

I strive to blend the best aspects of my own liberal arts education and professional training and experience, to balance academic, physical, and creative excellence. Understanding without creativity and execution produces academic content at best. But ability without understanding or creativity will never reach its full potential. Imagination without understanding or ability is just daydreams. Most students find some of these come more naturally to them than others, but a supportive, collaborative process means they can assist each other, finding not only common ground but more importantly areas where their skills and knowledge are complementary, where they as individuals feel they have the most to offer.

While we all want to see our students produce the best work possible, my more personal goals as an instructor are to share my passion, and to promote understanding of underlying concepts – of *why* and *how* we can make something work. I've seen industry standards change, but underlying concepts remain valid guideposts for new ground that is broken, even as tools and tactics shift, and practitioners fall in and out of favor. As such, I approach performance concepts through multiple lenses, incorporating Stanislavski and Adler's thoughtful analysis, the imagination and joy of Chekhov, the discovery and play of Lecoq, the discipline and specificity of Margolis Method, and Meisner's genuine, extra-textual exchanges. I'm looking for actors who make smart choices and can physicalize those for an audience, using both intellectual engagement and physical subtext. Likewise, teaching scholarship and communication is a blend of code-switching, analysis, and figuring out where one can personally contribute to ongoing academic discourse. I find pure adherence to any Dogma is not the best way to prepare students for the art of today – let alone tomorrow. My teaching adds synthesis and context to the practical skills that help students in the immediate.

As a teacher, I'm increasingly sensitive to the stress and trauma so many students carry with them. I try to create a supportive, safe classroom as a baseline, creating as much of a consent-based space as I can, minimizing unnecessary instructional touch and finding other ways to offer tactile feedback as needed. Many assignments can be turned in through various media, in case some students are more comfortable uploading voice memos or video essays than writing papers. Almost all my performance-based assignments are recorded, with narrative feedback that allows students to observe what worked, and what needs work, with specific suggestions and references provided in the online LMS shell. COVID has generally made me more active with online course shells, leaning more on Canvas modules than on traditional syllabi these days, and developing little virtual textbooks for my courses online.

Special contexts such as stage combat, screen work, motion capture, devised physical theatre, or historical and cultural styles offer additional learning opportunities, demanding balance of technical and artistic elements. My stage combat background also influences my take on acting, in that I come from a paradigm where “really feeling it” without being fully in control is dangerous, and good partnering skills are essential.

Training – especially for undergrads – often requires elements of *via negativa*, removing blocks that prevent us from being our better and more natural selves on stage or screen. I think some of this parallels an ideal collegiate journey of self-discovery for any young adult learning to both grow and discover who they are. I'm not above sharing a ‘bag of tricks’ approach however, utilizing tools from various theatrical lineages. Creating a rewarding journey for talented students also requires coordination of curriculum, discussions around

what we'll cover in different levels of acting, or in movement, or other areas, is very helpful: the end goal is well-developed artists, not an assortment of skills and tricks. Ultimately, performance students need to understand narrative, learn to translate their understanding into justified, playable actions, and stay present, genuine, and responsive while doing so.

I want students to be inspired by the examples of others, but also to see how their personal combination of skills, experience, creativity, and physicality form a unique foundation for professional-caliber artistic work. This helps all feel welcome, and helps aspiring professionals see how to distinguish themselves in competitive markets. If I can help them feel safe bringing their whole being to what they do —life experience, imagination, intellect, and whole body— then they have a chance to do what all students should: to learn not just what we can teach them, but move on to how they can shape and contribute to the art form.