Professional
Presence

BA 420
Professor Morgan
Lord

Fall 2025

Professional Presence

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Together we'll be diving into...
- Goal-setting and getting to know our values
- Effective interview and presentation skills
- Building storytelling skills through vulnerability
- Increasing connection and belonging through play
- Improv history and Hull House connection

What is this course all about?
This course is for juniors and seniors who are looking to build confident leadership skills while making real connections and feeling like they truly belong--students often leave this course feeling like they've found community. Using improv and group activities, you'll get better at self-reflection, connecting with others, and boosting your confidence.

LEARNING GOALS

We'll focus on three big questions:
1. Who are you?
We'll explore what makes you, you—your goals, values, and experiences—and how these shape your voice through storytelling.

2. How do you show up?
We'll work on how to present yourself professionally, including interview preparation and communication skills, so you can connect with clarity and confidence.

3. How do you co-create with others?
Through improv exercises, you'll build skills in listening, adaptability, and collaboration. We'll explore the roots of improv at Hull House, where play helped foster community and belonging. A tour of the Hull House Museum and a class session in the Residents' Dining Hall will immerse us in the practices that once supported community-building among immigrant populations. It was here in the 1920s that Viola Spolin learned from Neva Boyd, whose work laid the foundation for Spolin's games, which we'll be exploring this semester.

Integration with Hull-House Materials

(Content adapted from original course syllabus by Hull-House educators to reflect how materials were used for in-class instruction and assignments)

TOPIC: HULL-HOUSE, IMPROV & CONNECTING THROUGH CONVERSATION	RELEVANT READINGS	RELATED IN-CLASS ACTIVITY
Three weeks of class will be dedicated to reading and discussing the topic alongside a tour of the Hull-House museum and a day of class spent doing improv games in the historic Residents' Dining Hall. Students will be encouraged to think about the role that Hull-House and improv can play in generating conversations that foster connections.	- *Improvisation for the Theater: A Handbook of Teaching and Directing Techniques*; *Theater Games for the Lone Actor*; *Theater Games for the Classroom: A Teacher's Handbook* by Viola Spolin - *From Neva Boyd to Viola Spolin: How Social Group Work in 1920s' Settlement Houses Defined Collective Creation in 1960s' Theatres* by Scott Proudfit - *I Came a Stranger: Stories of a Hull-House Girl* by Hilda Satt Polacheck - *A Theory of Play* by Neva Boyd	As part of the Hull-House and improv unit of class, students will spend a day familiarizing themselves with techniques and games that use improvisational methods. This will be a required activity and held in the historic Residents' Dining Hall of the Hull-House Museum.

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