

M-SK 70610-Section 1: Authentic Performance

1 Credit

Thursdays, 4:00-4.50pm, 8 Fenway, Houston Hall

<u>Instructor Information</u>
INSTRUCTOR NAME: Aleksandr Polyakov, D.M.A. BERKLEE EMAIL ADDRESS: apolyakov@berklee.edu

Course Description

"There is no 'system'. There is nature".

This elective course is designed to bridge the worlds of acting and instrumental performance via the shared means of genuine expression and authentic delivery of the drama. This course draws inspiration from the pioneering work of Konstantin Stanislavsky and demonstrates how these concepts can be seamlessly integrated into the realm of music. As musicians, students will explore how adopting an actor's methodology can elevate their musical interpretation, infuse authenticity into their performance, and cultivate a fearless stage presence.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- integrate Stanislavski's teaching into their own daily work.
- be emotionally engaged with their work in the practice room or on stage.
- obtain advanced skills to help in overcoming performance anxiety
- engage the audience in a way that can improve the audience's perception of the piece that is being performed.
- reflect on their own artistry and professionalism through discussions and journaling.

Course Materials

Required Course Materials

Students are responsible for obtaining the following materials for this course:

- Study Guide: An Actor Prepares by Constantin Stanislavski (SuperSummary), ISBN-10: 1085851982
https://www.amazon.com/Study-Guide-Constantin-Stanislavski-SuperSummary/dp/1085851982/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3557ZRJJCOMLT&keywords=super+summary+study+guide+a

n+actor+prepares&qid=1706162632&prefix=super+summary+study+guide+an+actor+prepares%2Caps%2C107&sr=8-1

- Other articles, provided via email and/or posted on Canvas.

Recommended Course Materials

The following items are recommended, but not required:

- An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary, translated and edited by Jean Benedetti, ISBN-10 : 041542223X
<https://www.amazon.com/Actors-Work-Students-Diary/dp/041542223X>
- The Stanislavski System: The Professional Training of an Actor; Second Revised Edition, ISBN-10 : 9780140466607
https://www.amazon.com/Staniavski-System-Professional-Training-Handbooks/dp/0140466606/ref=asc_df_0140466606/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=312115090752&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=17624583028439588422&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmld=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9001994&hvtargid=pla-429573416042&psc=1&mcid=6638268cc3f138c6873d8fb621be1a28&gclid=Cj0KCQIAh8OtBhCQARIsAlkWb6_20kTFGC8d_q5IEvPOZ9Yj3wwSexqc-rEoSc8eLjoLaRARLYK188UaAuCIEALw_wcB

Additional Information About This Course

*"One cannot always create subconsciously and with inspiration.
No such genius exists in the world"*

There are two main areas that this course will delve into - thorough interpretation of a piece of music, and its genuine expressive presentation from the stage. This course is structured to provide a dynamic learning experience, combining traditional lectures with interactive, workshop/seminar-style group activities. Through these activities, you'll not only grasp the principles but also nurture your confidence and curiosity as an interpreter and performer.

Assessment Requirements and Grade Determination

- Attendance and active participation (15%)
 - 5 Reading Responses & 7 Journal Entries (15%)
 - 3 Short Answer Quizzes (10%)
 - 3 Interpretative Charts/Maps (20%)
 - 3 Performance Lab Workshops (15%)
 - Midterm Performance (20%)
 - Final Performance (5%)
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- Extra credit activities can be offered as well, and can substitute/replace a portion of the quiz grade or reading responses.

