**THEATRE DEPARTMENT**

**Course Title:** **Acting Techniques I**

**Prerequisite**: **None**

**Grade level: 9-12**

**Course Description**

The Acting Techniques I class uses a variety of theatre exercises, techniques and assignments that are based on Constantin Stanislavsky’s System of Acting. Students are asked to reach deep inside themselves to explore what is perhaps the most difficult question an actor can ask himself on stage; “Who am I?” Students are taught to make strong and believable choices and to recognize the difference between indicating and truly living on stage. Students are also encouraged to create a safe environment in order to take risks and explore. Emphasis is placed on moment-to-moment work and the ability to concentrate on both one’s individual work and the work of one’s peers. Students write and create an ensemble piece entitled *Moments from Class*. With the help of a director, students stage exercises into a performance collage. Students learn how to play an objective, break down an objective in active actions, create obstacles, strengthen their focus and concentration skills, and follow specific stage directions. Weekly assignments are given that contain both a written and performance component.

**Essential Questions**

Who Am I?

What makes me unique?

How do I create two minutes of believability on the stage?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Understand what using yourself means on the stage.
* Learn to take risks.
* Work as an ensemble.

**Course Title:** **Acting Techniques II**

**Prerequisite: Acting Techniques I**

**Grade level:** **9-12**

**Course Description**

Acting Techniques II is a course for beginning and intermediate acting students who are ready for rigorous, practical acting training. Through class exercises, discussions, and readings from texts including: Great Acting Teachers and Their Methods, The Sanford Meisner Approach, On The Technique of Acting, Respect for Acting and various others, students will develop a basic understanding of the Stanislavski approach and its terminology, and be introduced to the techniques of other acting master teachers of the 20th century. We will explore the theatre structures, conventions, and audiences which led to the development of modern acting technique. We will cultivate a trustworthy and supportive Ensemble to establish a safe place for artistic risk-taking so that each student is free to explore his/her own artistic impulses in the search for a distinctive artistic voice. The main focus of the course is Contemporary Scene Study. For scene performances, each student will make contributions to conceptualizing, blocking, creating stage business of a scene, and developing characters using techniques learned in class. Students will rehearse their scenes in class as well as independently for homework. Students will be guided by the teacher in class throughout their scene preparation. Scene work will focus on listening and reacting, timing, physicality, awareness of space, vocal expression, character building, and the importance of authentic emotional identification with characters and the connections between scene partners. On Monday, December 18, 2017, we will offer an informal sharing of our Scene Study for parents.

**Essential Questions**

* What is acting?
* Will experimenting with acting techniques help you develop your own approach to ‘living truthfully under imaginary circumstances?’
* How do cooperation, communication, and collaboration apply to the artistic demands of creating meaningful theatre?
* Why are self-esteem, risk-taking, and empathy important to creating meaningful Theatre?
* What is the function of the ensemble in creating artistic works of Theatre?
* How does each student contribute to the ensemble’s formation and creative work?
* Why is it essential that you develop a strong connection to your scene partner(s)? How will you do this?
* How do you create and build a character with psychological depth?
* How does a character analysis help to develop a character, connect to scene partners, and bring a scene to life for an audience?
* How do I safely expose and utilize my personal background and perceptions to produce ‘honest’ work?
* How do Theatre structures, conventions, and audiences create specific acting styles?
* Why and how does the audience complete the theatrical experience?

**Course Goals**

Upon completion of the course, you will be able to:

* Approach the work of an actor with improved stage presence and self-discipline
* Identify and perform techniques and skills of dramatic and comic acting
* Imagine, create, analyze and build a complex, believable character
* Employ a variety of tactics in pursuing character objectives
* Evaluate & analyze peer performances with insight & sensitive constructive criticism
* Open your mind and heart to the sensitive constructive criticism given to you
* Write coherently about the acting process
* Analyze a script
* Research, write, and present dramaturgical material
* Formulate a personal philosophy of theatre’s impact as an agent of morality, ethics, and personal insight
* Collaborate with scene partners and with the ensemble
* Share your Scene Study performance with an audience

