

Course Syllabus

Yale University – Summer 2025

Session B, June 30th- August 1st

DRMA S001 Yale Summer Conservatory for Actors

Course Instructors:

Director: Blake Hackler, blake.hackler@gmail.com

Co-Directors: John Evans Reese/Stephanie Machado

Instructors: Josiah Bania/Will Cobbs/Gabe Levey/Stephanie Machado/Eli Pauley/John Evans Reese

TAs: Stephen Cefalu/Jasmin Johnson/Ameya Narkar

Guest Artists: Evan Yionoulis/Welker White/Damian Young

Course Overview

More than just acting or scene study, the Conservatory offers students an entire program comprised of a series of sections, each focused on a fundamental element of acting. Sections concentrate on the following:

- Text Analysis: to comprehend the material being acted
- Acting/Scene Study: to begin the process of building a foundation of technique
- Voice and Speech: to improve vocal production, articulation, and interpretive skills
- Clowning: to encourage risk-taking and a sense of play
- On-Camera Masterclass: to learn how visual storytelling works on -camera

We divide the students into small sections of 10-12 that permit significant focus on individual work. With a faculty to student ratio of 1:4, we make sure that each student gets the personal attention needed for individual artistic growth. We think of the Conservatory as an experimental lab, and because of this, we offer no public performance or production of a play. Removing the pressure of an audience allows our students to focus on honing their skills for use in future performances.

Outside of the classroom, students work, study, and play. Because the majority of class work is project-based and dependent on collaboration with other students, rehearsal time outside of class is valuable. Weekends are spent rehearsing and enjoying personal time.

Course Goal

The Yale Summer Conservatory for Actors is an intensive introduction to the basic techniques of acting. This five-week program focuses on building a foundation that is applicable to all further study in theater.

Contact Hours

Students can expect to be in class 30 hours per week with an additional 10 hours of rehearsal/homework time.

Grading and Assignments

In addition to Acting Technique/Scene Study, each section of this course (Text Analysis, Voice and Speech, and Movement/Clowning) will have specific syllabi that contain individual course goals, assignments, and grading rubrics. Below you will find a detailed breakdown of Acting Technique/Scene Study as well as a specific rubric helpful in defining how grades are determined in that section.

Acting Technique/Scene Study

Major Assignments

1. Neutral Scene Work/Etude Work
2. Scene #1 Work Session #1
3. Scene #1 Work Session #2
4. Scene #1 Work Session #3
5. Scene #1 Work Session #4
6. Monologue Work

Grading Breakdown

1. Neutral Scene/Etude – 50 points
2. Class Participation – 50 points
3. Professionalism – 50 points
4. Scene #1- 100 points
5. Monologue Work - 50 points

Possible Points: 250

Scene grade based on overall preparation, ability to build on improvements made in class, and ability to integrate coaching into overall work – see the assessment rubric below for more detailed analysis.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

PHYSICAL SKILLS

Relaxation

Control

Awareness of Physical Habits

Stillness

Expressiveness

Skill acquisition

AFFECTIVE TECHNIQUE:

Emotional Accessibility

Emotional Depth/Complexity

Emotional Expressiveness

Emotional Believability

Skill Acquisition

COGNITIVE COMPONENTS:

Comprehension of Text as it relates to acting work

Clarity of Communication in the work/rehearsal process

Intellectual Analysis/Synthesis of textual information into Psychophysical Technique

Artistic Investigation

Problem Solving

INTEGRATION AND OVER-ALL TECHNIQUE:

Over-all Acting Skills

Over-all Technical Synthesis

Over-all Artistic Impression

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Mon Jun 30, 2025	Assignment Casting Preferences Worksheet	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
Wed Jul 2, 2025	Assignment VOICE & SPEECH - Watch Videos BEFORE Class Wednesday morning, July 1st	due by 9:30am
Sat Jul 5, 2025	Assignment VOICE & SPEECH - Roots of Habits Paper	due by 11:59pm
	Assignment Afternoon - Journal	
	Assignment Afternoon - Wallet	
	Calendar Event DRMA S001 01 (SB22): Yale Summer Conservatory for Actors	
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	Assignment Final Film	
	Assignment Montage	
	Assignment Morning Clips	
	Assignment Street Scene	
	Assignment Street Scene Expanded	

Date

Details

Due

Assignment Street Scene Redux
