

Fall 2023

THTR-216 (001): Improvisational Theater, Short-Form

Louis Kornfeld

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Kornfeld, Louis, "THTR-216 (001): Improvisational Theater, Short-Form" (2023). *Humanities Syllabi*. 714.
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THTR 216

Improvitational Theater, Short-Form

Tuesday, Thursday 10 - 11:20

Location: 110 Warren Street, Room 207

Louis Kornfeld

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Office Hours

KUPFRIAN 113 Tuesdays 11:30-12:3

Description: THTR 216 introduces the techniques of short-form improvisational performance through in-class practical exercises that promote spontaneity, play, and imaginative space work. Students learn through game structure and short narratives, leading to public performances, and gain insight into stage presence that only the live setting can impart.

Course Objective: To engage in spontaneous problem solving, critical thinking, and ensemble based theater making. The student at the end of this course will be more confident working in groups and in a public setting.

Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to act spontaneously under the pressure of a live performance, will learn to perform as part of an ensemble, and will develop the ability to take creative risks while challenging the fear of failure. This course includes exercises that promote story development skills useful in a wide variety of other media including music, movement, and film.

Prerequisites: [ENGL 101](#) and [ENGL 102](#) with grades of C or higher; [ENGL 102](#) may be taken concurrently as a corequisite. This course satisfies the three credit 200 GER in History and Humanities.

Attendance: The majority of your grade is based on classroom participation. If you miss class, your participation grade will be reduced.

Materials: Students are required to keep a notebook for weekly journal entries.

Grading: Students will be graded according to the following criteria:

- [Attendance and In-class participation](#) - 40%
- [In-Person Self Evaluation](#) - 10% (Students are expected to meet with the professor during office hours at least once over the course of the semester to

discuss insights gained throughout the class)

- Written Journal - 20% (Students are expected to keep a written journal detailing observations and thoughts throughout the week. These will be evaluated twice over the course of the semester.)
- In-class presentation - 10% (Presentations will consist of improvised scenes, developed in collaboration with a partner or partners, and performed in front of the class. Students will be evaluated on their ability to grasp the exercise and communicate their ideas to an audience)
- Final Performance- 20% (Final will be an ensemble performance consisting of two different long-form structures, demonstrating understanding of the semester's material. Students will be evaluated on their ability to work together as a cohesive whole.)

Honor Code: The NJIT and Rutgers honor code will be upheld, and any violations will be brought to the immediate attention of the Dean of Students.
[http://www.njit.edu/academics/pdf/academic integrity- code.pdf](http://www.njit.edu/academics/pdf/academic%20integrity-code.pdf)

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at:
<http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

Please note it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu

Class Conduct: You are expected to be respectful and courteous to each other at all times. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, for any reason, please speak to me.

THTR 216 Grading Rubric

THTR 216 Grading Rubric						
Criteria	Ratings					Pts
In-Class Participation	10 pts Full Marks Student is present, attentive, and engaged. Plays well with others, and is an active listener and communicator.	7.5 pts Needs Improvement Student is present, attentive and engaged, but sometimes fails to listen or communicate in exercises.	5 pts Needs Improvement Student is present and attentive, but reluctant to participate in classroom exercises.	2.5 pts Unsatisfactory Student is often absent or inattentive, and/or fails to participate in exercises.	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
In-Person Self-Evaluation	2 pts Full Marks Student sets aside time to meet with professor at least once over the course of the semester, articulating their insights, struggles and expectations throughout the class.				0 pts No Marks	2 pts

Journal Entries (2)	<p>5 pts Full Marks</p> <p>Student completes two weekly journal entries, no more than a page each, focused on real-life observations. Journals are turned in, complete, twice over the course of the semester.</p>	<p>2.5 pts Needs Improvement</p> <p>Student misses either first or second journal deadline.</p>	5 pts	
Scene Presentation	<p>3 pts Full Marks</p> <p>Presentations consist of pre-planned scenes developed in collaboration with a partner or partners, and performed in front of the class. Student demonstrates ability to play well with a partner, and is an active listener and communicator.</p>	<p>0 pts No Marks</p> <p>Student fails to improvise a scene, or is otherwise unable to collaborate with a partner.</p>	3 pts	
Final Performance	<p>10 pts Full Marks</p> <p>Final is an ensemble performance consisting of pre-planned scenes, 'spot' improves, and improvised games incorporating audience suggestions. Student plays well with others, easily incorporates other people's ideas, and is an active listener and strong communicator.</p>	<p>5 pts Needs Improvement</p> <p>Student completes the performance without participating in a scene, only featured in games.</p>	<p>0 pts No Marks</p>	10 pts
Total Points: 30				

9/5/23		Introduction/ Course overview				
9/7/23		Foundational principles: Acceptance; Truth in Comedy; Supportive choices				
9/12/23		Monologues & Storytelling				
9/14/23		Monologues & Storytelling: Acting Listening and Heightening				
9/19/23		Introduction to Scenic Improvisation				
9/21/23		Preparing improvised scenarios: What makes a strong premise?				
9/26/23		Initiations and offers				
9/28/23		Improvising off suggestions				
10/3/23		Spot vs. Planned Improvisation				
10/5/23		Spot vs. Planned Improvisation				
10/10/23		In-Class presentations/ First journal entries due				
10/12/23		In-Class presentations/ First journal entries due				
10/17/23		Group Scenes and Games				
10/19/23		Planning a Running Order				
10/24/23		Miscellaneous Games/ In-person check-in				
10/26/23		Miscellaneous Games/ In-person check-in				
10/31/23		Narrative skills/ In-person check-in				
11/2/23		Narrative skills/ In-person check-in				
11/7/23		Narrative Skills				
11/9/23		Narrative Skills				
11/14/23		Building trust and group mind: How to make others feel more comfortable				
11/16/23		Introduction to clowning				

11/21/23		Integrating Scenes and Games					
11/23/23		No Classes: Thanksgiving					
11/28/23		Rehearsal for Final					
11/30/23		Rehearsal for Final					
12/5/23		Rehearsal for Final/ Second journal entries due					
12/7/23		Rehearsal for Final/ Second journal entries due					
12/12/23		In-Class Performance					
12/14/23		In- Class Performance					
12/19/23	Final Exams	N/A					
12/21/23	Final Exams	N/A					
Please note, this syllabus is subject to change over the course of the semester. Any changes will be discussed beforehand, in class.							