



**LNDN COMM /BUSN 3329**  
**COMMUNICATE: Basic Acting Techniques for Confidence-Building and**  
**Better Presentations**

**CAPA LONDON PROGRAM**

**Course Description**

This course introduces the student to the basic skills of acting and shows how acting techniques can be used to improve self-confidence, presence, and vocal presentation in a range of different work and life scenarios. Over the semester, students will learn to improvise, undertake creative challenges and begin to master a range of techniques. Students will keep a developmental journey during the semester, and also perform a dramatic monologue. For the final assessment, students will write a 5-10 minute speech about something they feel passionate about, then deliver it at Hyde Park's famous Speaker's Corner to fellow students and an audience of Londoners.

**Course Aims**

Via a series of games, workshops, exercises, challenges and group problem-solving exercises, students will encounter a range of practical techniques derived largely from the writings of Stanislavski, but also including other practitioners. Students will learn techniques for relaxation, mindfulness, creative thinking and motivation.

By the end of the course, students will have met a range of developmental challenges, and completed a final task to demonstrate their new-found practical performance abilities!

**Requirements and Prerequisites**

NO PREVIOUS PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED! The course will be suitable for undergraduates from a wide range of subjects and programs, especially those planning careers in areas where presentations and public speaking are particularly central: business, marketing, law and teaching are particularly relevant to the course, but anyone who would like to improve their skills is most welcome. The course is NOT recommended for those majoring in a subject that already involves acting/performance.

**Learning Outcomes**

- a Students will encounter and take away a 'toolbox' of skills to assist with self-confidence, presentation and public speaking.
- b Students will engage with key ideas of Stanislavski, applying them practically
- c Students will work together on a variety of different performance forms, including improv and text work

- d Students will present publicly on a topic they feel strongly about
- e Students will reflect on their developmental path, what they've learned and the areas they need to work on to improve beyond the course.

### Developmental Outcomes

Students should demonstrate: creativity, responsibility & accountability, independence & interdependence, goal orientation, self-confidence, resilience, appreciation of differences.

### Class Methodology

The class will comprise of a series of skills-based workshops, collaborative creative tasks, lectures and problem-solving exercises, culminating in a 'live' public presentation at Speakers' Corner in London's Hyde Park. Students will each keep a developmental journal recording their process.

### Field Components

CAPA provides the unique opportunity to learn about the city through direct, guided experience. Participation in field activities for this course is required. Students will actively explore the Global City in which they are currently living. Furthermore, students will have the chance to collect useful information that will be an invaluable resource for the essays/papers/projects assigned in this course.

### The assigned field component(s) are:

- A guest lecturer in the area of communications
- A visit to London Zoo to study status in packs and groups
- A visit to Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park

Students are also strongly encouraged to participate in **co-curricular** program activities, among which the following are suggested:

- A tour of the National Theatre
- A tour of Parliament
- Additional visits to London shows listed on the My Global City calendar

### Assessment/Grading Policy

Descriptor	Alpha	UK	US	GPA
Excellent	A	75+	93+	4.0
	A-	70-74	90-92	3.7
Good	B+	66-69	86-89	3.3
	B	63-65	83-85	3.0
	B-	60-62	80-82	2.7
Average	C+	56-59	76-79	2.3
	C	53-55	73-75	2.0
Below Average / Poor	C-	50-52	70-72	1.7
	D+	46-49	66-69	1.3
	D	40-45	60-65	0.7
				1.0
Fail	F	<40	<60	0

### Grade Breakdown and Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Assessment Task	Grade %	Learning Outcomes	Due Date
Class participation	10%	a, b, c, d, e	Weekly
Mid-term class presentations	20%	a, b, c, e	Week 7, based on Weeks 1-6
Developmental journal and final reflection	40%	a, b, c, d, e	Week 14
Final Presentation at Speaker's Corner and text	30%	a, b, d	Week 13

## **Assignments:**

### **The mid-term presentations:**

Presentation of a journal ('work in progress') showing the student's development (1500 words) and an in-class presentation of a student hobby or interest

### **Developmental journal and final reflection:**

Completed development journal with reflective statement (3500 words in total)

### **Final Presentation at Speaker's Corner and text:**

A public talk given at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park and submission of the presentation text

## **Dress Code**

Students should wear casual clothing for practical work in class, sneakers with white soles are required for work in The Street studio

## **Course Materials**

Texts from theoretical and practical works, plays and articles on various topics will be supplied in class. It is not necessary to purchase additional text books for this course. Online resources will also be made available.