Attendance and active participation

- Being on time, present, and offering thoughtful comments throughout the course
- Giving your full attention during class discussions, exercises and the work of your colleagues
- Creating a safe space through appropriate, generous, and kind behavior
- Refraining from distracted or distracting behavior during class
- Refraining from using any electronic devices once class has begun, unless suggested by instructor
- Consistent lack of participation in discussions may lead to a withdrawal from the class
- Please see more details on attendance, tardiness and missing the class below (on page 4)

5 Reading Responses & 7 Journal Entries

- For some assigned reading, you will be asked to complete a brief reading response, in which you - Identify a quote from the reading and briefly explain why you chose that quote (include page number); Write a question for the class pertaining to the reading. Questions and quotes would arise organically. If it appears that a student is only ever reading a part of the chapter, they will be asked to redo the assignment.
- For each module of the course, you will be asked to complete 1-2 journal assignment, in which you - answer the question posed by your instructor; reflect on your work both in and outside of class. Entries must be a minimum of 3-5 good sentences in length

3 Short Answer Quizzes

Pass or Fail. No additional coursework is required, other than attentively observing and participating in class discussions and work sessions. Short tests, consisting of 5-10 questions, covering the topics and discussion of the most recent lectures.

3 Interpretative Charts/Maps

You will be asked to create Interpretation Chart, based on the program of your Spring Jury. You will receive an example of the chart along with grading rubric, 2 weeks before the first deadline. Some of the elements that must be included in the chart are - Given Circumstances, and Magic IF (which will be covered in the first module of the class).

3 Performance Lab Workshops

this is not an acting class, but every workshop will present an opportunity to develop a certain, meaning-oriented, mindset for personal practicing sessions, as well as appearances on the stage. You are encouraged to collaborate with each other, in small groups, comment on each other's progress, and provide any other kind of feedback that will contribute to mutual improvement and growth. Activities will include live-performance of the piece of music, including walking up to an imaginary stage, and addressing an audience. Same piece of music would can be performed with a number of different emotional expressions. Each workshop will focus on a particular element, and students will receive details about the upcoming workshop, at least one week in advance. Upon request, the number of workshops can be increased to 4.

Midterm Performance

Is based on (but not limited to) two elements of the system - Adaptations and Emotional Memory, focusing on performer's stage presence. Further details will be provided 2 weeks before the exam. You will be asked to perform a piece of music of your choice, under 2 different imaginary circumstances, or combination of them (imagining playing for studio class,

audition, juries, underprepared, overprepared, tired, ill, happy, sad, distracting audience, music critic).

Final Performance

Another opportunity to perform, summarizing everything that has been discussed and tried in class. With particular attention on Performers Creative State. Details of the assignment will be provided during Spring Break. Students will be asked to go on stage, carrying the character of the piece, verbally present one-two sentence summary of piece's Supertask (core emotion of the piece) and how or why this piece is important (to the audience, and/or to the performer), and performing the piece.

All your performances (at workshops, but at midterm and final in particular), while preferably need to be polished, the main area of feedback and grading will be your willingness to try, interest and ability to incorporate the skills that we have been working on in class.

Late Assignments

No grade shall be deducted for your first late submission of the assignment, as long as it is submitted within 48 hours from the end of the class. After the first late submission - no late assignments will be graded, unless, you communicate with the instructor before the class, explaining the reasoning behind your delay.

Email Communication

Students are expected to check their Berklee email and the course website frequently throughout the semester for course announcements and information.

Class Attendance and Participation

From instructor:

This is a performance forward course, and it is imperative that students attend in order to participate in exercises, as well as to serve as an attentive, responsive audience for fellow classmates.

Attendance is required, and you are expected to be on time to class; If you are more than 10 minutes late to class, you will be marked absent. If tardiness becomes chronic/repetitive - late arrivals will also affect your grade. If you have to miss the class or be late - you must communicate with the instructor in advance, at least an hour before the class (unless it is an emergency). Based on the nature of the class, and in order to maintain inclusive and equitable environment - I find it difficult to start the class without everyone present, as it creates gap and uneven learning opportunity for everyone who is enrolled.

