

Somatics for the Actor I
TPP 2570
Credits: 2 cr.

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Office Hours: Mondays 12:45 –2:00,
and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to psycho-physical processes that offers actors an alternative way of thinking about character embodiment beginning with basic physical awareness and the exploration of self. Somatics, from the Greek word for the living body, soma, is the study of the body experienced from within. Conditioning the evolving actor as an artist is a mind/body exercise – strength, balance, flexibility, alignment, and imagery come together as a balanced whole.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To understand and apply the principles of Lessac Kinesensics Body Wisdom technique.
- To understand and apply the use of Body Wisdom in the development of your idiosyncratic self, both as a person and as a theatre artist.
- Develop the ability to utilize self-teaching to understand and instruct the idiosyncratic self through Inner Harmonic Sensing, Organic Instruction, and the process of S.P.A.R.
- Develop your ability to “unlearn” old habits using the De-Patterning Principle.
- To understand and explore the Bodyvoice through the Lessac Body and Voice NRG’s with dynamic alignment and optimal breath.
- Develop a healthy use of Bodyvoice that brings dynamic rhythm, vibrancy, richness, and clarity to your performances.
- To understand, develop, and explore a Lessac “Tune Up” with a specific and precise use of self in preparation for performance.

Course Overview: Lessac Kinesensics

The student will learn Lessac Kinesensics through Bodyvoice explorations to gain further use and understanding of the actor’s inner and outer environment. The course begins with an introductory overview over the Autonomic Nervous System followed by the Lessac principles of Inner Harmonic Sensing and S.P.A.R (Sensing, Perceiving, Awareness, and Response). Anchoring in Optimal Breath and Dynamic Alignment of the spine is explored and integrated into the students use of self, while Organic Instruction (self-teaching) is encouraged through out the process as the students delve deeper into Body Wisdom by exploring Relaxer-Energizers (Muscle Yawn, Muscle Shake, Muscle Float, humming), Body Esthetics (Wheel Walking, Small Ball Roll, Curvo-Linear Principle), and the Body NRG’s (Buoyancy, Potency, Radiancy) while incorporating inner stillness and point-to-point work.

The course will begin to introduce the concepts of Lessac’s Somatic voice through the principles of Forward Facial Orientation, Structure, Lessac Consonant NRG, and Lessac Tonal NRG. Students will learn to begin to ‘score’ a script (Consonant NRG, Tonal NRG, Body NRG’s, and the relationship of punctuation and breath).

Each unit of Kinesensics training will conclude with a ‘Performance Exploration Lab’ which is meant to assess and track your development throughout the course

The course will culminate in the student’s ability to use Lessac Kinesensics Bodyvoice technique to develop 1) a performance exploration using all the techniques covered in class and 2) apply a pre-performance Kinesensics “Tune-Up” to their personal repertoire.

TEXTBOOK: Primary reading will be from *Essential Lessac* by Arthur Lessac and Deb Kinghorn. Additional handouts on Polyvagal Theory and chapters from *The Use and Training of The Human Voice* and *Body Wisdom* by Arthur Lessac may be used as well.

REQUIRED MATERIALS: Water bottle, pencil, notebook. Three unmarked printed copies of your monologue always available in your binder.

PLEASE NOTE: Our work in the studio is challenging physically, intellectually, and emotionally. Somatic work requires vulnerability and awareness between you and yourself, as well yourself and others. Most of the course content is your exploration of your use of self with playfulness, wisdom and honesty. Sometimes, physically stored emotions can be awakened. We should welcome and embrace our bodies communication with us and learn to facilitate a “carefreeness” in working through those moments with the techniques learned in class. If you need to disengage with the work for a moment, please do so and check in with your instructor to create a game plan for staying connected in class.

Movement and Acting classes often involve touching. Physical contact may range from simple touch or to a helpful re-direction of the use of self. If you have a related medical consideration or touch makes you uncomfortable, please privately notify the instructor at the start of the semester. I will always ask the student for permission before doing any “hands on work” and explain the ‘what and why’ before it is done.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Students are expected to participate daily in tune-ups, explorations, and performances.
- Students must be dressed in appropriate movement clothing for every class and performance.
- Students are expected to work on material outside of class.
- You will do a close reading of all reading material.
- Students must be supportive and respectful of their fellow classmates.
- Students must complete all assignments and performances on their assigned due date. The course outline and dates are subject to change at the discretion of the professor.
- Students must contribute focused and creative participation in all class explorations, assignments, and discussions.

COURSE CALENDAR (specific weekly schedules, including assignment due dates, will be shared separately in class and in Canvas).

Week 1-2: Autonomic Nervous System, Lessac Kinesensic Principles & Beginning of the “Tune Up”

Topics Covered: Autonomic Nervous System & Hierarchy of Response, Neuroception, Interoception and Proprioception, Human Likeness Principle, Idiosyncratic Self.

Week 3-9: Body Wisdom

Topics Covered: S.P.A.R, Inner & Outer Environment, Organic Instruction, Dynamic Alignment, Optimal Breath, Small Ball Roll, Wheel Walking, Body Pain Relievers, Relaxer Energizers, Curvo-Linear Principle. Body NRG’s (Buoyancy, Potency, Radiancy), Somatic Stanislavski, The Heart Centered Actor.

Week 10-14: Somatic Voice

Topic Covered: “The Feeling Voice”: Forward Facial Orientation, The Facial Muscles & The Voice Nozzle, Resonance, Prosody, Tonal NRG, Consonant NRG.

