Course Objectives:
DR122 is a class designed with the following goals in mind:
To EXPLORE your unique potential as an acting instrument by investigating both the skills that enable you to play with freedom, and the attitudes that allow you to play with joy.
To DEEPEN your ability to read plays more thoughtfully, and to think more clearly about the characters you play, and the worlds in which they move.
To DEVELOP strategies for strengthening your fully engaged responsiveness to the demands of every piece of dramatic text you encounter.
To CREATE a warm and supportive laboratory environment while establishing a standard and style of peer evaluation that contributes positively to individual growth and discovery.
To REINFORCE and EXTEND the skills and approaches you have begun to form in your first semester of training
To HAVE FUN while playing hard !!!!!!

Texts:
Required (ordered at bookstore):
Michael Shurtleff, AUDITION, (Practical guide for actors)
Harold Guskin, HOW TO STOP ACTING (Wisdom from a professional coach)
Several handouts along the way.

Recommended (not ordered at bookstore):
Keith Johnstone, IMPRO. (Improvisation & creative process)
Constantin Stanislavski, AN ACTOR PREPARES (Source of the Method)
Meisner & Longwill, SANFORD MEISNER ON ACTING (Intro to Meisner)

Requirements:
I expect you to ATTEND EVERY CLASS unless there is a serious emergency and you let me know in advance that you have to be absent. In the event of a dire occurrence (and if you notify me before class begins) I will allow you one (1) excused absence. You are not allowed any unexcused absences; an unexcused absence will lower your final grade by one full letter (i.e. from B+ to C+).
I expect you to be **PUNCTUAL**, and to be here in spirit and mind as well as in body. A full involvement in the process is essential if the class as a whole is to progress. As in the theatre, you are **COLLABORATORS**, and are therefore reliant on and responsible to each other. In the unlikely event that you are late to class, your first two (2) tardies will be counted as one unexcused absence. Each subsequent tardy will lower your final grade one notch (i.e. from B to B-).

Our **WORK** is applied **PLAY**. It will comprise your active participation in daily studio exercises, group projects and scene study as well as readings and writing assignments. You will rehearse and present at least 2 scenes during the course of the semester. Each scene you work on will be rehearsed out of class, presented, critiqued and worked in class, then re-rehearsed out of class and re-presented for further feedback and in-class work. I will assign all texts and scene partners.

**PAPERWORK** is required before and after each scene you do. Please type, sign, staple together if multiple pages, and submit to me in hard copy all paperwork. We will talk in class about the paperwork you’ll be doing, but here is a brief description:

On the day of your first presentation of each scene you work on this semester, you will turn in:
#1 - a sheet comprising your answers to the five basic acting questions that comprise the given imaginary circumstances (who, where, when, why, what), and a brief description of how you went about rehearsing your scene.
#2 - a comprehensive list of everything that you say, or that is said by others anywhere in the whole of the play from which your scene is drawn, about the sort of person your character is. With each item on that list, you will include a rating on a scale of 1 to 5 of what you, the actor, take to be that item’s truthfulness.

On the day after the last present in each set of scenes, you will pass in a Performance Self-Evaluation of your experience with your scene in that set. It will consist of your answers to a group of questions that I will give you.

I will expect you to perform on the day your scene is due, and to hand in all written assignments in a timely fashion. NO EXCUSES will be accepted for not completing assignments.

I do NOT REQUIRE, but I strongly RECOMMEND keeping a **WORK JOURNAL** throughout the semester. I encourage you to write in it as often as you would talk to a trusted friend - but I would do so at least twice a week at a bare minimum. Your journal is a place to chart your own feelings and understanding about our process, and is a place where you can talk to yourself about ideas and issues that your experiences in class stimulate. (You may be asked to write in class during the semester, so please always have on hand blank lined paper, and, as in rehearsal, you should always have a pencil on hand as well.)
Please wear comfortable nonrestrictive CLOTHING to every class. You should have appropriate FOOTWEAR available for your scene work. In addition to hard-soled shoes, men may need ties, jackets, etc., and women may need heels, skirts, etc. In rehearsal, things can happen, so I encourage you to refrain from bringing into class objects of great financial or sentimental value. If your scene requires PROPS, etc., you will need to take responsibility for supplying them and bringing them to class with you.

NO SMOKING in scenes. If smoking is essential to the scene, please speak to me in advance, and we’ll strategize an alternative solution.

