

The truth of ourselves is at the root of our acting.” Sanford Meisner

The core of my teaching philosophy rests on the above statement. I keep it firmly in mind when I teach theatre. I ask students always to question their own truth in every circumstance, for questioning is vital for an actor. Those who care to understand themselves more strongly connect more fully with their characters and circumstances. I foster confidence in each student’s individuality and uniqueness. I encourage and challenge them to embrace all their powers of expression. I strive to give my students many questions while guiding them to answers. My goal in working this way is for students to realize the joys of their own creativity.

I speak with students directly and honestly, treating them with respect, impartiality and consistency. I value their opinions, observations and ideas. My classes and workshops are conducted in a nonjudgmental atmosphere allowing a strong bond of trust to form between professor and student as well as among the students themselves. That bond of trust allows students the freedom to take risks, fail, and then risk again. Through this process they evaluate their work and grow as artists. I ask my students to be as honest with themselves as they are with me. I encourage them to be courageous and curious, and to always seek a deeper understanding of themselves and their world on the journey as artists because the process of learning is more important than an end product or result. Collaboration is vital to my work with students. Teaching acting goes beyond the classroom to coaching auditions for professional theatre and/or graduate programs, working on cold reads, and discussing their classwork and career goals.

Acting and Directing are crafts wholly specific and unique to each individual theatre artist. I offer a variety of tools and approaches to shaping, teaching and honing those crafts. I have a high level of expertise in the methodologies and teachings of Sanford Meisner, Uta Hagen, and Michael Chekhov. Meisner enables me to help students uncover moment-to-moment truth, spontaneity and acting on the impulse. Michael Chekhov approaches acting on a psycho-physical level, and I help students better understand and access their emotional life by using his theories, as well as provide the basis for character development. Uta Hagen’s philosophies encourage students to approach acting from an understanding of themselves. For script analysis, I teach Stanislavski’s ideas of action and objective because I believe this is a strong introduction to understanding the inner workings of a scene. For directing, I utilize William Ball’s teachings and reframe the methods of Michael Chekhov with a directorial lens.

It is important to develop and enhance students' senses. I do this by utilizing exercises of the Williamson Technique which allows me to inspire students' connectivity to the world around them and to encourage vulnerability to those connections. I incorporate Fitzmaurice and Linklater vocal exercises to free the voice, an integral part of the actor's instrument. I believe students should learn the International Phonetic Alphabet and apply it not only to their own natural speech, but use it to learn various accents. I also incorporate speech exercises of Dudley Knight. When teaching Shakespeare and how to perform his work, I integrate the above methods with a technical approach to the text itself and the theories of John Barton.

To prepare for the professional world of auditioning, I teach students how to select appropriate monologues and conduct practice auditions, including reading sides with a reader and practicing callbacks with cold reads. I also conduct dance workshops in an audition environment. As a working professional actor, I have a wealth of connections in the field of theatre and consistently bring theatre artists and practitioners to hold workshops with my students. Through these workshops they not only receive current, real-world knowledge about the business of theatre but also create professional connections that may help them after they've transitioned from the collegiate world of theatre into the industry. In 2016, I co-founded Illyria Theatre Company. One goal in creating this professional non-profit theatre was to provide current students the opportunity to gain professional experience during their university tenure to build resumes, work with other professionals in the industry, and practice their technique and training.

I am an avid believer in devised theatre: student-generated, multi-skilled performance pieces conceptualized and created in a collaborative, workshop setting. It is wholly specific to the group of students involved, the particular space they are in, and the present time. It allows them to create theatre that may include dancing, singing, writing, playing an instrument, or other forms of artistic expression. Devised theatre allows me to inspire my students to discover what type of theatre inspires them and what kind of stories they want to tell. It instills the necessity and value of theatre serving as a responsive art: that through theatre they can reflect upon, teach, or change the world. I encourage my students to have ongoing and dynamic connections and dialogues between theory and practice.

I completed 20+ hours in Theatrical Intimacy Education to create brave spaces in my classrooms, utilize boundary practice and consent-based approaches in teaching and directing, and instill confidence in

actors' self-advocacy in their collaborative work. My certification in trauma-informed education allows me to build my courses and structure my rehearsals in ways that support students' mental health.

I believe that wonder and curiosity are essential traits for a theatre artist. I encourage my students to view the world with childlike wonder and always to question, question, question. I work with dedication, passion and professionalism. I give myself to every class and production completely and I expect my students do likewise. My goal is to help my students become complete artists and complete persons. If I can accomplish this goal, my students will contribute to the world in an exciting and enriching way as both professional theatre artists and valued members of society.