### **Textbook(s) and Recommended Readings**

Aristotle (trans M. Heath). *Poetics* (Penguin)

Boal, A. (trans A. Jackson) *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (Routledge)

Chekhov, M. *To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting* (Harper and Row)

Johnstone, K. *Impro* (Methuen)

Stanislavski, K. (trans. E R Hapgood) *An Actor Prepares* (Bloomsbury)

*Creating a Role* (Bloomsbury)

### **Course Calendar**

Field Studies and class visitors will be confirmed in the first 2 weeks of semester. The existing list is provisional.

### **CLASS ONE: YOU AS A CHARACTER**

In this class, we'll get to know each other, create biographies for ourselves and establish our targets for the course. We'll play some games to get us bonded into a team, then work on some improvisation exercises to get us thinking and acting creatively. We'll then prepare for our observation exercise, which will involve looking at status in a social group.

Task: Observation Exercise, First Journal Entry (at least 500 words per entry)

### **CLASS TWO: MIND AND BODY.**

We'll share what we've learned in the Observation Exercise before moving on to explore the connection between our mind and our body. One of the keys to confidence is to view ourselves as a whole, a 'bio-machine' working in the present tense. To this end, we'll focus on exercises to heighten our sensory awareness and work on scenarios that inspire us to embrace the present moment.

Task: Reading 1 from *An Actor Prepares*, Second Diary Entry

### **CLASS THREE: CIRCLES OF ATTENTION**

How do actors maintain their composure whilst under the pressure of performance? What techniques allow them to stay 'in the moment' and focused? Here, we'll unpack Stanislavski's idea of the Circles of Attention. Once understood, they allow us to develop our concentration skills and shut out distractions from the task-at-hand. Finally, we'll undertake the challenge of learning and delivering a poem together in 30minutes!

Task: Reading 2 from *An Actor Prepares*, Third Diary Entry

#### **CLASS FOUR: STATUS**

It's all around us: status. What does it mean? Is it all do with social position and material wealth, or is something more complicated going on? In this class, we'll look at how our physical disposition affects both our self-confidence and how we are perceived by others. Status is ancient, and our awareness of it comes straight from the 'lizard brain'! Via a series of improvisations and exercises, we'll learn how to feel and look more confident as we speak and present. I will also introduce the mid-term task: Present your passion.

Task: Prepare your presentation for Class Six, Fourth Diary Entry

#### **CLASS FIVE: ZOO STORY, A FIELD STUDY**

We'll meet at CAPA reception and head to London Zoo at Regent's Park for a session looking at specific groups of animals. We'll take a tour, then in groups of 3 and 4, we'll undertake an observation exercise based on status in groups and packs. Wolves and primates will be of particular interest to us, and we'll consider how the basic elements of status are evident in the natural world. Prepare to make notes, sketches, and share your findings in the final debrief!

Task: Prepare you presentation for next week, Fifth Diary Entry (for submission Week Six)

#### **CLASS SIX: PRESENT YOUR PASSION!**

In the first half of class, I'll collect in your Journals for midterm assessment. We'll discuss what we've learned so far, then we'll each stage a presentation of 5 minutes on a specific hobby or interest. Your objective is to make us feel as excited about the topic as you are! At the end of each presentation, we'll offer each other positive feedback for development.

Task: Reading 4 from To The Actor: On the Technique of Acting

#### **BREAK WEEK**

#### **CLASS SEVEN: FINDING YOUR VOICE 1**

In this class, we'll look at the anatomy of our voice. How is made, and where does it come from? How can we improve its strength, tone and ensure variation in the way we deliver what we want to say? What aspects of anatomy do we need to develop to ensure we are vocally strong? After undertaking a workshop, you'll each be issued with a short speech by Shakespeare to work on for next week's class.

Task: Learn a Shakespearean speech, Sixth Diary Entry

#### **CLASS EIGHT: FINDING YOUR VOICE 2**

In the first half of class, we'll work on further developing and strengthening our vocal delivery, ensuring its clarity and consistency. In the second half, we'll use our speeches to create situations for improvisation and vocal development, before each of us delivers our speech to the group. At the end, we'll reflect on the experience, and draw up a skills audit of the areas to work on in advance of our visit to Speaker's Corner in Week Twelve!

