What is an actor? Or, even more sharply, who is the actor? This is a question that has continually troubled Western thinking from the classical age of Greece to our own days. Why is this question so troubling? Precisely because the actor seems to be ungraspable, for s/he can be ANYONE, any possible identity, a king, a beggar, a businesswoman, etc, and as a consequence seems to be NO ONE, or no one specific identity. What is the real identity of the actor, how do we know if they act or don't act at any certain moment, telling the truth or pretending? This class has several aims in relation to these questions: 1) to trace a philosophical and theoretical history of the question of the actor, trying to show that through this history we can gain access to some of the most fundamental problems that have occupied Western thought. 2) to engage with some of the fundamental schools of thought regarding the PRACTICE of acting, such as Stanislavski, method acting, etc, learning through them what is involved in the actual activity of acting. 3) to examine several case studies of important actors, such as Laurence Olivier, Katharine Hepburn, Marilyn Monroe, or Johnny Depp. And 4) to ask what is the difference in the relation to acting that different media introduce? Thus, what is the difference between the actor in theater, in film, and in television?