



Policies and FAQs

Section 1: FAQs

How can I register for classes?

You may register for classes online, over the phone, or in person. Payment for the class is due at the time of registration, either in the form of an automatic payment plan or payment in full. All registrations are subject to a handling fee.

What are my payment options?

Online purchases must be completed with a credit or debit card. When registering online, you will have the option to pay in full, or you may choose to participate in the Online Deferment Plan. Participating in the Online Deferment Plan sets up an automatic payment plan for your class with equal charges being made monthly until the end of the class. The first installment is due at registration. Otherwise, you will be charged for the full amount of the class at the time of registration.

When registering on the phone or in person, you may pay in full with a credit or debit card, or you may set up a Deferment Plan with your credit or debit card via phone. If your balance is not paid off by the last day of the class, your card will automatically be charged for the remaining balance. If your card is declined, you will be charged a \$10 processing fee. All payment plans require an initial payment installment at the time of registration and a credit card number on file for future payments.

If you prefer to pay with cash or check, you may register over the phone or enroll in person at the Box Office. In this case, payment in full must be received within 72 hours of registration to reserve your space in the class. If we have not received payment in full in that timeframe, your registration will be cancelled and your space in the class will be released.

If you have a balance on your account from a past class or purchase, you will not be able to register for or attend a new class until your balance has been paid in full.

Are there any registration discounts available for classes?

We offer several discounts that vary depending on the program or class. Please see the class description webpage for discount details.

What happens after I have completed my registration?

At least one week before the class begins, you will receive a Welcome Email with information such as location, Teaching Artist information, and other details about the class.

Cancellation and Transfer Policy:

You may only withdraw from a class up until week 2 of the class. There will be no refunds or transfers after week 2 of a class. If you would like to withdraw or cancel your registration for a class within this two week window, there will be a \$40 Cancellation Fee and all other monies will be refunded. If you are unable to attend your classes and wish to transfer your registration to



the next quarter, there will be a \$25 Transfer Fee. Transfers only apply to the next subsequent quarter (or the next quarter the same class is offered) and must be requested by the end of week 2 of the class you are registered for. If enrollment for a specific class does not reach the required minimum for that class, American Stage will cancel the class and fully refund any previously enrolled students.

Section 2: Standards of Conduct

Class Conduct Policy:

We believe a safe environment is essential so students can freely play and explore this art form. It is our priority to provide a physically and emotionally safe educational and artistic environment in which students and performers and instructors/directors can build trust. We expect all involved to demonstrate respect for another because it is essential for any collaboration. American Stage reserves the right to remove a student, performer, director, or teacher from class or program if they demonstrate conduct that we deem physically or emotionally disruptive or harmful to others.

Conduct that may result in removal or suspension includes, but is not limited to:

- A pattern of verbal disruptions
- Discriminatory language or behavior
- Sexual harassment (see Sexual Harassment Policy below) in or out of the classroom/rehearsal room
- Repeated disregard of the teacher or director's directives in class or rehearsal
- Repeated disregard of a student or performer's support needs/requests
- Physical misconduct or abuse
- Verbal or emotional abuse or bullying
- Physical or verbal threats
- Repeated or excessive tardiness or absence
- Use of alcohol or drugs in the classroom/rehearsal room
- Personal relationships that disrupt the culture or dynamic of the ensemble/class
- Expressed unwanted communication outside of the class or rehearsal room

If the Conduct Policy is being broken among your class or cast mates (in or out of the class or rehearsal room), and you are concerned, please communicate with either your instructor or the Director of Education. See contact information at the end of this document.

Discipline Policy Immediate Dismissal or Expulsion

If at any point during class or rehearsal, the instructor/director feels that a student or performer is engaging in behavior which is threatening, dangerous and/or highly disruptive to the classroom ensemble, the instructor/director may require that the student leave the room for the remainder of that day's class or rehearsal. Students/performers dismissed in this manner may not return to their regular class/rehearsal until they have spoken with the Director of Education. Behavior which would result in immediate dismissal includes, but is not limited to, threats or acts



of violence, inebriation and/or severe impairment due to use of drugs and/or other controlled substances, violation of the Anti-Harassment and/or Civility policies or other actions which are disruptive to the work, in the discretion of AS. If behavior is deemed excessively disruptive or dangerous to the AS environment, AS reserves the right to permanently expel a student or performer from AS as well as the extended AS/SPC property.

