

ADV 4930, Fall 2018

Improv + Storytelling + Presentation Skills & Why They Matter

Instructors: Leah Johnston, Joe Ascaridis

Contact information: leahcjohnston@gmail.com

Dates and times of class: We will meet in person **October 5th – 7th** at the following times (with breaks, of course). Attendance at all three sessions is mandatory.

- Friday, October 5th: 6 PM to 9 PM
- Saturday, October 6th: 10 AM to 3 PM
- Sunday, October 7th: 10 AM to 1 PM

Location: AHA! Lab, Weimer Hall

Required work to be completed before October 5th:

- **Read the article, *Google Spent Years Studying Effective Teams. This Single Quality Contributed Most to Their Success*, here: <https://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/google-spent-years-studying-effective-teams-this-single-quality-contributed-most-to-their-success.html>**
- **Read the following chapters from *Improv Wisdom* (see email attachment):**
 - *“Say Yes,”* pages 27-34
 - *“Don’t Prepare,”* (even though we are asking you too) pages 35 – 44
 - *“Make Mistakes, Please,”* pages 103-113
- **“Say Yes,” *Improv Wisdom* *Do the Exercise on page 32 and write a journal entry expressing your thoughts on the experience. No length requirements, but be thoughtful in your writing. Bring this with you to the workshop.***

About the workshop:

This workshop is designed to incorporate improvisational skills and creative thinking processes to help successfully navigate the “creative” corporate environment. We will be highlighting areas of improvisation and story-telling/presentation that will consistently create a positive working environment, and will be vital to a successful career, whether it be a media planner, an account manager, or on a creative team for an advertising or a variety of fields.

We will use interactive warm-ups and short-form improv games to understand and discuss how the rules of improv can apply to a corporate setting. We will touch on the following areas of improv that are universal to business and life;

- The power of “Yes, And”, and its value in a business setting.
- Establishing effective and supportive teams/ensembles.

- Using improv and storytelling skills to polish and expand presentation skills.
- Applying the rules of improvisation to life, both personal and professional.

About the instructors:

Leah Johnston ... How much time do you have? After graduating from Butler University with dual majors (and we won't say when), Leah has worked for several companies in various areas of marketing, events and advertising including Radio Disney, Time Out magazines and for the last seven years at Leo Burnett Chicago. But that's not all! In 2014, she decided to pursue a new challenge and returned to school to study Nutrition & Dietetics. Leah is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist working in the field of research at Rush University Medical Center (and still at Leo Burnett).

Leah has been singing, acting, and performing on stage since high school. She studied improv comedy at Second City and iO theaters in Chicago. She regularly performs long-form improv at venues across Chicago and comedy festivals across the U.S. with her all-lady team, SKORT.

Joe Ascaridis has been professionally acting since childhood. He has been a SAG/AFTRA union member since 1991 (Yes. Well before you were born). He has had the honor of working with some amazingly talented artists in the Chicago theatre including Jane Lynch, Austin Pendleton, John Hoogenaker, and Eric Simonson. Joe has over 10 years of improvisation experience, including performances on The Second City ETC stage, and at iO Chicago. Joe performs weekly, and coaches an improv team at The Comedy Clubhouse in Chicago. Joe can "toot his own horn" with the very best of them... Very long-winded individual... But I digress.

Learning objectives:

- To have the qualities of a supportive teammate.
- To think without judgements or filters to find inspired connections.
- To understand the rules of improvisation.
- To acquire the extra improv tools that will help to have a successful career.
- To think creatively, and bring your gifts to a group or corporate setting.

Grading:

1. Do the assignments with thoughtfulness. Show up. Put your phone away. Participate. Be present. Be positive. Leave insecurities and judgements at the door. Most importantly, have fun! Do these things and congrats, you will get a top-notch grade.
2. Don't do these things and your grade will be lower. And seriously, keep your phone in your bag. There will be breaks to check it.

Grading scale:

A 100-93%	C 76-73%
A- 92-90%	C- 72-70%
B+ 89-87%	D+ 69-67%
B 86-83%	D 66-63%
B- 82-80%	D- 62-60%

C+ 79-77%

Assignments:

- See above. Pre-work is due in class on Friday, October 5th.

Class participation:

We'll move quickly in class so there won't be time to zone out. Please keep multitasking to a minimum. Join the conversation as life is a team sport. Participate fully in group, class work and discussions. Be open to possibility and sharing who you are in front of others, even when it means being vulnerable.

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities:

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct:

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>