

Nick Cutelli

(312) 613-4969

Theatre Educator | Director | Improv Specialist

NickCutelli@gmail.com

Results-driven theatre educator with over two decades of experience, uniquely blending professional directing and Spolin-Close improv methodologies with academic rigor. I specialize in developing educational programs that integrate industry insights, fostering inclusive, ensemble-driven storytelling, and preparing students for immediate success in the performing arts.

EXPERIENCE

University of North Texas, Denton TX *Adjunct Theatre Professor* *May 2025 - Present*

Instruction on the subject of "Acting for the Camera." A course designed to prepare students that want to transition from the stage to the commercial/film/tv industry. The acting method applied to this course is the Spolin-Close method that focuses on creating strong original characters for the screen which is becoming an industry standard.

- Designed and delivered a comprehensive "Acting for the Camera" curriculum, preparing students for diverse film, television, and commercial media opportunities.
- Instructed and mentored students in advanced on-camera acting techniques, screenplay analysis, and industry-standard audition practices, including cold reads and taped submissions.
- Cultivated student confidence and expanded emotional and acting range through focused work on improvisation, character development, and camera technique.
- Guided students in mastering essential camera and industry terminology, on-set protocol, and effective interaction with film directors.

North Central Texas College, Denton TX *Adjunct Theatre Professor* *August 2025 - Present*

Teach an asynchronous, fully online Theatre Appreciation course that introduces students to the history, literature, and cultural significance of theatre as a collaborative art form. My teaching philosophy centers on making theatre accessible, fostering empathy, and encouraging students to see themselves as active participants in the cultural conversation.

- Design and deliver accessible, engaging course content through the university's learning management system
- Develop modules covering theatre history, dramatic structure, performance analysis, and the role of theatre in society
- Facilitate interactive online discussions that encourage critical thinking, creativity, and cultural awareness
- Provide timely, constructive feedback to support student growth and success
- Assess student learning through a combination of quizzes, essays, discussion boards, and reflective projects
- Adapt instructional strategies to meet the needs of a diverse student population, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility

Hilarity Theatre Improv, Denton TX *Founder- Artistic Director* *Oct 2024 - Present*

A nomadic improvisational and sketch comedy theatre dedicated to exploring the Spolin-Close Method through performance, education, and ensemble development. Hilarity Theatre produces mixed-format improv shows that integrate both short-form games and long-form scenic improvisation while fostering a collaborative and process-driven approach to comedy.

- Designed and directed improvisational and sketch comedy productions, integrating both structured and spontaneous performance techniques.
- Developed and facilitated workshops in improvisation, ensemble building, and sketch writing for performers at various skill levels.
- Cultivated and coached improv ensembles, guiding performers in the application of the Spolin-Close Method to strengthen storytelling and character work.
- Produced and directed original sketch revues, leading writers and performers through the creative and rehearsal process.
- Established a mobile theatre model, bringing accessible improv education and performances to diverse communities.

University of Idaho Theatre Department, Moscow ID *Teaching Assistant (Online)* May 2024 - Dec 2024

Teaching Graduate Assistant for the masters courses "Foundations of American Theatre" and Directing.

Foundations of American Theatre:

- Designed and implemented course curricula aligned with academic learning objectives and industry.
- Prepared discussion questions based on weekly readings to facilitate critical thinking and engagement.
- Managed online discussions via Canvas, on challenging plays with themes of racism, sexism, and classism.
- Delivered mini-lectures on key historical and theoretical aspects of American theatre, contributing to students' understanding of the material.
- Supported students in developing a strong historical and theoretical foundation for contemporary American plays, with special attention to significant movements and tropes in American theatre history.

Graduate-Level Directing:

- Assisted in lectures and developed discussion questions understanding directing methodologies.
- On-your-feet approach to directing, incorporating improv discovery, table work, and collaborative scene exploration.
- Supported the development of students' skills in play analysis, research, and conceptualization
- Encouraged a team-based, ensemble-driven mindset, allowing students to apply their learning to real-world directing assignments for public presentations.

North Texas Performing Arts , Southlake TX *Theatre Director* August 2023 - August 2024

- Developed and taught three undergraduate level courses. The Actor's Portfolio: A course focusing on the business aspects of acting, including resume building, audition techniques, and networking strategies. A Comedy of Ethics: A lecture class exploring the history and cultural evolution of comedic theatre, analyzing its impact on society through different eras. Long Form Improvisational Theatre: A practical course on the art of the improvised Harold, emphasizing creativity, collaboration, and performance skills.
- I lead the comprehensive management of our theatrical space. Additionally, I serve as the Creator and Artistic Director of the new Improv Theater Program at the North Texas Performing Arts Center. Within this role, I have developed a range of classes, workshops, shows, and house teams.
- Functioning as an Executive Producer and Show Runner for all theatrical productions hosted at our location, I oversee all aspects of management to ensure seamless execution. This includes hiring directors, choreographers, and music directors, as well as handling show budgeting and creating production schedules.
- Collaborating closely with the theatrical board, I spearhead efforts to identify fundraising opportunities and apply for grants.