Warnings

Students or performers who display behavior which an instructor/director deems to be detrimental to the progress of their ensemble may be issued a warning. The instructor gives the warning verbally and then notifies the AS office. If a student receives more than one warning for similar issues, the Program Head will be notified and appropriate action will be taken. Depending on the circumstances, students may be required to transfer classes, repeat a term, take a leave of absence from AS, or to leave AS permanently. Examples of conduct considered detrimental to the progress of the ensemble include, but are not limited to, the above Class Conduct Policy.

Civility

By their very nature, theatre, improv theater and comedy are artistic pursuits in which the boundaries of what is deemed socially “appropriate” and/or politically correct are often blurred and subject to interpretation. Words and/or conduct that offend one person may have no effect on another. AS does not endeavor to shield students or performers from ideas and/or behavior that they may find unwelcome, disagreeable or even offensive; indeed, the free exchange of ideas between students and their instructor(s) – even those that some may find objectionable – is vital to the creative process underlying great improv theater. As such, students should approach their class work with an open mind, and take into the account the diversity of viewpoints, beliefs and backgrounds that make the programs a rich educational and artistic experience. By the same token, students should exercise good judgment when participating in activities, and abide by the Class Conduct Policy above. As a general rule, the AS will not intervene to enforce social standards of civility. If, however, you feel that certain conduct – whether by an instructor or a student – has overstepped the bounds of what is acceptable even in an improv theater/comedy setting, you may decline to participate and report the behavior to the Director of Education. AS will investigate the matter and address the issue, as needed. There will be no retaliation against any student who in good faith raises a concern, reports an incident and/or participates in an investigation under this policy. Any student who believes that he or she has been retaliated against in any manner should report it immediately to the Director of Education.

Anti-Harassment Policy

AS recognizes the right of every employee and volunteer to be able to attend work and to perform their duties without being subjected to any form of harassment. It is the obligation and responsibility of every employee and volunteer to ensure that the workplace is free from harassment. It is the policy of American Stage to prohibit intentional and unintentional harassment of any individual by another person on the basis of any protected classification including, but not limited to, race, creed, color, religion, sex,



marital status, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, gender identity, alienage or national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, physical or mental disability, veteran or military status, genetic information, arrest record, pregnancy or any other applicable legally protected category. This policy also extends to behaviors that may constitute bullying in the workplace that are not based on a protected category. Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, verbal abuse; threatening, intimidating, or humiliating behaviors; work interference – sabotage – that prevents work from being done; or some combination of the above. The purpose of this policy is not to regulate employees' personal morality, but to ensure that in the workplace, no one harasses another individual. The prohibition against harassment applies to employees at every level of the AS including upper management personnel. It is also AS's policy to prohibit non-employees, such as students, customers or vendors.

AS Tips for harassment/bullying:

If you are being bullied or harassed, whether you are a student/performer, instructor/coach:

- Calmly ask the bully to stop.
- If speaking up seems too hard or not safe, walk away and stay away.
- Stay near other people. Most bullying happens one on one.
- Tell your instructor or the Director of Education, so we can help you or other who might be affected now or in the future.

Sexual Harassment

AS is fully committed to its obligation to eliminate sexual harassment in the its programs and activities.

Sexual harassment means any unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favors, or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated, and where that reaction is reasonable in the circumstances. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- staring or leering
- unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against you or unwelcome touching
- suggestive comments or jokes
- insults or taunts of a sexual nature
- intrusive questions or statements about your private life
- displaying posters, magazines or screen savers of a sexual nature
- sending sexually explicit emails or text messages
- inappropriate advances on social networking sites
- accessing sexually explicit internet sites
- requests for sex or repeated unwanted requests to go out on dates
- behavior that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications



Behavior that is based on mutual attraction, friendship and respect is not sexual harassment. In addition, sexual innuendo or suggestive comments, gestures or jokes made in the course of a class exercise or performance may not be considered impermissible sexual harassment, if they serve an educational and/or artistic purpose.

Please note that due to the unique nature of the improv theater/comedy setting, a person's subjective belief that behavior is offensive, intimidating or hostile does not necessarily render that behavior harassment under this policy. Rather, the behavior must be objectively unreasonable in light of the surrounding circumstances and context. Such expression will not constitute impermissible harassment unless (in addition to satisfying the above definitions) it is targeted at a specific person or persons, is abusive and/or serves no educational purpose.

Complaint Procedure

Any student who experiences or observes harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, whether from a fellow student or a faculty member, should discuss the problem with the Director of Education and, if desired, request that she speak informally to the person complained about. No one at AS – whether a faculty member or a student – may reprimand, retaliate or discriminate against an individual for raising a concern, making a complaint and/or participating in an investigation under this policy. Any individual who believes that he or she has been retaliated against in any manner should report the matter to the Director of Education or the Producing Artistic Director.

