

COURSE: ON CAMERA AND OFF Steve Blackwood (Adjunct Professor-Hillsdale)
DAYS OF OUR LIVES (regular 1997-2007) *ED GEIN*, *CEDAR RAPIDS*, *MACHINE GUN PREACHER*, *BOEING BOEING* and *DING DONG* (Meadow Brook Theatre)

Over the years acting styles and , indeed , instruction have evolved from the presentational to the representational to the Method to the Meisner technique and beyond. The question of which is the "right" style to teach and indeed if acting in and of itself can truly be taught in a formalized structure does indeed beg an answer. Henry Fonda never took a formal acting class,. Al Pacino & Marilyn Monroe would swear by Lee Strasberg and The Acting Studio and could not approach a piece without that "METHOD"- a style developed by Harold Clurman and the Group theatre that teaches actors to "live" the part through intense preparation (Paul Newman lived on a chain gang before shooting COOL HAND LUKE) and observation. Who is, for want of a better word, "right"? I believe the answer lies within the individual actor. Some like, Fonda and Sinatra, can dig deep for their truth about the character without a Method roadmap..some need the roadmap. What this course will provide is a guide for actors to find their truth about the characters through personalization exercises and improv based on my work with Uta Hagen at HB Studio in NY and my own personal experiences on stage and screen. The scene work will evolve from questions explored in that work, ie WHO AM I? WHAT DO I WANT? HOW CAN I GET IT? WHAT'S MY OBSTACLE? and finally WHAT WOULD I DO IN THE GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE SCENE? I believe you do not need to "live" the part to play it (there are limits to this, you can't really kill someone to play a killer, but you can imagine and use a personal substitution of hate in your own life to feed the circumstances). We will explore how to ground the character by physical life (WHERE ARE YOU? IS IT HOT? COLD? DO YOU HAVE A HEADACHE?) sense memory work , the aforementioned emotional memory work, truly listening to your fellow actor in the moment, and rehearsing a scene correctly with "first beat" focus . Finally we will end the class with personal monologues, written and performed by each student, that focus on any issues (parental,societal etc) that need to be addressed or brought to light (I played my own father,wearing his cologne-SENSE MEMORY-talking to "me" on the phone about his skepticism about my being an actor in NY.. I actually had a deeper empathy for him after doing it.). Louis Armstrong said it best "What we play, is Life"...what we explore, in this course, is Truth.

ON CAMERA AND OFF will have a actual camera and playback monitor in the classroom and students will be taught how to professionally audition as well as doing scene work for casting directors and producers. How to slate, hit your mark, use your eyes (talking to downstage eye of fellow actor opens up your face on camera) etc. Practical problems of administration (8x10 pictures, reels, agents) will be addressed as well as finding the right "casting" for yourself (how others

perceive you, what roles fit that perception and your personality).

TEXTS

Hagen Uta RESPECT FOR ACTING Macmillan Publishing Company 1973

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Blackwood Steve TAPPING INTO YOUR GOLD pamphlet/self published

EXAMS

Final grade for the course will be determined from class attendance and participation, preparation fro scene work, a mid term of a prepared 2 person scene and final examination of personal monologues written and performed by ALL students.