TH 381 – Michael Chekhov Technique
3 Credits
Winter 2018

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Email: kshoffmann@millikin.edu  
Office: Shilling 210C
Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE PURPOSE (from Millikin University Bulletin):
Topic to be announced each year. Pre-requisite*: TH 142 Acting II
(must be a major or consent of instructor.)

DEPARTMENT LEARNING GOALS:
The five central goals of the School of Theatre and Dance are to engage in analytical learning, technical learning, collaborative learning, professional learning, and the pursuit of a life of meaning and value.

COURSE LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES:
1. To develop an understanding of the tools and principles of the Michael Chekhov Technique
2. To implement and apply these tools in the crafting of a character and to dramatic text
3. To enhance the ability to trust your impulses and encourage confidence in your physical and creative choices
4. To use the imagination as a means to access and unlock the potential of the body and vice versa

COURSE OVERVIEW:
This acting elective seeks to build upon your existing Stanislavski training by introducing you to the principles, concepts and tools of one of his brightest students and contemporaries, Michael Chekhov.

In exploring this psychophysical technique, the class will be highly experiential in nature and seek to cultivate and strengthen your imaginative powers in relation to the expressive actor’s instrument. We will examine the role of the imagination and the physical body as a part of the creative process as we apply Chekhovian tools and principles to The Crucible by Arthur Miller as our medium for exploration.

“I have a body. It is my instrument for conveying artistic ideas.”
- Michael Chekhov

CLASS MEETING TIMES:
This class is a Winter Immersion and will meet on weekdays from January 8-19. Each weekday, we will meet for two sessions.

10:00am-12:30pm  Morning Session
12:30pm-1:30pm  Lunch Break
1:30pm-4:00pm    Afternoon Session

CLASS GUIDELINES:
- This class relies heavily on practical experience. Treat it as a laboratory.
- Repetition is the growing power.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS:
- To the Actor by Michael Chekhov, ISBN: 978-0415258760
- The Crucible by Arthur Miller, ISBN: 978-0142437339
- Various handouts, readings and worksheets as assigned.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:
There are many wonderful books and articles about the Chekhov Technique. This is only a partial listing of some of my favorites. Should you have an interest in learning more, please set up an appointment with me. I love talking about this stuff!
- Michael Chekhov by Franc Chamberlain, ISBN: 978-0415258784

ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imagination Journal</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Crucible Quiz</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Actor Forum Posts</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monologue – The Crucible</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Scene</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

There is no final exam for this course.

GRADING SCALE AND METHOD:
You will receive a number of points for your completion of each assignment based on the following available points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
<th>100-93 A</th>
<th>92-90 A-</th>
<th>89-85 B+</th>
<th>84-80 B</th>
<th>79-75 B-</th>
<th>74-70 C+</th>
<th>69-65 C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69-65 C</td>
<td>64-60 C-</td>
<td>59-55 D+</td>
<td>54-50 D</td>
<td>49 -&gt; F</td>
<td>49 -&gt; F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CLASS POLICIES:

1. ATTIRE:
   a. Students must be aware of the physical nature of our work and wear appropriate clothing for physical exploration. Wear clothing that allows freedom of movement and makes you feel comfortable and confident. Long hair must be tied back. Please avoid dangling jewelry and heavy perfumes or colognes.

2. ATTENDANCE & PROMPTNESS REQUIREMENT:
a. Acting is highly experiential in nature. Learning comes from exploration and “doing.” Active participation in all class activities and discussions is required.

b. Regular attendance in class is an essential requirement. **Due to the condensed nature of our session, there will be no excused absences.** You must be present and ready to work on each day of class.

c. Each absence will result in the lowering of your final class grade by one “step” (example, A -> A-). Furthermore, it is your responsibility to make up any missed work due to an absence and be prepared for class on the day of your return.

d. Lateness is unacceptable. **If you arrive late to class, you will not be allowed in.**

e. Any officially excused absences must be cleared in advance with written documentation.

f. You must be present on all assigned performance days. Missed performances and performances for which you are not prepared (including trial performances) will result in a grade of zero (0) for that portion of the project.