Unexcused absences:

You are allowed ONE unexcused absence during the course of the semester. Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a third of a letter grade reduction of your final grade. If you miss three or more classes (excused or unexcused), you will be required to have a meeting with the instructor to discuss possible withdrawal from the course

It is YOUR responsibility to contact the instructor to find out what you missed in class, as making up the work may be necessary to continue on with future classes and assignments.

Excused absences:

Excused absences are granted for:

- Illness: for more than one absence due to illness, you must provide a valid doctor's note, that specifically covers all the days you missed. You must present your note on the day you return to class.
- School-sponsored activities: for example concerts or rehearsals (large ensemble). You must notify instructor about this - at least one week prior to your event.
- Religious Holidays: please provide written notification of date/event at least two weeks prior to the anticipated absence
- Sever Extenuating Circumstances: If there is a sever circumstance, personal emergency or personal condition that leads to your absence - I am open to discussing this with you. In order for me to consider elimination of an unexcused absence under these conditions, you must meet with me to discuss the circumstances of your absence.

Boston Conservatory at Berklee:

Attendance is required in all classes, private instruction, instrumental labs, and ensembles, beginning with the first scheduled meeting. Absences must be addressed directly with the course instructor to determine impact on student progress and/or overall grade.

Students who enroll in a class after the first meeting are responsible for all material they miss; however, for the purposes of any absence policies established by individual faculty or departments, students will not be considered absent from class meetings that occur before they enrolled (e.g. during add/drop).

Students must be officially enrolled in a class in order to attend the class. Attending a class or auditing a class without being officially enrolled is not permitted.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure they attend the correct class and class section. There are often multiple sections of a course. It is recommended that the student confirm with each instructor that the official class list contains the name of the student.

Course Outline - 2024 Spring

Module 0

Overview of the system

Week 1 (January 25)

- Introductions
- Syllabus and course overview
 - Assignments & Performance Lab Workshops
- Applicability of the "System" in instrumental performance
- Amateurism
- Various approaches to the art of performance

[No reading assignments]

Module 1

Magic If (Ch. 3)
Given Circumstances (Ch.3)
Imagination (Ch.4)
Belief and sense of truth (Ch.8)

Week 2 (February 1)

- Exploring 4 elements of the System
- Identifying underlying emotions and narratives
- Interpreting pieces of music as characters and stories

[Reading assignment - Summary Chapters 3, 4 and 8]

Week 3 (February 8) - QUIZ 1 (Due on Feb 13)

- Continuation of Week 2
- On "becoming the music"
 - Turning the composer's emotion & expression into your own being
 - Emotional connection with the music, using imagery and personal experiences
- "Believable logic" of emotional development throughout the piece

Week 4 (February 15) - WORKSHOP 1

Workshop #1 - Performing up to 5 minutes of music (excerpt is welcome), while providing a brief explanation (narrative) to the participants of the class the "Given Circumstances" of the piece (as Imagined by the performer), and "Magic If" that helps performer to assimilate with composer's expressive intentions.

Module 2

Emotion Memory (Ch.9)
Actor's adaptations (Ch.11)

Week 5 (February 22) - INTERPRETATIVE CHART (Emotional map) 1 (due Feb 29)

- The art of Experiencing emotion
 - Feeling/experiencing, not visual expression
 - Internal motivators, not external gestures
- Adapting one's body language and interpretation based on the external circumstances

[Reading assignment - summary chapter 9 and 11]

Week 6 (February 29) - WORKSHOP 2

- Continuation of discussion from week 5
- How does the memory of a lived experience (emotion) transforms and changes with time.
 - How to bring freshness to the piece after a number of performances

- Workshop objectives - conveying emotion of the piece as you walk on stage - assuming the identity of music; AND - applying different emotions to the same content (melody, theme, harmony, musical phrase, section).