Task: Work on your final speech, Seventh Diary Entry

#### **CLASS NINE: ONE TO ONE SESSIONS**

This session will be given over to personal, 1-1 work. We'll discuss our speech topics and the best ways to deliver them, and we can refresh any practical areas that are causing us concerns. We'll also look at our journal entries so far.

#### **CLASS TEN: MASTERING THE MATERIAL**

In this class, we'll get into groups of 2 or 3 to discuss our final speech topics in depth. We'll then exchange topics, and attempt to present each other's areas of interest. What can we learn from watching someone else engage with an idea that inspires or interests us passionately? Our objective is to identify 'the lure' of an idea, what attracts us to it, and what will interest an audience. We'll discover this 'lure' has direct parallels with how actors work!

Task: Work on your final speech, Eighth Diary Entry

#### **CLASS ELEVEN: REHEARSAL**

In the final class before the Speaker's Corner task, we'll revisit the skills we've learned over semester, then each of us will present our speech to the class. We'll then positively critique each one before holding a second round of presentations, which we will film and watch back.

Task: Work on your final speech, Ninth Diary Entry

### **CLASS TWELVE: COMMUNICATE FINAL EVENT – A SPEECH AT SPEAKERS’ CORNER, HYDE PARK**

We’ll meet a little earlier than usual for a vocal warm up and mental preparation, before heading to the site and delivering our speeches before actual Londoners. Each speech will be recorded. Afterwards, we’ll head back to the center (probably in triumph) for refreshments and a debrief!

Task: Tenth Diary Entry – your reflection on the Speakers’ Corner experience!

### **CLASS THIRTEEN: FINAL REFLECTION AND SUMMING UP**

In this class, we’ll deliver our completed journals and watch film clips of our work over semester, reflecting on how we’ve learned and grown in confidence and skills. We’ll draw up a plan for future development and consider how best to realize our goals on our return home.

## **Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities**

**Attendance:** CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class. The first time a student has an unexcused absence for a class, his/her grade will not be impacted. The second time a student has an unexcused absence in that class, it will result in a 3 percent reduction of the final grade (for example: an A- [92] will become an B+ [89]). The student will be placed on academic probation at this time. Three unexcused absences per class will result in failure of the course. A pattern of three absences in more than one course will result in dismissal from the program.

**Excused Absences:** Absences are only excused for medical reasons, for a family emergency or for a religious holiday. To request an excused absence, students must contact [excused.absence@capa.org](mailto:excused.absence@capa.org) ahead of time and provide evidence (e.g. a doctor’s note) of the reason for his/her absence, otherwise the absence will not be excused. Even if the student knows the absence will not be excused, the student should still contact CAPA to inform CAPA they will not be in class.

In addition to contacting [excused.absence@capa.org](mailto:excused.absence@capa.org), it is the responsibility of the student to contact his/her instructor and make up any missed assignments.

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assignments BEFORE the class, and come in on time.

Participation is a vital part of your grade: students are expected to participate orally in seminars and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance; and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others in the class will not be tolerated.

**Academic Integrity:** A high level of responsibility and academic honesty is expected. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism, self-plagiarism and cheating can result in dismissal from the program.

Self-plagiarism, copying an assignment entirely or partially to submit to a different class in an attempt to receive credit twice for one piece of work is unacceptable and considered cheating by duplication. Students risk receiving an "O" for any assignments in which they have duplicated their own work.

All substantial writing assignments (typically anything worth 20% or more of the final course grade) will be run through the plagiarism checking software Turnitin when submitted via CANVAS. See CAPA’s Academic Standards and Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

**Use of electronic equipment in class:** All devices such as laptops, i-pods, i-pads, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are **NOT** allowed unless you have express permission from the faculty or you have been instructed to do so. If you require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, inform the Associate Director of Academic Affairs at the beginning of Term.

**Use of Electronic Translators:** In Language courses students are NOT allowed to use electronic translators for writing texts in the target language: those submitting compositions and texts of whatever kind translated in such a fashion will receive a final F grade for the course.

**Late Submission:** Late submission of papers, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request must be made to the relevant Faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a full alpha grade penalty. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of F will be given for the assessment.

**Behaviour during Examinations:** During examinations, you must do your own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.