it. Make a real choice that challenges your creative spirit, and put an end to ‘faking’. Don’t worry about trying to “get it”, just do it.

Final thoughts...

I am here to help you succeed, so please take advantage of me so I can help you. As Anne Bogart adroitly says in her blog:

What is the point of all the discipline, hard work and training? The preparation and sweating and memorizing and studying is not the point, rather it is the indispensable discipline and sweat that endows upon us the permission to take up space and make wild, surprising and untamed choices.

(“Anne Bogart” October 2009)

COURSE OUTLINE and SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Week 1

Introduction to the Viewpoints. Spatial relationship and kinesthetic response
Sun Salutation and 12-6-4. Space is divided into positive and negative values. Basic ensemble exercises explore the malleability of representation according to the manipulation of Viewpoints of Space. The Viewpoints of Space are: Architecture, Shape, Spatial Relationship, and Floor Pattern. The first two classes are devoted to a precise examination of the performer’s relationship to the theatrical event from the perspective of the viewpoints of space.

Week 2

Viewpoints Training: Time

The second week is devoted to the use of time. The Viewpoints of Time are: Tempo, Repetition, Gesture, Kinesthetic Reaction, and Duration.

Week 3

Viewpoints Training: Motion Composition / Social Composition

Work on Spatial and Temporal Viewpoints are synthesized. Exercises concentrate first on very specific combinations of temporal and spatial viewpoints, such as Duration, Shape, and Repetition. As fluency is acquired, music is added to the improvisations.

Week 4

Viewpoints Training: Motion Composition

Continued Viewpoints work with music. Themes are incorporated into the Viewpoints vocabulary with a concentration on basic principles of composition. Short compositions are developed based on image materials viewed in class. Music videos are discussed vis a vis the Viewpoints. Tactics for compositional practice are explored through exercises focused on the sequencing of compositional elements.

Week 5

Composition: Composing with Space

Music Video compositions are workshopped with special emphasis on use of space. Compositions are rehearsed in class and outside of class. These are 3 to 7 minute compositions, which must make use of light, color, costume, sound, and video—based on the Music Video selected during the prior week. The music video compositions are made by small ensembles of 3-7 individuals and presented in the dance studio.

Discussion of social space and nomadic space / virtual space vs. haptic space.

Week 6

Composition: Duration / Time Specific Composition

Composition is one means of making minor elements major. It is an opportunity to sketch and to react along thematic, analogous, parallel, associative or contradictory trajectories in relation to the text or to a theme. We will use composition as a means of conducting motion based research into storytelling and the body

In-Class Composition assignment for groups of 2-3:

Please make a 5 minute composition which directly addresses the following three questions: “How do people, in Roland Schimmelpfennig’s play behave when confronted by *desire*?” and “how do people embrace for the first time” and “how far are you willing to go for love?” The composition must contain the following elements: one staged accident, one single gesture or action which has a duration of exactly 72 seconds and during those 72 seconds nothing else may happen on the stage, 1 minute of top speed action, one profound revelation of space, a visual quotation of at least one image in its entirety from the images that we have seen in class and the six lines of text from the play.

You have will have 20 minutes to prepare the assignment. We will then present them and discuss them.

Week 7

Composition: the movement image

During this week we will concentrate on exploring the expressive potentials of Schimmelpfennig’s play from the perspective of image. Our initial focus will be on the creation of static images. We will then move our focus to the making of images that are in motion. How do images in flight remain semantically intact?

In-class Composition Assignment for groups of 2-3:

Please make a 5 minute composition with the following ingredients: Choose 5 images from the images that have been brought into the class which you believe best amplify the world of *Before / After*. Study the images in their finest detail. What is it exactly about these images that allow them to speak to the world of the play? This composition should be exactly five minutes long. Each image should last precisely 60 seconds. The images must be as exactly copied as possible. Pay special attention to the social dimension of an image's composition. The image need not necessarily be still but must remain semantically in tact for the duration of sixty seconds. The composition must contain the following elements: an excellent use of All of the Viewpoints; 2 excerpted pop songs, a scandalous use of colour, surprising or shocking use of costume, 20 seconds top speed.