- **Module 3**

Concentration and attention (*Ch.5*)
Muscular release (*Ch.6*)

Week 7 (March 7) - QUIZ 2 (Due on March 12)

- Body and performing on stage:
 - How to acquire genuine expressions for stage, in a practicing environment
 - Removing tensions - making every muscle available for musical expression
- Techniques for maintaining focus and being present during performances

[Reading assignment - Summary Chapters 5 and 6]

Week 8 (March 14) - Interpretative CHART 2 (Due on March 25)

- Overflow week (open discussions)
- Mid-semester check-in

- Discussing results of the quiz
- Clarifying midterm and final assignments
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--- Spring Break (March 21 - no class) ---

Week 9 (March 28) - >>> MIDTERM <<<

Midterm - is a performance on stage that will be recorded (of the same, or different piece/excerpt).

Each student will pick two imaginary conditions of a performance (performing at public concert - big venue, small venue; lesson, studio class, audition, juries, competition, while being sick, irritated, extremely happy or upset) and then present oneself (walking on stage, bowing, while conveying the emotion of the piece).

Each performer will receive feedback from the peers and instructor, at the time of the performance.

Each performer will receive a video recording for self-evaluation.

- **Module 4**

The Supertask, Throughaction (*Ch.15*)
Tempo-rhythm (*Ch.21*)
Logic and sequence (*Ch.22*)

Week 10 (April 4)

- Discussing the core emotion, mood, atmosphere, reason, purpose or the goal of a piece.
 - How this central element may affect our decisions on phrasing
- Finding the right tempo to truthfully express the emotions and atmosphere of the piece.

[Reading Assignment - Summary Chapters 15, 21, 22]

Week 11 (April 11) - WORKSHOP 3

- Continuation of discussion from week 10
- Workshop - practical application on the stage, of what was discussed on week 10

Week 12 (April 18)

- Overflow week
- Introduction to Module 5 - Performer's Creative Stage (*Chapter 16*)

• **Module 5**

Inner creative state (*Ch. 14*)

External creative state (*Ch.27*)

General creative state in performance (*Ch.28*)

Week 13 (April 25) - Interpretative CHART (Due on Apr 28), QUIZ 3 (Due on Apr 30)

- Discussion of how holistic approach to analysing the piece of music, its interpretation and expressive but genuine delivery of it (interpretation) to the audience allows performer to reach one's own subconsciousness and inspiration.
- Waiting for inspiration to happen vs. triggering one (using decoys) to occur when one needs it

[Reading assignment - Summary Chapters 14, 27, 28]

Week 14 (May 2)

- Discussing quiz results
- General discussions on Psycho-technique

Week 15 (May 9) - >>> FINAL <<<

Brief performance (up to 5 minutes) on stage, embodying all the elements of the system that were discussed, tried and practiced over the course of the semester. Each performer must provide One-Two sentence summary of the piece (its core emotion/mood atmosphere, or/and something that makes this piece relevant and important for the performer).

Important Dates

The [Boston Conservatory Academic Calendar](#) lists important dates, including holidays and designated exam periods. Students are responsible for reviewing this calendar and planning accordingly.

Berklee Student Policies and Services

Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

Diversity and inclusion are integral to the mission of Berklee simply because diversity and inclusion are integral to music, dance, and theater itself. Innovators from diverse backgrounds and cultures have studied here. An essential part of a Berklee education is gaining an appreciation of the rich variety and interdependence of the cultural traditions from which the creative fields they study originate.

We must be a community in which every member's voice is valued and respected. A diverse, inclusive work and learning environment is essential to maintaining our role as a leader in contemporary music, theater, and dance education. It is imperative that we take specific steps to attract and retain the widest array of talented artists and provide an environment that supports and nurtures their creative process. The fulfillment of our mission—to educate, train, and develop students to excel in their careers—will be demonstrated in their influence on the future of music, dance, and theater, and on the larger culture.

We view diversity holistically, understanding that the definition is constantly evolving. Our definition of diversity includes, but is not limited to, race, color, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, ethnicity, class, religion, disability, age, and sexual orientation. We also know that a diversity of ideas, approaches, disciplines, and learning, artistic, and musical styles are essential to inclusion and equity. The integration of myriad cultural values and perspectives into what we do at all levels, from teaching to decision-making, is critical.