3. ASSIGNMENTS:

   a. Unless special arrangements have been made with the instructor, all assignments must be turned in via hardcopy on paper. No electronic submissions will be allowed.

   b. All written work must be typed double-spaced, 1” margins and in a standard 12 point font. Hardcopy of the assignment is due at the beginning of the class period on the day assigned and **multiple sheets must be stapled**. It must exhibit correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.

4. PREPARATION & RUBRIC:

   - **“F” Level Work:**
     o Little to no understanding of material and the tools that have been introduced.
     o Text is regularly misspoken or paraphrased without a strong interpretation.
     o Memorization is lacking.

   - **“D” Level Work:**
     o In between a C and an F.

   - **“C” Level Work:** Average work. You have a general knowledge and understanding of what the text requires.
     o The tools introduced in class are being examined somewhat.
     o The performance engages the top layer of the text and character. Notes revolve around issues such as: Given Circumstances, Objective, Obstacle, Tactics, Relationship between characters, Stanislavski’s IF/imagination.
     o Lines and/or blocking are completely memorized.
     o You know what lines mean, and that understanding can be heard and seen.

   - **“B” Level Work:** Above average, solid, college-level work.
All work described above, plus…
- Fundamentals from Acting I and II are intact and ingrained in the performance.
- Pursuing an actable need (objective, goal, etc.) that complies with class criteria for a usable objective.
- Playing a variety of actions (tactics, verbs, doings, etc.) in effort to achieve above need.
- Emotionally meaningful relationship to scene partner(s)—real and imaginary—and given circumstances.
- Significant control and understanding of language including rhetoric.
- Lines and/or blocking are completely memorized verbatim.
- Teacher and student begin to collaborate as colleagues.

- “A” Level Work: Excellent professional-level work.
  - All work described above, plus…
  - Impulsive listening and responding
  - Such confidence and familiarity with the material that vital choices emerge based as impulsive response to the partner and the moment.
  - Balance of inspiration and form – a piece of crafted art that one would pay money to see or a piece worthy of a callback at a professional audition.
  - Audience is drawn into the work and forgets that they’re watching a scene or monologue. “Mistakes” are viewed as choices that still work and came about due to in-the-moment inspiration.
  - Notes given are complex in nature and deal with alteration of already strong choices.

5. CLASS ENVIRONMENT:
   a. Respect is a requirement for this course. In acting classes, as in many creative disciplines, respect for all class members and recognizing our responsibility for creating an atmosphere in which honest, open, creative work can be experienced is imperative. Because of the collaborative nature of our work, students must recognize the impact their behavior may have on the ability of other students to complete assignments successfully. Thank you for supporting each other’s growth.
   b. Whether working in class as an ensemble, in groups, pairs, or engaging in discussion, all participants in the class are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe environment in which everyone has the opportunity to explore and develop creative abilities without fear of judgment or reprisal.
   c. When working with other students outside of class, students are expected to extend this class ethos. Students need to be available for sufficient outside rehearsal to complete assignments, to be cooperative and flexible about arranging rehearsals and to be prompt and focused at rehearsal sessions. If you arrange a rehearsal meeting with a group or partner: be there, be prepared and be on time.

6. LATE WORK:
   a. No late work will be accepted. Period.
   b. Material due on the day of a prearranged, officially excused absence must be turned in early.
7. CELL PHONES, SOCIAL MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY:
   a. You must turn off all cell phones and computers at the beginning of class. If a student is found to be using a cell phone during class, or if a cell phone is audible during class, the student will be asked to leave the class and will receive an absence for that day.
   b. There will be no electronic recording of any kind (audio, video, photography) in our class.
   c. What happens in class stays in class. Under no circumstances are you to post or discuss class events on social media including (but not limited to) Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat, Vine or InstaGram. Approved electronic forums are designated by the instructor and viewable by class participants only.
   d. You are expected to take useful written notes in class, but you may not use your computer or smart phone for this or other purposes without consent.
   e. Computer failure, printer failure or lack of access to a printer are not a valid excuses for missing deadlines.