Week 15-16: Pulling it all Together

Topics Covered: Pre-performance “Tune Up”; Final Assessment

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

- You will choose one monologue to use throughout the course, using Lessac Kinesensics techniques to develop the work.
- There will be three “Performance Experiment Labs” which are a graded monologue check-in assessments which follows your work throughout the course: Body NRG, Consonant NRG, and Tonal NRG. Each performance lab and final will have their own grading rubric, which will be shared with you as we progress through the course.
- There will be one final performance project which is a culmination of the Kinesensics techniques learned during the course.

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
Performance Experiment Lab 1: Body Wisdom	35
Performance Experiment Lab 2: Vocal NRG	70
Final Assessment	80
Personal Experience Paper	20
Participation	40
Attendance (approx., see gradebook for final total point value; subject to change)	60*
TOTAL	305

GRADING

Grading will be evaluated and will be based on methods and requirements listed above, as well as quality of work, approach, enthusiasm, development, completion of all assigned work, and the student’s ability to express written and oral knowledge concerning the course topics. Final grades will be based on above criteria, evaluation and assessment of each student’s attitude toward the work, and the individual development of each student throughout the semester.

UF GRADING SCALE

Percent	Grade	Grade Points
90.0 - 100.0	A	4.00
87.0 - 89.9	A-	3.67
84.0 - 86.9	B+	3.33
81.0 – 83.9	B	3.00
78.0 - 80.9	B-	2.67
75.0 - 79.9	C+	2.33
72.0 – 74.9	C	2.00
69.0 - 71.9	C-	1.67
66.0 - 68.9	D+	1.33
63.0 - 65.9	D	1.00
60.0 - 62.9	D-	0.67
0 - 59.9	E	0.00

More information on UF grading policy may be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/#calculatinggpa>

PARTICIPATION RUBRIC

Total points for the below categories = up to 10pts. Per category, totaling 40 pts. for 4 categories.

CRITERIA	EXEMPLARY 10-9	PROFICIENT 8.9-8.0	DEVELOPING 7.9-7.0	UNSATISFACTORY 6.9-0	SCORE
Frequency of Participation	Proactively and regularly contributes to class discussion; initiates discussion on issues related to class topic.	Sometimes contributes proactively to class discussion; asks questions and responds to direct questions.	Rarely contributes to class discussion; seldom volunteers but responds to direct questions.	Never contributes to class discussion; fails to offer relevant responses to direct questions.	
Preparation	Consistently well-prepared with all assignments completed; demonstrated preparation with notes, observations, & questions.	Arrives fully prepared with some frequency; partially prepared at other times; inconsistent demonstration of preparation through notes, observations & questions.	Demonstrates infrequent completion of assignments and readings; often has not completed assignments or prepared notes or observations.	Exhibits little evidence of having read or thought about assigned material.	
Listening Skills	Listens attentively and actively as indicated by comments that often built on others' remarks; contributing to class dialogue	Some evidence of active, attentive listening in remarks	Listens very infrequently and without attention to concept or detail, as indicated by polls & comments that are often loosely related to others' remarks.	Rarely or does not listen to others; did not pay attention while others speak; comments did not contribute to class dialogue, engages in activity unrelated to class.	
Quality and Relevance of Contribution	Comments always insightful & constructive, balanced between general impressions, opinions, & thoughtful analysis; uses appropriate terminology.	Comments mostly insightful & constructive, occasionally too general or not relevant; mostly uses appropriate terminology.	Comments are sometimes insightful & constructive, with occasional signs of insight; comments often general and rarely use appropriate vocabulary.	Comments are uninformed and counter-productive; almost never uses appropriate vocabulary; heavy reliance on uninformed opinion & personal taste.	
				TOTAL	XX/40

ATTENDANCE POLICY and CLASS EXPECTATIONS

The university recognizes the right of the instructor to make attendance mandatory and require documentation for absences (except for religious holidays), missed work, or inability to fully engage in class. After due warning, an instructor can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for excessive absences.

This is an experiential class. You are expected to attend class daily and be on time. Tardiness is disruptive to a class of this nature.

Here is my policy:

Each class meeting is worth 2 points. I take attendance every class meeting and record it under “Attendance” in “Gradebook”.

All tardies (regardless of how late you are to class) will result in 1 point removed for the class meeting in which the tardy took place. If you are going to miss class or be late, you will need to inform me via email BEFORE class starts.

At the end of the semester, Gradebook totals all the class meeting points and you are given a total based on that number.

You are allowed ONE unexcused absence.

You are allowed ONE tardy.

You are allowed ONE “excused” absence.

These are non-negotiable and the “allowed” mentioned above are reconciled in Gradebook at the end of the semester.

To be considered “excused” an absence must be accompanied by appropriate official documentation and include the following reasons:

- Illness—doctor's note must be on official letterhead with address and phone number, noting the date and time of visit and diagnosis verifying that an absence from class is warranted, doctor name and signature
- Serious family emergencies
- special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences)
- Military obligation
- Severe weather conditions
- Participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate
- Court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena)

Religious observances do not require documentation. But, to help organize accommodations, students must inform the instructor by the end of the second week of classes of religious observances of their faith that will conflict with class attendance this semester.

Any student that acquires 3 absences (either excused or unexcused) will be required to meet with this course’s instructor and/or area faculty to discuss the student’s continued participation in the course. For Majors: Failure to attend this meeting will result in Artistic Probation.

UNIVERSITY HONESTY POLICY

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

(<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>)

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)
Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu.
<https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://www.crc.ufl.edu/>.

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>.

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.

Student Complaints Campus: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf.

On-Line Students Complaints: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>.

COURSE EVALUATION PROCESS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.