ACTING PROGRAM IN THE MFA Acting program provides a range of resources and techniques for students to explore, helping each individual actor to grow and mature. The curriculum proceeds from a deep exploration of the text and takes students through both rigorous training and free improvisation.

Working primarily in laboratory situations, this search takes many forms, drawing upon traditions as varied as Commedia dell’Arte and the techniques of Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Brecht, Brook and Grotowski. It demands meticulous training of the voice, physical dexterity, a keen analytical mind, and a willingness to discover new approaches to acting.

Although all periods and styles of drama are examined, special attention is given to the classics, including Greek tragedy and comedy, Shakespeare, Molière, Chekhov, Beckett and Ionesco. The study of the past is intended to provide a foundation for a re-examination of the present, and as a starting point for creating a theatre of the future.

Ensemble work and collaboration are fundamental to the training, while constant individual attention is provided to monitor each student’s individual progress.

The training offered at Columbia University provides graduates with the skill set necessary to succeed in classical or experimental theatre, as well as in television, or film.
Fall Semester – Year 1:
Acting I
  Niky Wolcz
Acting Studio I (American Classics)
  Andrei Serban
Voice and Text I
  Andrea Haring
Acting Techniques
  Ulla Wolcz
Contemporary Scene Study
  James Calleri
Text Analysis
  Gregory Mosher
History of Performance
  Arnold Aronson

Spring Semester – Year 1:
Voice and Text II
  Andrea Haring
Acting II
  Niky Wolcz
Collaboration
  Anne Bogart
Acting Techniques
  Ulla Wolcz
Acting Studio II (Contemporary Plays)
  Andrei Serban
Viewpoints
  Kelly Maurer
Stage Combat
  Joe Travers

Additional Year 1 Requirements: include one production assignment and Collaboration Weekend Workshop.

Fall Semester – Year 2:
Acting III
  Niky Wolcz
Acting Studio III (Focus on Chekhov and Ibsen)
  Andrei Serban
Acting Techniques
  Ulla Wolcz
Voice and Shakespeare I
  Andrea Haring
Speech
  Susan Cameron
Visiting Artists
  Anne Bogart

Spring Semester – Year 2:
Voice and Shakespeare II
  Andrea Haring
Acting Studio IV (Focus on Shakespeare)
  Andrei Serban
Acting IV
  Niky Wolcz
Acting Techniques
  Ulla Wolcz
Acting for Camera
  James Calleri
Visiting Artists
  Anne Bogart

Year 3:
Acting Thesis Production: This full-scale production is presented by the third-year MFA acting class and is directed by a faculty member or guest director. Recent directors have included Tyne Rafaeli, Ken Rus Schmoll, Brian Kulick, Osheen Jones, Jesse Berger, Karin Coonrod, Yurii Kordonskiy, Kristin Linklater, Diane Paulus, and Andrei Serban. There is no written thesis required to supplement this project.