

THEA 491-020 ACTING WITH ARCHETYPES

Fall 2012

TR 01:00 – 02:50pm

Shafer Street Playhouse 302

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Instructor – Thomas L. Cunningham

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Office Hours – By Appointment

Office – Millhiser House 302

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“You have to be brave enough to live creatively. The creative is the place where no one else has ever been. You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. You cannot get there by bus, only by hard work, risking, and by not quite knowing what you are doing. What you will discover will be wonderful; yourself.” - *Alan Alda*

### Course Description

Have you ever felt that, in your acting, you are playing with only part of a full orchestra? If so, what instruments might you be missing? If you were a pack of crayons, what colors would be missing from the box? Do your monologues ever seem to go flat? What roles are you *not* cast in? What parts of yourself have you not yet gained access to?

Think about these questions as we enter into the world of archetypes and discover ways to unlock in ourselves the motivational cores, voices, and physicality of “the human and mythical figures that inhabit the pool of legends, myths, and folklore” (Frankie Armstrong).

### Course Objectives

The archetypes that we will explore in this course are the essences of myths and legends from many diverse cultures. They are not fully developed characters, but images, forms, voices, physicalizations, and a few psychological elements (or *shards*) that will help you organize your own being around a recognizable phenomena (the archetype) and bring you to the starting point of full character development.

In this course, we will explore **breath** and **voice** to its full energy and potential. Our exploration will be directed through each of the following objectives:

1. Daily preparatory voice and body exercises, including oxyrhythm techniques and drum work
2. Exploration of vocal extremes and diverse modes of production (droning, yodeling, etc)
3. A series of guided journeys based on the work of Frankie Armstrong, Nigel Jamieson, and Janet Rodgers. The archetypes whose journeys we will adventure are:

The Benevolent Leader (The King)

The Huntress

The Trickster

Lucifer (The Devil)

The Child (The Innocent)

The Blind Seer

The Maiden

The Lover

The Mother

The Crone

The Noble Warrior

The Creator/Destroyer

The Sybil  
The Gate Keeper  
The Initiate  
The Hero

4. Application of the work to monologues
5. Application of the work to cold-readings and audition technique
6. Exploration of dramatic text, song, lyrics, poetry, and improvisation designed to expand our vocal, physical, and psychological acting toolbox.

### **Day by Day**

The day-to-day breakdown is subject to change. I will be sure to give ample notice of changes to our schedule.

#### August

- R 23 Introduction to course  
Syllabus day (you're reading it right now!)  
Archetype self assessment
- T28 UNIT 1: CHAOS AND ORDER  
Journey: The Benevolent Leader (The King)
- R30 Journey: The Huntress

#### September

- T04 Journey: The Trickster
- R06 *Transitions*  
*Monologues*
- T11 ***Performance: Monologue 1***
- R13 UNIT 2: GOOD AND EVIL  
Journey: Lucifer (The Devil)
- T18 Journey: The Child (The Innocent)
- R20 Journey: The Blind Seer
- T25 *Gradations*  
*Monologues/Cold Readings*
- R27 ***Performance: Monologue 2***

#### October

- T02 UNIT 3: THE CYCLE OF LIFE (GENESIS)  
Journey: The Maiden
- R04 Journey: The Lover
- T09 Journey: The Mother
- T11 Journey: The Crone
- T16 ***Midterm Performance: Cold Readings/Poem/Monologue***
- R18 ***Reading Day: NO CLASS***

T23 UNIT 4: THE CYCLE OF DEATH (KATABASIS)

Journey: The Noble Warrior

R25 Journey: The Creator/Destroyer

T30 Journey: The Sybil

November

R01 *Applications (TBA)*

T06 *Applications (TBA)*

R08 UNIT 5: THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Journey: The Gatekeeper

T13 Journey: The Initiate

R15 Journey: The Hero

T20 ***Archetype Feast***

R22 ***Thanksgiving Break: NO CLASS***

T27 *TBA*

R29 *TBA*

December

T04 Work on Final Projects

R06 Work on Final Projects

Final Exam: *TBA*

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Required Texts/Materials**

- Acting and Singing with Archetypes by Rodgers and Armstrong, Limelight Editions, 2009.
- *Recommended: Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* by Carl Jung.
- *Recommended: Awakening the Hero Within* by Carol Pearson.
- *Recommended: The Hero Within: 6 Archetypes We Live With* by Carol Pearson.
- An archetypes journal. Something durable that will endure.
- Pen/pencil. In addition you may wish to bring crayons, colored pencils, or markers to class. Some archetypes inspire diverse modes of expression.
- Treasure box (or boxes).
- A water bottle full of delicious water.