8. FOOD & DRINK:
   a. No food or drink, with the exception of bottled water, will be allowed in the classroom.

9. INCLUSIVITY & ACCOMMODATION:
   a. Every student in this classroom, regardless of background or identity categories, is a valued member of this group. I recognize that our individual differences can deepen our understanding of one another and the world around us, rather than divide us. In this class, people of all ethnicities, genders and gender identities, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities are strongly encouraged to share their rich array of perspectives and experiences. If you feel your differences isolate you in some way from the class, if you have a need of any specific accommodations, or if there are aspects of the instruction of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion, please speak with me privately about your concerns, without fear of reprisal, to discuss what we can do together to help you become an active and engaged member.
   b. In this classroom, you have the right to determine your own identity. This means that you have the right to be called by whatever name you wish, for that name to be pronounced correctly, and the right to be referred to by whatever pronoun you wish.

MILLIKIN’S POLICIES:
1. Disability Accommodation Policy:
   a. Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you should submit your documentation to
the Office of Student Success at Millikin University, currently located in Shilling 204.

2. Distance Delivery Components:
   a. Millikin University is committed to providing support for students using technology resources in pursuit of academic success. The Department of Information Technology resides in Shilling Hall and offers walk-in support.
   b. Please visit http://millikin.libguides.com/ed-tech for link, resources, and additional information that aid in the use of technology in distance/hybrid delivery and technology policies.

3. University Commitment to Student Success:
   a. Millikin University is committed to the success of all students. As such, the University provides a variety of services devoted to academic support of both undergraduate and graduate students, although some service provision may vary by degree level. The Office of Student Success serves as the hub for these services. Services include, but are not limited to, the following:
      1. Tutoring
      2. Supplemental Instruction
      3. Study Skill Assistance
      4. One on One Advising
      5. Major Change Assistance
      6. Development of Personalized Academic Growth and Success Plans
      7. Support of Exploratory Studies majors
      8. Support for students on Academic Probation or Progress Warning
      9. Accommodations for Students with special learning needs
     10. Online Resource Library
   b. In addition to the Office of Student Success, the University Writing and Math Centers offer students intensive support in these subject areas.
      i. Undergraduate students who are in need of additional academic assistance are also assigned a Student Development Advisor. These advisors work with academic advisors to ensure students receive the attention they need in all aspects of their University experience.

4. Sexual Misconduct
   i. Millikin University is committed to creating a campus culture of respect that is free from discrimination, sex discrimination, and sexual misconduct of all forms. Sexual misconduct is unlawful and will not be tolerated. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are subject to the same rights and support as other protected categories. If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual misconduct, or you know of an alleged incident of sexual misconduct, you can speak to someone
CONFIDENTIALLY by contacting Millikin University Counseling Services at 217-424-6360, and can file a report directly to any one of the following:

1. Diane Lane, Director, Human Resources/Title IX Coordinator at dlane@millikin.edu, 217-362-6416
2. Tammy Maxwell, Assistant Director, Human Resources/Title IX Coordinator for Employees at tmaxwell@millikin.edu, 217-362-6416
3. Raphella Prange, Dean of Student Development, Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Students at rpa@millikin.edu, 217-424-6395
4. Campus Conduct Hotline, an anonymous reporting line, at 866-943-5787.

5. Academic Honesty and Plagiarism
   a. The intellectual and moral integrity of an academic community depends upon an uncompromising commitment to honesty which guides the actions of all its members. Any disregard for this threatens the unrestricted and honest exchange of knowledge. The Faculty has the right and the responsibility to hold students to high ethical standards in conduct and in works performed, as befits a scholar at the university. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to:
      1. Cheating
      2. Collusion
      3. Electronic Dishonesty
      4. Grade Falsification
      5. Plagiarism
   b. Faculty members have the responsibility to investigate all suspected breaches of academic integrity that arise in their courses and shall have the authority to decide whether the student(s) has violated the Academic Integrity Policy. If it is determined that the violation occurred, the faculty member will decide the consequences, taking into account the severity and circumstances surrounding the violation, and will inform the student in writing, forwarding a copy of the letter to the Registrar and to the Dean of Student Development.
   c. Consequences to an academic integrity violation include, but are not limited to:
      a. A letter in the student’s academic file
      b. Failure on assignment(s)
      c. Failure in the course
      d. Issuance of an XF for the course
      e. Conduct hearing with Student Development
   d. If a student received an XF, this remains as a permanent grade and cannot be removed from the official transcript. Some programs and majors
have more explicit ethical standards, which supersede this Policy, and violation of which may result in dismissal from some programs or majors within the University.