**Course Title:** **Acting for the Camera**

**Prerequisite: Acting Techniques I and II**

**Grade level:** **9-12**

**Course Description**

This course introduces students to screen acting and helps them become comfortable with the camera’s presence in the acting studio. Students learn how to take direction specifically for the camera. Students compare and contrast the skills needed for the screen as opposed to the stage. Students discuss and define types and typecasting. Students explore how an actor presents him or herself to agents and casting directors and how to make a good first impression. Students work with commercial copy, a scene from a TV show, and their own emotional toolbox in front of the camera. Topics may include the distinctions between drama and comedy, action, speech for the camera, improvisation and emotional work, and script analysis. Through video feedback, students discern how one can improve upon one’s performance in front of the camera. Students are given multiple opportunities to apply their newly learned techniques toward film, TV, and other screen presentations.

**Essential Questions**

How do I minimize gesture and facial expression to be effective on camera?

How do I prepare emotionally before a take?

How do I prepare a cold reading for the camera?

How do I present myself professionally to agents and casting directors?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Demonstrate successful acting techniques for the camera.
* Execute the difference between acting for the stage and acting for the camera.
* Identify one’s personal strengths and limitations as an actor for the camera.
* Imagine the given circumstances of the text and communicate these ideas to the camera.

**Course Title:** **Audition Techniques**

**Prerequisite: Acting Techniques II and Production Class**

**Grade level:** **12**

**Course Description**

The Audition Techniques Class focuses on helping each student develop and prepare a minimum of two speeches (one Shakespearean and one modern) that can be used for college and conservatory auditions. The class discusses the “dos and don’ts” of a successful audition and how to conduct oneself in the interview process. The students explore and ultimately decide on strong objectives, physical actions and a variety of tactics that will work for their character and the monologues they have chosen. They work with each other and the instructors in order to achieve the best possible results from their audition experience. The goal of the class is to prepare the student to succeed and hopefully be accepted to the college or conservatory of their choice.

**Essential Questions**

How do I choose two contrasting monologues that will showcase my abilities as an actor?

How do I breakdown my monologue into strong objectives, actions and physical choices?

What techniques and knowledge can I employ so that I make the most of the audition/interview process?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Prepare, memorize and perform two contrasting monologues.
* Create monologues with variety in tempo, physicality, speech, and emotional content.
* Trust one’s instincts and present oneself professionally.
* Connect to oneself emotionally.
* Create an appropriate resume.

**Course Title:** **Autobiography**

**Prerequisite: Acting Techniques I**

**Grade level: 9-10**

**Course Description**

Students create theatre through writing and refining scripts based on their own memories. They act by developing, communicating and sustaining characters. Students direct, evaluate, interpret and rehearse their own work as well as the work their peers. Students are introduced to basic stage terminology and primary acting techniques. Students revisit the idea of reaching deep inside themselves and asking the question, who am I? Students are asked to remain highly focused and committed to the process of the work that gradually leads into an ensemble piece that the class creates. Collaborative learning is stressed, and students take on leadership roles when necessary.

**Essential Questions**

Who am I?

Where am I?

What time is it?

What surrounds me?

What are the given circumstances?

What is my relationship?

What do I want?

What is in the way of getting what I want?

What do I do to get what I want?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to

* Establish a safe environment where students’ ideas are supported and nurtured.
* Create an ensemble performance based on students’ memories.
* Revise written memories into dramatic form.
* Have ownership of the work being created and performed.
* Work as an ensemble.

**Course Title:** **Butoh**

**Prerequisite: None**

**Grade level: 9-12**

**Course Description**

Guest Artist Jerry Gardiner conducts master classes in Butoh Dance Theatre, a movement-based theatrical art form that developed in Japan in the later part of the 1950’s. Students explore the structural forms of Tatsumi Hitchikata and the improvisational style of Kazo Ohno, the two main originators of this art form, focusing on the language of Butoh and the discovery of each student’s own inner dance. Students participate in warm-ups for the body, mind and breath, and learn the specific forms of “bull”, “Maya”, and “flower”. Using these forms and improvisation, students created their own “dances” to share with the class.