#### **Elocution with Thomas**

In keeping with departmental policy, you must wear solid black movement clothing during class times. Likewise you must remove all jewelry prior to the start of class. This includes earrings, bracelets, watches, and any piercing worn above the neck (this most certainly includes any in or about the mouth)! Dressing appropriately is a sign that you are ready to work and have come prepared to participate.

In addition to appropriate dress, an appropriate attitude and comportment are necessary in maintaining a free and open environment in which to explore our voices, bodies, and selves. You must show respect and support for the efforts of your fellow classmates. You needn't like them or even agree

with them! But you must approach one another with the same grace and professionalism as you approach the work itself. So take turns speaking! Share the floor with others! Offer constructive feedback! Expand on one another's ideas, and always—always—put the work first while in the classroom.

### Vocal Expression

This semester we will attempt to gain a greater understanding of the fundamental building-blocks of ourselves. The only way to begin to enter into this understanding is with a clear and direct *use of language*. Verbal garbage such as “um,” “like,” “you know,” or “kind of” only inhibits your communication. This aurally offensive particulate matter is not welcome in the classroom.

Patsy Rodenburg says that it takes 10,000 hours (about seven years) to learn something. How long does it take to break negative habits that muddle the communication process?

### Attendance

In keeping with the university and departmental attendance policy you are allowed a total of two (2) absences. Each additional absence results in the loss of one (1) full letter grade. Two (2) tardies qualify as one (1) absence. The most important part is showing up!

If you have to miss class due to illness, family matters, or for professional reasons please e-mail me and let me know. If you know in advance that you will be missing a class, likewise, please e-mail me. I worry about you. I won't remember if you tell me in passing, so please make use of my VCU e-mail listed in the header of the syllabus.

### Food and Drink

Please bring a full bottle of water (a closed container) to class each day. No food is allowed in the classroom, except on the day the Archetypes feast.

### Conferences/Coaching Sessions

If you would like to meet with me, just send me an e-mail with the best times for you to meet and I will get back to you. I am available to discuss our work in class, for coaching, or just to talk. Consider me a resource, and take advantage of that fact.

### Grading

You will be graded based on your written/project assignments, your in-class commitment to the work, as well as your attendance.

- Participation and Attendance                      40%
- Monologue Work    10%
- Cold Reading Work    10%
- Archetype Feast    10%
- Group Project    10%
- Midterm    10%
- Final    10%

### Additional University Guidelines

#### Important Dates

Important Dates for the Fall 2012 semester are available online:

- [http://academiccalendars.vcu.edu/ac\\_fullViewAll.asp?term=Fall+2012](http://academiccalendars.vcu.edu/ac_fullViewAll.asp?term=Fall+2012)
- Or Google “VCU Fall 2012” and select the Academic Calendar

### Disabilities

If you have any visual, auditory, ambulatory, or learning disability it is your responsibility to inform me so that I can try to accommodate your needs! See The VCU Resource Guide for details. Please let me know if you are struggling, so that I can help.

### Religious Observances

In accordance with University policy, if you want to observe a religious holiday of special importance you must provide advance written notification by the end of the second week of classes so that I can accommodate your needs.

### Honor Policy

Please visit the VCU website or see the VCU Handbook to review the official university honor policy. Two university rulings you need be especially aware of:

- The University requires that cell phones, media players, and beepers must be turned off while you are in the classroom. Yes, beepers.
- Firearms and knives are not permitted in the classroom or on campus.

### VCU Alert and Campus Security

- Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts.
- Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
- Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
- Know where to go for additional emergency information [<http://www.vcu.edu/alert>].
- Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police: 804-828-1234. Report suspicious activities and objects.

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*I am looking forward to taking many journeys with you. T.L.C.*