The complete policy may be found at www.millikin.edu/handbook.

6. Disruptive Behavior Policy:
   a. Students who exhibit behaviors that are considered to obstruct or disrupt the course goals or learning environment are subject to student conduct action per the University Standards of Conduct. Behaviors that are considered disruptive include, but are not limited to: tardiness, sleeping, inappropriate use of mobile or electronic devices, use of language that is offensive or discriminatory, excessive interruption, and/or repeated violation of faculty or classroom expectations which are stated in the course syllabus. Students who exhibit such behavior may be dismissed from the class on a temporary basis and referred to Student Development.

7. Dropping a Course and University Withdrawal Policy:
   a. There is an add/drop deadline for each academic term. During the allowed period, students may elect to add or drop courses by completing the proper form and requesting a signature from the instructor or department chair as required. (Forms are available in the Registrar’s Office.) Faculty members reserve the right to permit dropping or adding courses after the set deadline. Courses dropped during the appropriate period result in a W on the student’s transcript. Courses dropped after this period will result in the earned grade at the time of drop.

   b. Students who leave the University during or at the end of the semester must report to the Registrar’s Office to complete the necessary procedures and forms. Students who withdraw from the University will receive a refund of charges assessed by the University through the refund schedule posted in the Academic Bulletin. After week six of any given semester, there is no refund. Students may also be involuntarily withdrawn if they engage or threaten to engage in behavior that poses a danger of causing physical harm to self or others. The Involuntary Withdrawal Policy may be found in the Student Handbook.

8. Course Evaluations:
   a. Millikin University utilizes online course evaluations that are available beginning in the last week of each course term. Students may log into their MyMillikin portal to complete course evaluations. Evaluations are considered an important part of the teaching environment and students should feel comfortable giving thoughtful, honest feedback without fear of retaliation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Making Contact, Ball Toss, Crossing the Threshold, Concentration, Awareness, Breath &amp; Inspiration, Spyback, Background Info, Assign Imagination Journal</td>
<td>Read TTA Foreword &amp; All Introductory Articles, Ch. 1 &amp; 2 Monologue Selection</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Ball Toss, Radiation/Receiving, Ideal Center, Tempo (Staccato/Legato), Making Contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>The Crucible Quiz, Staccato/Legato, Qualities of Movement, Four Brothers</td>
<td>Read The Crucible Quiz TTA Foreword &amp; All Introductory Articles, Ch. 1 &amp; 2 Forum Post</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Ball Toss, Expansion/Contraction, Energy &amp; Life Body</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Direction &amp; Polarity, Imagination &amp; Incorporation of Images</td>
<td>Read TTA Ch. 3 &amp; 4, Forum Post</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Atmosphere (Objective &amp; Subjective), Improvisation (Crucible)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Ball Toss, Gestures, Archetypal Gestures, Psychological Gestures</td>
<td>Read TTA Ch. 5 &amp; Appendix, Forum Post</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Staccato/Legato, Higher Ego (Creative State), Monologue Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1/12</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Centers (Thinking, Feeling, Willing)</td>
<td>Read TTA Ch. 6 &amp; 7, Forum Post</td>
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<td></td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Monologue Work</td>
<td>Collect Imagination Journals</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1/15</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Review, Archetypes</td>
<td>Read TTA Ch. 9, 10 &amp; 11, Forum Post</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Sensations &amp; Three Sisters</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>1/16</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Imaginary Centers &amp; Imaginary Body</td>
<td>Watch Network (on reserve at Library)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Monologue Work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>1/17</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Lab Play Day, Begin Open Scene work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Monologues (Show), Spyback, Qualities</td>
<td>Monologue Reflection due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th</td>
<td>1/18</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Flex day, Fantastic PG</td>
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<td>PM</td>
<td>Space, Review Psychological Gesture</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1/19</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Open Scene Improvisation, Centers</td>
<td>Collect Imagination Journals</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>PM</td>
<td>Open Scene (Show), Spyback and Review</td>
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SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT (for purposes of Immersion proposal)

Imagination Journal

INTRODUCTION:
Each of us is born with a powerful, active and accessible imagination. As we move from childhood into adulthood, our facility with this power tends to atrophy as the responsibilities and realities of “being an adult” set in. However, as artists, it is imperative that we begin to exercise this skill. This project is aimed at reacquainting yourself with your imagination and provides several ideas and prompts to guide your exploration.

