

**University of Illinois at Chicago**  
**ACTG 494 – Special Topics**  
**PROFESSIONAL PRESENCE THROUGH IMPROVISATION**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**Fall Semester 2009**

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## INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 1:00 – 3:00 pm, Tuesday 5:00 – 6:00 pm

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Professional presence is a combination of verbal and non-verbal abilities that are recognized as a poised, authentic communication style, particularly in spontaneous or impromptu interactions. Businessmen and women can profit greatly from the training received by some of the world's experts in spontaneous, creative communication: improvisational theater actors. Using improvisational theater techniques taught in workshop exercises of graduating difficulty, this course creates a safe laboratory for students to experiment with the elements of their own professional presence. This is a "presentations course" in the sense that we will study how you present yourself in a variety of professional communication modes: [networking](#), [interviewing](#), [creative team leadership and impromptu speaking situations](#), like client interactions or expert panel discussions. The class will be 90% experiential workshop and debrief, with readings of relevant literature.

## READINGS (others may be added)

Short selections (can be read in library):

- a. Gladwell, Malcolm. "The Structure of Spontaneity." Chapter 4 in *Blink: the power of thinking without thinking*. New York: Little, Brown & Company, 2005, pp.111-117. ISBN: 0-316-17232-4
- b. Spolin, Viola. "Creative Experience." In *Improvisation for the Theater*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999, pp.3-17. ISBN: 081014008X.

Large portions used (should be purchased):

- c. Klaus, Peggy. *BRAG: The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn without Blowing It*. New York: Warner Business Books, 2003. ISBN: 0-446-53179-0.
- d. RoAne, Susan. *How to Work a Room, revised edition*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-06-123867-3.

HBR reprints available for purchase online at: <http://www.hbsp.harvard.edu>

- e. Nichols, Ralph G. and Leonard A. Stevens. "Listening to People." *Harvard Business Review* (September - October 1957): pp.112-119.
- f. Goleman, Daniel. "What Makes a Leader?" *Harvard Business Review* 82, no. 1 (January 1, 2004): pp.82-91.

## **HOMEWORK POLICIES**

FOR FULL CREDIT HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED, PROPERLY LABELED, TO THEIR RESPECTIVE LINKS UNDER THE ASSIGNMENTS LINK ON THE COURSE BLACKBOARD SITE **BY MIDNIGHT** (UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED) OF THE DUE DATE. LATE HOMEWORK WILL BE GIVEN 50% CREDIT FOR UP TO A WEEK LATE. **Exceptions to these policies will be made only upon prior approval by the instructor.**

PLEASE PUT YOUR NAME ON THE DOCUMENTS YOU SUBMIT!

## **CLASSROOM POLICIES**

### **Attendance**

Attendance is everything in this class. Since this is an experiential course, missed classes cannot be made up, so please plan on attending every class and plan to arrive on time.

### **Dress**

Casual dress with flat-heeled shoes will probably be most comfortable since we will be fairly active.

### **Laptops & Cell Phones**

Turn them off before coming to class.

### **UIC Email Forwarding**

Sometimes during the semester I will be sending the class email messages. It is essential that you receive these messages. If you use an email account other than your UIC account, forward your UIC account to your main account. This is easily done over the UIC homepage ACCC email link.

## UIC HONOR CODE

As a student in the College of Business Administration, you are subject to the following Honor Code:

As an academic community the College of Business Administration at the University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to providing an environment in which teaching, learning, research, and scholarship can flourish and in which all endeavors are guided by academic and professional integrity. All members of the college community – students, faculty, staff, and administrators – share the responsibility of insuring that high standards of integrity are upheld so that such an environment exists.

In pursuit of these high ideas and standards of academic life, as a student I hereby commit myself to respect and uphold the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) College of Business Administration Honor Code during my entire matriculation at UIC. I agree to maintain the highest moral and ethical standards in all academic and business endeavors and to conduct myself honorably as a responsible member of the college academic community. This includes the following:

- Not to seek unfair advantage over other students, including, but not limited to giving or receiving unauthorized aid during completion of academic requirements;
- To represent fact and self truthfully at all times;
- To respect the property and personal rights of all members of the academic community.

**Honor Code implications for ACTG 494** include, but are not limited to, the following:

- All assignments handed in must be your own work. Although you may discuss approaches to doing assignments with other students currently enrolled in the class, you must complete them individually. You may not obtain assistance from anyone not currently enrolled in the course.
- You may question the grading of any assignment, however, any alteration of a graded assignment that is then misrepresented as the original work will be considered a severe honor code violation, as will the claim that an assignment was handed in when it was not.

Sanctions for Honor Code violations range from failure on an assignment, to failure for the course, to expulsion from the university.

## GRADING & CLASS SCHEDULE

<b>Attendance &amp; Participation</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Weekly Homework</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Final Project</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

<i>SESSION</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>COVERAGE</i>
1	Tuesday 8/25	<p><b>Assignment due before first class:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the <b>Student Profile</b> emailed to you, upload it to Blackboard and bring a copy to class</li> <li>• Read the <b>excerpt from Blink</b>, by Malcolm Gladwell</li> </ul> <p><b>Topic: Introduction to Improvisation and what the heck does it have to do with business?</b></p>
2	9/1	
3	9/8	
4	9/15	
5	9/22	
6	9/29	
7	10/6	
8	10/13	<b>MIDTERM!</b>
9	10/20	
10	10/27	
11	11/3	
12	11/10	
13	11/17	
14	11/24	
15	12/1	
	12/8	<b>FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATION</b>