Many challenges lie ahead in all areas. We believe that increased diversity will support our strategic objective of attracting the highest-quality students, faculty, and staff to Berklee. To accomplish this, we must create a welcoming and supportive multicultural atmosphere for all members of our community. This focus is not the work of any one individual or office—it is the work of everyone. In this spirit, we will encourage a campus-wide climate of respect, openness, and awareness that celebrates and values our diversity. To learn more about the Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, please visit berklee.edu/diversity.

Equity Statement

Berklee's equity and interim Title IX policies and processes prohibit acts of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. These policies are a fundamental part of a Berklee community where all can study, live, and work together in an environment of equal opportunity and inclusiveness.

Sexual misconduct includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault or harassment, domestic/dating violence, and stalking. Such acts undermine Berklee community values and

are strictly prohibited. The equity policy and process prohibits and addresses discrimination and harassment based on age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, mental illness, military/veteran status, national and ethnic origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, transgender status, or any other characteristic protected by law (collectively referred to as “protected characteristics”), whether that characteristic is actual or perceived.

The complete and current policy and process, as well as other important resources, are available at berklee.edu/equity.

Accessibility Resources and Necessary Accommodations:

It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please meet with me outside of class so we can explore potential options. Students with disabilities may also work with Accessibility Resources for Students to discuss a range of options for removing barriers in this course, including official accommodations. Please visit their website for contact and additional information: www.berklee.edu/accessibility-resources. If you have already been approved for accommodations through Accessibility Resources for Students, please meet with me privately so we can develop an implementation plan together.

Privacy:

In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, students must authorize contact between faculty members and their parents/guardians. Students will be notified via email and asked to reply in that format or in writing to grant this authorization if a parent/guardian contacts the instructor. For more information, see the Student Policy Handbook.

Support Services:

- Student Wellness: healthandwellness@berklee.edu or 617-747-6575
- Student Counseling Services: 617-747-2310
- Accessibility Resources: accessibilityresources@berklee.edu or 617-747-2387
- Berklee Career Center: careercenter@berklee.edu or 617-747-2246
- Berklee Writing Center and ESL Tutoring: writingcenter@berklee.edu
- Dean's Office for Student Advising and Success: success@berklee.edu or 617-747-2363

Berklee Academic Policies

Berklee Definition of a Credit Hour:

For lecture and discussion courses, students earn one course credit for every 15 class contact hours—one credit for one hour of class meeting time each week for 15 weeks. For lecture and discussion courses at the undergraduate level, there is also the expectation that one hour of class time per week requires two hours of outside-of-class work each week. For graduate courses, the expectation is that one hour of class time requires at least three hours of out-of-class study. For ensemble and lab work, where repetition, practice, and iterative learning

are key, students earn one hour of credit for every 30 hours of in-class time, or one credit for two contact hours each week for 15 weeks.

Class Attendance:

Attendance is required in all classes, private instruction, instrumental labs, and ensembles, beginning with the first scheduled meeting. Attendance policies vary, and students should refer to syllabi and/or their course instructors for attendance policies specific to their class. Absences must be addressed directly with the course instructor to determine impact on student progress and/or overall grade.

Students who enroll in a class after the first meeting are responsible for all material they miss; however, for the purposes of any absence policies established by individual faculty or departments, students will not be considered absent from class meetings that occur before they enrolled (e.g. during add/drop).

Students must be officially enrolled in a class in order to attend the class. Attending a class or auditing a class without being officially enrolled is not permitted.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure they attend the correct class and class section. There are often multiple sections of a course. It is recommended that the student confirm with each instructor that the official class list contains the name of the student.