ASSIGNMENT:
Each day, you will be doing a single prescribed imaginative exercise. These exercises are not tremendously time consuming. Shoot for approximately 15 minutes exploration. Try to work with a feeling of lightness and ease. Resist intellectualizing or being bogged down in the minutiae of each question. These prompts are largely suggestions to get you started.
Afterwards, you will record your thoughts, observations and experience in an electronic format on Moodle. There is no length requirement and this is an informal writing assignment. Write in the first person and write from your personal perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal Due Date</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1/9              | Go outside and pick up an object of nature. As you hold this in your hands, answer these questions:  
- Where did this come from?  
- What is it made out of?  
- Was it always this size?  
- Does this object contain inner movement? |
| 1/10             | Find a public place where you can view others undisturbed. Look at a person and imagine them:  
- Experiencing great emotional pain  
- Falling in love  
- Becoming a parent  
- Being betrayed by the person they loved the most  
- Fighting in combat  
- Being the victim of a heinous, violent crime  
- Contemplating suicide  
- Succumbing to addiction  
- Dying for what they believe in  
- Saving someone’s life |
| 1/11             | Pick up several objects from your home to work with. One at a time, pick up each object and imagine if it were a person, what type of character would it be? How would they look? Move? Speak? What might their personality be like? |
| 1/12             | Eat a meal as if a great tragedy has just happened. With each bite, imagine that you are ingesting pure sorrow. Repeat the process as though you had just won the lottery (extreme joy) and that with each bite, you are ingesting pure joy. |
| 1/13             | Go to Walmart, Target, CVS, Kroger, etc. Enter the store and move throughout the space as though you are floating and your feet cannot touch the floor. Be sure to play with levels, tempo and spatial relationship. If your imaginative reality shifts (i.e. the floor is now molten lava) then go with it! |
| 1/14             | Go for a walk through campus and look at the architecture. Reach out and get a sense of the shapes, lines, form, movements, weight and space of what you’re seeing within the architectural elements. Imagine what the building would be like if these were to shift or... |
change at all. What if it doubled in size? Or shrunk? How would this affect the overall building?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/15</td>
<td>At the end of the day, sit down and piece together the events of your day. Recall in detail those moments of transition that caused your daily trajectory to shift. Where were you at the time? What were you doing? How did you feel? Reconstruct the day as best as you can. Now, choose one of those moments of change and imagine that a different outcome resulted. Trace the path of this “new day” as the result of a change in a single moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/16</td>
<td>Listen to a piece of music you’ve never heard before several times. Transform it into a gesture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/17</td>
<td>Imagine a seed transforming into a tree. Watch the transformation happening slowly and don’t skip over the difficult parts. Patiently let your imagination show you how the metamorphosis takes place.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/18</td>
<td>Imagine a flower in as much details as possible, until you can practically touch it. Hold this image in your mind and perform simple takes (sit down, walk across the room, tie your shoe, sip your coffee, etc.) If the image dissipates, pause and renew. Return to your activity. Now being to speak. Any text will do. How does this affect your movement, posture and voice?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**GRADING:**

I will be collecting these twice during the course of our class. You will not be graded on the content of the journal entries. What is most important is that you are actively engaging in each activity and demonstrating good work ethic in completing the assignment.

For each entry completed, you will receive **2 points**. There are a total of 10 journal entries (this includes Saturday, January 13 and Sunday, January 14!) for a total of 20 points.

With regards to academic honesty, I urge you to work on the assignment daily as it is described and not cram having to fashion multiple journal entries the night a due date.