

Carol Gray

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Teaching Interests:

Acting (beginning through advanced)
Ensemble-based and site-specific performance
Text and performance (Chekhov, Ibsen, Shakespeare, contemporary works)

Education

University of Michigan School of Public Health / MPH

2012-2014, ANN ARBOR

Health Behavior & Health Education

University of Michigan Residential College / BA

2000-2004, ANN ARBOR

German Language & Literature, Text-to-Performance (Drama)

Theater & Teaching Experience

University of Michigan Residential College / Lecturer I

2019 - PRESENT, ANN ARBOR

Design and co-teach courses integrating performance practice, textual analysis, and site-specific staging. Lead students in scene study, ensemble-based exercises, and performance projects emphasizing language, physicality, and spatial awareness. Mentor undergraduate actors through rehearsal and performance, emphasizing ensemble collaboration and text-based character development.

Courses Taught:

RCDRAMA 282: Fundamentals of Acting

RCDRAMA 485: Drama Lab

RCHUMS 483: Shakespeare in the Arb

Shakespeare in the Arb / Director

2001 - PRESENT, ANN ARBOR

Direct student and community actors in text-based rehearsal processes emphasizing language, action, and ensemble dynamics. Lead script analysis and adaptation for outdoor, site-specific performance. Mentor undergraduate performers through rehearsal and performance.

Additional Employment Experience

Michigan Social Health Interventions to Eliminate Disparities (MSHIELD) / Program Manager

2021 - 2025, ANN ARBOR

Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center (Detroit URC) / Center Manager

2015 - 2021, ANN ARBOR

Teaching Statement

My teaching practice is grounded in the belief that acting is both an analytical and embodied discipline: a rigorous engagement with language, structure, and circumstance, brought to life through the body, voice, and imagination in relationship to others. I approach the classroom as a collaborative studio where students develop practical skills, deepen their interpretive capacities, and learn to work as members of an ensemble.

In introductory acting courses, my primary goal is to equip students with a clear, usable process for approaching a text. I guide them in breaking down scripts into playable actions, identifying objectives and obstacles, and making specific, intentional choices grounded in given circumstances. Because many students in a liberal arts context are new to performance, exercises are structured to build confidence while reinforcing repeatable technique. Voice and movement work, monologues, and scene study are integrated to help students connect intellectual analysis with physical and vocal expression. In upper-level courses, I ask students to engage more deeply with the historical and aesthetic contexts of dramatic literature while continuing to develop their performance practice.

My pedagogical approach has been deeply shaped by my work as a co-director of Shakespeare in the Arb, where performance is created in dynamic relationship to environment and audience. This experience informs my emphasis on spatial awareness, tempo, and ensemble responsiveness. I invite students to consider how staging, movement, and proximity influence storytelling, and how actors can remain present and adaptable within shifting performance conditions.

Across all of my teaching, I am committed to fostering an inclusive and responsive classroom environment. My background in facilitation and community-based work has shaped my ability to support a wide range of learners, encourage active listening, and navigate complex group dynamics. I strive to create a space where students feel both challenged and supported, and where diverse perspectives contribute to a richer collective process.

Ultimately, I aim to help students develop not only as performers, but as thoughtful, collaborative artists and individuals who can engage deeply with texts, work responsibly within an ensemble, and approach creative practice with curiosity, discipline, and care.