You will have 15 minutes in class to prepare the assignment. We will then present them and discuss their importance as a means of making a detailed inquiry into the potential the play. We will begin compiling a successful list of images, gestures, spatial relationships, dance phrases... etc a list of things which HAVE GOT TO BE IN OUR PRODUCTION OF BEFORE / AFTER.

We will make short compositions based on recipes written by the class.

- **Assignment #1 for week 7:** Please write a Composition recipe. Use the above written Assignments as your models. Focus the recipe in such a way as to learn something intrinsic about the play and about the interactions of the characters, their interests, their passions, or how the light falls on their faces in the evening—use the recipe as a means of understanding something about the concrete reality of the work.
- **Assignment #2 for week 7:** Please bring to class 5-7 images, which you feel provide interesting perspectives. Images may be taken from magazines, art books, they may be staged photographs taken by you or by friends, or photos taken on the street. We will hang them on the wall in the studio discuss them. And put them to use.

Week 8

Composition: *BEFORE / AFTER*

During week 8 we will present excerpts from *Before/After*. Each group will present twice. After each showing the work will be discussed in terms of its compositional strengths and weaknesses. Each group will then have an opportunity to take the results of discussion back into the studio to rehearse.

- **Assignment for week 8:** Making use of Compositional tactics explored in the class and the Viewpoints Please prepare a 10-15 minute excerpt from *Before/After*. You may work in any ensemble configuration you wish and you may make use of any variant of *Before/After* that you choose. (there are a lot out there! In many genres opera, film, numerous plays...) My only stipulation is that Projects must be discussed with me prior to presenting them. You only have four lines of text, total (these will be assigned).

Week 9

Composition:

During this week we will see the second round of presentations of *Before / After*. Readings will be discussed in the second half of the week.

Week 10

Viewpoints Training: Review

During this week we will review viewpoints training in class. This will be an opportunity to come back to some of the fundamental ideas presented at the beginning of the semester. We will again undertake a detailed physical inquiry into Architecture, Spatial Relationship, Kinesthetic Reaction, Tempo, Repetition, Duration, Shape, Gesture, and Floor Pattern.

- **Assignment for the beginning of week 10:** Please prepare a brief proposal for your final project. Your final project should be a work of approximately 20 minutes (not to exceed 30 minutes). It may be text based or theme based. You may work in any ensemble configuration. In your proposal please discuss the kinds of research you are doing, ideas that you have regarding sound, or light, or costumes, or color. It is your performance. I will also welcome proposals that seek to return to / build upon past works—the music video, for example, or to continue with *Before/After*. Proposal should 3-5 pages.

As with the *Before/After* presentations we will present each piece at least twice with in-class discussions on their compositional strengths and weaknesses...

Week 11

Viewpoints Training: Review Part 2

During this week we will review viewpoints training in class. This will be an opportunity to come back to some of the fundamental ideas presented at the beginning of the semester. We will again undertake a detailed physical inquiry into Architecture, Spatial Relationship, Kinesthetic Reaction, Tempo, Repetition, Duration, Shape, Gesture, and Floor Pattern.

- **Assignment for the beginning of week 10:** Please prepare a brief proposal for your final project. Your final project should be a work of approximately 20 minutes (not to exceed 30 minutes). It may be text based or theme based. You may work in any ensemble configuration. In your proposal please discuss the kinds of research you are doing, ideas that you have regarding sound, or light, or costumes, or color. It is your performance. I will also welcome proposals that seek to return to / build upon past works—the music video, for example, or to continue with *Before/After*. Proposal should 3-5 pages.

As with the *Before/After* presentations we will present each piece at least twice with in-class discussions on their compositional strengths and weaknesses...

Week 12

Composition: Personal Works

The first half of the week will be consist of an open rehearsal/workshop day.

In the second part of the week we will begin our First round of presentations.

Week 13

Composition: Personal Works

First round of presentations continued...

Open rehearsal/workshop in the second half of the week.

Week 14

Composition: Personal Works Final Presentations

Final presentations will be open to invited guests...

Week 15

In-class viewing of project with critique

Final Projects/Examination SHOWINGS