

The General Practice Program at Vermont Law School
& Northern Stage Present...

Improv for Advocates

Taught by Jim Maxwell & Eric Love
VLS Faculty Supervisor Gary Brooks

June 15 & 16, 2019
10:00am-4:00pm
Northern Stage

This is a 1 Credit (42.5 hours) Pass-Fail course. Evaluations will be based on the following curriculum requirements:

I. PRE-WORKSHOP READING MATERIALS

Antigone, Sophocles (3 Hours)

The western world's first enactment of a conflict between the needs of a civil society, the rationale for civic order, and the imperative of individual conscience, the passion in the heart.

Sanford Meisner On Acting, by Sanford Meisner & Dennis Longwell (25 Hours)

Sanford Meisner was one of the most influential acting teachers of the 20th Century. His technique continues today as the most widely adopted basis for the actor's ability to "live truthfully, which infers to do truthfully, under the imaginary circumstances of the play." We will explore in exercises and discussion what this entails as a definition and course of training for the actor.

II. IMPROV FOR ADVOCATES WORKSHOP (12 Hours)

This high-energy, full body workshop is lead by lawyer & Meisner acting teacher Jim Maxwell and Northern Stage's Director of Education Eric Love. Maxwell and Love will use acting warm-ups, Meisner exercises, and improv games to help advocates explore the relevance of the actor's practice to the lawyer's development of professional skills and to a widening/deepening of the lawyer's insight into the non-intellectual, non-analytical aspects of their practice. We will use the assigned readings to further our discussion of law and society, law and theater, and how lawyers participates in both. Participants must come with an open mind and willingness to play, but no prior acting experience is required.

III. 3 PAGE POST-WORKSHOP REFLECTIVE ESSAY (2.5 Hours)

This is an opportunity for students to reflect on their experience in the workshop and highlight how their new skills will influence their practice of law.

Improv for Advocates Workshop Day 1

June 15th from 10am-4pm

10:00a Group Introductions

10:15a Workshop Ground Rules

10:20a Physical & Vocal Acting Training

11:20a BREAK

11:30a Introduction to the Meisner technique

11:40a Meisner's basic technique: Doing, not Showing

12:30p LUNCH BREAK

1:00p Meisner \$100 Dollar Bill Exercise

1:45p Reflection discussion relating exercises to Meisner On Acting

1:55p Improv Games: Freeze, What Are You Doing?

2:30p "Keys" Listening Game

2:30p BREAK

2:45p 3:30p Antigone reading and discussion.

Exploration of civic vs. natural law.

4:00p End of Day 1

HOMEWORK

-Think about your Passion Story.

-Something that you care deeply about.

-Personal Story

-Policy

-A Favorite Memory

-A Description

Improv for Advocates Workshop Day 2

June 16th from 10am-4pm

10:00a Physical & Vocal Acting Training

10:50a BREAK

11:00a Passion Story Exercise

12:30a LUNCH BREAK

1:00p Mirroring/Repeating Vocal & Physical Exercise

2:00p BREAK

2:10p Viewpoints Movement

3:20p BREAK

3:30p Reflection & Discussion

4:00p End of Day 2

WRITE 3 PAGE POST-WORKSHOP REFLECTIVE ESSAY

Email to Jim Maxwell (jim@maxwelllawyer.com) and Eric Love (elove@northernstage.org) by 5p on Sunday, June 23rd.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

- To learn how to bring “who you are” to the demands of the situation: be it client interview, negotiation, or court appearance. Developing confidence in yourself as a presenter and advocate: What is it you care about? What inner resources do you have that you can bring to bear on the task at hand?
- To increase awareness of your physical resources: your body, your voice, how you “inhabit” yourself when you are interacting with others.
- To practice and understand what it means to proceed through a task on a moment-to-moment basis. You know the mountain you want to scale, by you proceed step by step.
- To increase ability to make effective decisions in rapidly evolving situations.
- To develop empathetic skills. Using what you observe and hear from the other person to understand that person’s situation or predicament. To listen and observe more closely and accurately.
- To increase ability and willingness to work in a group giving individual attention and support toward a shared goal.