SE Missouri State, Cape Girardeau MO *Guest Instructor (Online)* Jan 2023 - June 2023

Developed and taught an online master class designed to prepare college actors for professional careers by building their industry knowledge and marketing materials.

- Instructed students on creating a professional actor's portfolio, including headshots, resumes, and demo reels (acting, commercial, and character-specific).
- Guided students through the process of self-submission, agent submissions, and audition strategies to navigate the professional acting industry.
- Provided hands-on training in branding and marketing for actors, including website creation, social media presence, and promotional materials.
- Educated students on industry best practices, including avoiding scams, understanding contracts, and professional networking.
- Fostered a practical, career-focused approach to acting, ensuring students gained the tools to transition from academia to the professional entertainment industry.

WEHO TV NEWS, West Hollywood CA *On Camera Host* June 2017- Oct 2022

- Delivered engaging community, arts, and entertainment news segments for Emmy Award-winning local station.
- Combined improvisation and journalistic storytelling to connect with diverse audiences.
- Conducted interviews with community leaders and artists.
- Collaborated with producers to align content with audience engagement goals.
- Developed a confident, adaptable on-camera presence.
- Host Reel available upon request.

Actor, Writer, Director, Teacher Los Angeles CA *AEA // SAG-E* August 2004- Oct 2022

- Versatile professional actor in commercials, video games, and web series. Represented by Buchwald talent agency.
- Acting coach for reality TV stars transitioning to scripted work, focusing on character, scene study, and on-camera skills.
- Two-time Final Draft Big Break Quarterfinalist for screenwriting.
- Led actor portfolio workshops at top college theatre programs.

SCHOLARSHIP & RESEARCH

- Author, *Long-Form Improv: Mastering the Harold through Strong Characters*
A comprehensive guide to the Harold, focusing on character-driven improvisation and ensemble storytelling. Includes a structured workbook for ensembles, offering practical exercises for rehearsals and performances.
- Author, *Long-Form Improv: Mastering the Scene*
a practical guide to character-driven storytelling and ensemble performance
- Author, *Improv Show Builder: A Blueprint for Creating Engaging Shows for Any Audience*
A Blueprint for Creating Engaging Shows for Any Audience, a practical guide to producing, hosting, and customizing improv shows for any crowd
- Author, *Actor on a Budget: The Nuts and Bolts of Creating Your Actor Portfolio for Next to Nothing*
A step-by-step guide helping actors build their professional materials, market themselves, and navigate the entertainment industry.

COURSES DEVELOPED

- Comedy of Ethics: Examines the evolution of comedic theatre and its relationship to society, exploring how humor has shaped and reflected cultural norms throughout history. Connects historical comedic works to modern ethical dilemmas, analyzing the responsibility of comedy in today's world.
- The History of Improv Theatre: A comprehensive study of improvisational theatre from its origins in Commedia dell'arte through the modern Chicago improv movement. Explores key figures, movements, and theories that have shaped improvisational performance, including The Second City, IO, and long-form structures.
- Spolin-Close Method: Improvisation for Acting: A performance-based course utilizing the improv games and theories of Viola Spolin and Del Close to train actors in improvisational techniques for character development. Focuses on helping actors tap into their subconscious to create strong character points of view, using improvisation as a modern acting methodology.
- Introduction to Improv: Foundational improv course covering fundamental principles such as **Yes, And**, active listening, and group collaboration. Students develop confidence in spontaneous performance while enhancing creativity and teamwork skills.
- The Improvised Harold: Advanced improv course focused on long-form improvisation, specifically the Harold structure. Students learn how to connect scenes, build thematic narratives, and create compelling comedic and dramatic performances through improv.
- Musical Long Form Improv: Teaches improvisers how to create spontaneous songs and musical numbers within an improvised performance. Covers song structure, lyrical storytelling, and collaboration between actors and musicians.
- Actors Portfolio: Teaches actors how to build professional materials that showcase a range of acting skills, including headshots, resumes, cover letters, and video reels. Students will also explore the business aspects of an acting career, with an emphasis on creating a strong, marketable identity. Through practical exercises and feedback, students will develop the tools they need to confidently present themselves in the competitive entertainment industry.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Actors' Equity Association (AEA)
- Screen Actors Guild - Eligible (SAG)

EDUCATION

University of Idaho -	Master of Fine Arts	Theatre	Jan 2023 - Dec 2024
S.E. Missouri State -	Bachelors of Fine Arts	Acting/Directing	Aug 2002 - May 2006