Withdrawal Policy:

Students may withdraw from a course through the 10th week of classes in the fall or spring semester and, for undergraduates at Berklee's Boston campus, through the eighth week in the summer term. They can do so by submitting a Withdrawal from Courses form at berklee.edu/registrar/registration-forms. Withdrawal from a course is not allowed for graduate students during the six- or seven-week summer term or for undergraduates during the intensive summer semester in Valencia. Withdrawing from a course is the responsibility of the student. The instructor will not withdraw a student from the class for any reason (including absence) or submit the form for the student.

A grade of W will be issued for any particular course from which a student has withdrawn. Once the withdrawal deadline has passed, all registered students will receive a course grade based on the stated grading criteria. Students continue to be financially responsible for that course and are not eligible for a tuition refund or replacement course. Students should note that withdrawing from a class may affect their eligibility to receive scholarship, financial aid, veterans' benefits, and international student visa status. Undergraduate students are strongly advised to consult with their instructor, department chair, counselor or academic advisor, prior to withdrawing from a course.

GRADING CRITERIA		
Letter Grade	Equivalent Percentage	Numerical Value

A (excellent)	93–100	4.0
A-	90–92	3.70
B+	87–89	3.30
B (good)	83–86	3.0
B-	80–82	2.70
C+	77–79	2.30
C (satisfactory)	73–76	2.0
C-	70–72	1.70
D (poor)	60–69	1.00
F (failing)	0–59	0.00
W	Withdrew	0.00
NA	Not averaged	0.00
P	Passed	0.00
I	Incomplete (through request to instructor only; see the Student Policy Handbook)	0.00
NG	No grade submitted as of indicated date	0.00
Boston Conservatory does not rank its students		

Honesty in Academic Work

Berklee values integrity from all members of the community—students, teachers, and staff—across all areas of academic, scholarly, and professional work and practice: in the classroom; in the creation of compositions, arrangements, and choreographic works; in courses and course-related works and materials for course assignments, projects, and exams; including placement exams, credit by exam (CBX), and advanced placement credits; in extra-curricular work; and in the use of any and all information and music technology resources. Consequently, members of the Berklee community are expected to maintain high standards of honesty and practice throughout the many aspects of their life and study at Berklee.

The following definitions are provided for the information of the Berklee community and constitute notice of unacceptable academic behavior or scholarly and professional practice.

Academic work in this context means any and all work undertaken by a student while enrolled at Berklee, whether curricular, co-curricular, or extra-curricular. Dishonesty in academic, scholarly, or professional work, whether in the form of fraud, plagiarism, or cheating, is unacceptable at Berklee and subject to appropriate disciplinary procedures.

- Fraud is using identifiers (such as name, password, or ID) of other persons as one's own or submitting false information about oneself. Some examples include such infractions as concealing or misrepresenting one's identity, impersonating another individual, falsifying information on such documents as one's résumé or internship applications, misrepresenting oneself as acting on behalf of Berklee, or using the college's name, logo, or symbol without prior written permission.
- Plagiarism is defined as copying and/or misrepresenting work that has been done by another as one's own efforts, whether such misrepresentation has been accomplished with or without the permission of the other individual.
- Cheating is the use of prohibited assistance (whether in the nature of a person or a resource). This includes, but is not limited to, copying of another student's work, and giving or receiving of information or answers, whether verbally, in writing, or by any other means.

Policies around the use and incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) will vary, and students should refer to syllabi and/or their course instructors for policies specific to their class or to specific assignments. In the absence of a policy or direction from the instructor specifically permitting the use of AI, using AI to substantially complete coursework—either directly or with modification—and presenting it as original work constitutes a violation of academic integrity and will be treated analogously as receiving help from another person. Students with questions about the use of AI or academic integrity should check with their instructor before submitting work.

Refer to the following resources for further information on academic integrity:

- [Purdue Writing Lab](#)
- [International Center for Academic Integrity](#)
- Fordham University's [Standards of Academic Integrity](#)