All concerns and complaints will be treated with confidentiality to the extent practicable without compromising the investigation and/or resolution of the matter, and will be investigated thoroughly and promptly. Where possible, AS will attempt to resolve the issue informally (for example, by speaking to the alleged harasser and/or counseling the parties). However, this does not preclude more formal corrective or disciplinary action.

Consensual Relationships Between Faculty and Students

It is against AS policy for students and instructors to enter and/or engage in romantic and/or sexual relationships with one another while the instructor is teaching the student in a class and/or supervising the student's work. Consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships between instructors and AS students not enrolled in a class the instructor is teaching, while not forbidden, generally are considered unwise and inappropriate. Please note that even where both parties have consented at the outset to a romantic and/or sexual involvement, such consent does not preclude a subsequent charge of sexual harassment against the instructor.

Romantic and/or sexual relationships existing between instructors and students prior to the start of a class must be disclosed by the individuals to the Director of Education.



Sexual Assault Policy

Sexual assault is a criminal act that violates the standards of our community and is unacceptable at AS. American Stage's Sexual Assault policy applies to students, instructors, staff, and visitors, as well as vendors, contractors and third parties. Sexual assault is defined as:

- Any intentional or knowing touching or fondling by an individual, either directly or through the clothing, of the genitals, breasts, thighs, or buttocks of the victim without the consent of the victim;
- Touching or fondling of an individual by the victim when the victim is forced to do so against his or her will; or
- Any nonconsensual acts involving sexual penetration of the sex organs, anus, or mouth.

Use of alcohol or drugs may impair an individual's capacity to consent freely and may render an individual incapable of giving consent.

Violence

AS maintains a zero-tolerance policy for violence. Acts or threats of physical violence which involve or affect AS faculty, students and staff or which occur on American Stage or St. Petersburg College property, will not be tolerated. Examples of prohibited threats or acts of violence include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hitting or shoving an individual
- Physically injuring another individual
- Threatening an individual or his/her family, friends, or property with harm, or otherwise engaging in behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury in another person
- Intentional destruction or threatening to destruct property
- Making/sending harassing or threatening phone calls, text messages, and emails
- Harassing surveillance or stalking
- Unauthorized possession or use of firearms or weapons

Every student is encouraged to report incidents of threats or acts of physical violence of which he/she is aware. The report should be made to the Director of Education or the Production Artistic Director. Please note that this policy does not apply to fictitious "threats" or simulated "acts" of violence made in the course of your work at AS.

Weapons

AS prohibits all persons who enter American Stage or St. Petersburg College property from carrying a handgun, firearm, knife, explosive, or other prohibited weapon of any kind regardless of whether the person is licensed to carry the weapon or not. The only exception to this policy will be police officers, security guards or other persons who have been given written consent by AS or SPC and/or are permitted by law to carry a weapon on the property. Violation of this policy is grounds for discipline, including immediate dismissal.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

The use, sale, manufacture, cultivation, distribution, dispensation, possession of illegal drugs or other unauthorized, intoxicating, or controlled substances while on AS/SPC property, or while otherwise engaged in AS activities, is strictly prohibited. The term "controlled substances" is



defined as any substances that are illegal or controlled by federal and/or state law, including lawful substances (such as prescription drugs) which have been improperly obtained and/or used in violation of their lawful prescription. Students and performers are prohibited from having any such illegal or unauthorized controlled substances in their systems while attending class and/or engaged in AS activities.

Alcohol consumption or illegal drug activity that impacts a student, performer, instructor, or director's participation in AS activities and/or threatens the reputation of AS will not be tolerated.

Alcohol consumption by AS employees, volunteers, students or guests who are under the age of 21 is strictly prohibited.

Those who violate AS's Drug and Alcohol policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including permanent expulsion from AS and/or referral for prosecution of criminal violations.

Student Whistleblower Policy

Students, performers, instructors, and directors must immediately report to the Director of Education or the Production Artistic Director any activity or conduct that they suspect is:

- Illegal, or a violation of any state or federal law and/or regulation; or
- A serious violation of AS policy and/or procedure, including the above stated policies regarding violence, use of drugs and/or alcohol and weapons; or
- Otherwise inappropriate and/or unethical.
- AS will not retaliate against any student as a result of his or her report of inappropriate conduct under this policy, or because he or she has refused to follow an illegal, inappropriate and/or unethical request.