NO ALCOHOL or DRUGS of any kind may be used in any scenes.

PHYSICAL CONTACT between students, and between the instructor and students may occur during this class.

FIRST, LAST AND ALWAYS: CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF!! You should make sure to leave any room in which you have been working at least as clean as you found it. Those who stay to help set the room right after class will be looked upon with particular good will.

Grades:
The kind of work that you will be doing in this class is not susceptible to objective, mathematical analysis, so I would be less than honest to suggest that your grades will be anything other than subjectively determined. I do want you to know that I will consider each of the following three areas equally in arriving at your grade:

- attitude, attendance, punctuality, collaborative skills, etc.
- rehearsal and presentation of scene work.
- written homework assignments … and your PROCESS PAPER!!

In order to better understand how I will look at grades, I offer the following descriptive guidelines: if your work is approached in a professional manner, your assignments are thoughtfully executed, and your scene work is fully prepared and presented with commitment, then you are doing “B” work ñ which is to say, your work is good. If your work falls beneath those standards, you are earning a “C”. If your work is consistently fresh, insightful, and unexpected, you may be approaching an “A”, a rare occurrence at best. In all cases, I will be talking consistently with you about your progress in class, so your grades should not come as a surprise.

Disability:
If you believe you have a disability that may warrant accommodations in this class, I urge you to register with Disabilities Services so that, together, you can work to develop methods of addressing the demands of our work. You can find Disabilities Services at 19 Deerfield St., by phone at 617-353-3658, or at the following e-addresses: http://people.bu.edu/access.
Take Careful Note:
You should plan on doing AT LEAST 15 HOURS of in-studio rehearsal for each in-class presentation. In addition, make sure you leave yourself sufficient private time for research, reading, writing and thought. It’s unreasonable to expect to succeed fully if you lack the will to prepare adequately – or, as Henry David Thoreau said, “The will to win is useless without the will to prepare.”

P.S.:
As every class is in some measure an experiment, this syllabus must of necessity be a work in progress. Accordingly, there may be changes along the way. Any such changes will be discussed in class as well as given to you in writing.

For your consideration along the way:
Who am I, the artist asks. And he spends his career answering. Agnes DeMille, choreographer

I am very much aware of my own double self. The well-known one is very under control; everything is planned and very secure. The unknown one can be very unpleasant. I think this side is responsible for all the creative work – he is in touch with the child. He is not rational; he is impulsive and extremely emotional. Ingmar Bergman, film maker

One of the things you can do as an actor is to compensate for all of the things you can’t do in life. Dustin Hoffman, actor

The actor finds a character not by striving to be that character but by identifying with the character’s actions and desires (and words). Walter Felsenstein, director

The will to win is useless without the will to prepare. Henry David Thoreau, essayist

If you don’t enjoy the process, you’ll never be happy with the outcome. Paul Hamm, gymnast

I am afraid, therefore I must take some action so I will no longer be afraid. Rainer Maria Rilke, poet

If you leap the net will appear. ?

Intellect impedes the flow of creativity. Marcel Proust, novelist

Action, not ideas. The Wooster Group motto

There is a time for discovering what can only be discovered by joy, extravagance and
irresponsibility. Peter Brook, director

Exerting a great deal of conscious control over your work is sometimes the best way to strangle the life out of it. David Hwang, playwright

Whenever I’m feeling natural, comfortable on stage or in rehearsal … well, I know that’s NOT necessarily a good thing. Fiona Shaw, actor

If you need for life to be clear and simple, forget it. If you expect to get all your answers from me, forget it. My job is sometimes to slow you down and sometimes to light a fire under your butt. Cirque du Soleil trainer

Only a great actor finds the difficulties of the actor’s art infinite. Ellen Terry, actor

Egoless stuckness is not to be avoided. Fr. Henri Nouwen, essayist

An exercise that you cannot master immediately allows you to encounter and extend your limits … it should be regarded as a game with oneself, a game that can only be won by confronting one’s limits. Since this confrontation, by its very nature, means temporary defeat, winning and improvement demand the willingness to dare the momentary sense of loss, explore it and grow through it. H. Wesley Balk, teacher.

No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. A. Einstein, physicist.

You can’t do anything you don’t know if you keep on being what you do know. M. Alexander, physical therapist.

I got into the theatre because it was a low, sleazy, discredited art form that had to do with sex and things of the devil. Mac Wellman, playwright

Art demands sacrifice. K. Stanislavski, actor, director.