Confidentiality

Reports of inappropriate conduct under the policy may be submitted on a confidential BASs by the student directly or may be submitted anonymously. AS will endeavor to investigate the reported conduct as discreetly as possible under the applicable circumstances. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an appropriate investigation.

Any student who believes he or she has been sexually assaulted, whether by a fellow student, faculty member or visitor, should report the incident to the Director of Education or the Producing Artistic Director. The student is also encouraged to report the incident to the police and seek medical care as soon as possible. No one at AS – whether a faculty member, performer, or a student – may reprimand, retaliate or discriminate against an individual for raising a concern, making a complaint and/or participating in an investigation under this policy. Any individual who believes that he or she has been retaliated against in any manner should report the matter to the Director of Education of the Production Artistic Director.

All concerns and complaints will be treated with confidentiality to the extent practicable without compromising the investigation and/or resolution of the matter, and will be investigated thoroughly and promptly. Depending on the severity of the incident and the individuals involved,



the AS may pursue the matter through internal disciplinary procedures without the cooperation of the victim. Under such circumstances, AS will inform the victim of its decision to proceed in this manner.

Handling of Reported Violations

Upon receipt of a report of inappropriate conduct under this policy, AS shall conduct a prompt and thorough investigation and appropriate corrective action will be taken, if/as warranted.

Open Door Policy

AS is committed to providing a safe, productive and fun educational environment for all students. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, concern or question can be addressed and discussed. Students who have a question, problem, suggestion and/or complaint should feel free to discuss the issue with the Director of Education. There will be no retaliation for raising a concern under this policy. Any issues raised or discussions held pursuant to AS's Open Door Policy will be treated with confidentiality unless the student agrees to include others in the discussion or an investigation into the matter is warranted, in which case, confidentiality will be maintained to the extent practicable without compromising the investigation.

Please note that AS's Student Whistleblower and Open Door policies do not apply to complaints of harassment or sexual assault. Students who wish to report an incident of harassment or sexual assault must follow the complaint procedures set forth in AS's Anti-Harassment and Sexual Assault policies.

Reporting Procedure

If a student feels comfortable in doing so, it is preferable to raise the issue with the person directly with a view to resolving the issue by discussion. The student should identify the harassing behavior, explain that the behavior is unwelcome and offensive and ask that the behavior stops.

Alternatively, or in addition, they may report the behavior to the Director of Education or the Producing Artistic Director (PAD). Once a report is made the organization has the right to determine how the report should be dealt with in accordance with its obligations and this policy. Additionally, students are encouraged to report conduct they believe may be prohibited harassment or that, if left unchecked, may rise to the level of prohibited harassment, even if they are not sure the conduct violates this policy. If the student is unable for any reason to contact the Dir of Education or the PAD, or if the student has not received a satisfactory response within five (5) business days after reporting any incident of what the employee perceives to be harassment, the employee may contact MBA's Human Resources Department at 727-563-1500 or toll free at 888-622-6460. You may also leave a message, with contact information, on the HR Hotline at 877-884-7700 or email HR@mbahro.com. Students choosing to leave a message on the HR hotline or to make contact via email to HR@mbahro.com anonymously, or identified at their discretion, are requested to provide as much of the following information as possible: the alleged harasser(s), alleged victim(s), and any witnesses; the date(s) of the alleged harassment; the location(s) of the alleged harassment; and a description of the alleged harassment.



AS encourages any student who believes they have been sexually assaulted to additionally contact the police as soon as possible.

Contact Information:

Please direct communication and requests surrounding these policies and procedures to one or both of the following AS employees:

- 1) Director of Education
Tiffany Ford. tford@americanstage.org, 727-823-1600 ext 201
- 2) Producing Artistic Director
Rajendra Ramoon Maharaj rmaharaj@americanstage.org, 727-823-1600

Failure to comply with these policies may result in action up to and including dismissal from AS programs and activities.

Section 3: Agreements

Hold Harmless Policy

By registering in an American Stage Improv class, I agree to hold American Stage Theatre Company and St. Petersburg College harmless from any and all claims, loss or damage to my personal property, liabilities and costs, as a result of my participation in classes and performances, including travel to and from, or any events incidental to classes and performances.

Photo Release Policy:

Students are requested to sign a Photo Release at the beginning of each quarter of classes. This optional Photo Release gives American Stage permission to use a photo of a student taken either during class or during a performance for promotional purposes. Student names will not be published by American Stage.