**Essential Questions**

What is Butoh?

What is Butoh’s purpose?

What is my inner dance?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Explore oneself through the art of Butoh movement.
* Create an original inner dance.
* Release oneself from inner inhibitions.
* Collaborate with peers through the mind and body connection.

**Course Title:** **Costume Design**

**Prerequisite: Acting I**

**Grade level:** **9-12**

**Course Description**

The Costume Design class produces costumes for specific ECA production classes. By the end of the course students have a basic understanding of the design process for costuming a play. They will be familiar with using a sewing machine, hand sewing techniques and taking proper measurements. The class is encouraged to use their creativity to improve upon or change designs. Expectations of work will vary with the skills demonstrated by the individual students. Evaluations are based on final products, enthusiasm, and a willingness to learn new skills. Past classes have designed and built costumes for ***The Tempest*** and ***Into the Woods***.

**Essential Questions**

What are the technical skills needed to build a costume?

How does one create a costume sketch based on characters in a script?

How does the playwright’s world influence my concept for costumes?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Design costumes for a production.
* Understand the development of character through costume design.
* Understand the importance of costuming for a production.

**Course Title:** **Directing for the Stage**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II and Scene Study**

**Grade level:** **11-12**

**Course Description**

Directing for the Stage is a process-centered class for Advanced Theatre Majors who have a background in theatre history, movement, speech, improvisation, scene work, and have acted in and/or stage managed a major production. Classes include the discussion of pertinent topics, directing exercises in small groups, and constructive criticism of each director’s scenes. Directing exercises are based on silent scenes, justified movement scenes, ground plan scenes, open scenes, and closed scenes. Student directors read, choose and critique scenes from plays such as ***I Never Saw Another Butterfly****,* Thornton Wilder’s ***The Skin of Our Teeth***, and Shakespeare’s ***Macbeth***. Each student records his or her thoughts and questions in a daily journal, and reflects upon his or her progress.

**Essential Questions**

How does a director communicate to an actor?

How does a director form a concept for a play?

How does a director tell a story for a given play and playwright?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Discuss and practice the skills and desirable qualities of a good director.
* Practice composition, stage pictures and blocking.
* Create a flexible floor plan.
* Collaborate with other student directors.
* Rehearse and coach actors.
* Prepare a prompt book.

**Course Title:** **Dramaturgy**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II, Scene Study and Production Class**

**Grade level:** **10-12**

**Course Description**

This course provides an overview of the art and craft of dramaturgy in the contemporary and classical theatre. Through individual and group projects, students examine the role the dramaturg plays in developing production concepts, conducting production research, choosing translations, and developing adaptations of literature for performance. Students also consider how the dramaturg functions within a theatrical organization to assist in season selection and audience education. Students gain experience in production dramaturgy, which includes a combination of research, text analysis and educational outreach. This is a project course related to a specific theatrical production, and assignments will be determined by the instructor in consultation with the students and the director of the production. Examples of past classes include: ***A Dream Play*** by August Strindberg, ***The Tempest*** and ***A Midsummer Night’s Dream*** by William Shakespeare, ***Caucasian* *Chalk Circle*** by Bertolt Brecht, ***Fools***by Neil Simon, ***The Serpent*** by Jean-Claude Itallie, and Theatre for Social Change.

**Essential Questions**

What is the world of the play?

What is the history of the production?

How is it relevant to a contemporary audience?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Assist the director in production.
* Research and gather historical data on the production.
* Discover and illuminate the landscape of the script.

**Course Title:** **Experimental Theatre**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II, Scene Study**

**Grade level: 9-12**

**Course Descriptions**

**Previous courses have included:**

**Experimental Theatre:** Students investigate how gesture, sound and personal images can transform the actor and develop one’s own unique approach to acting. With an open mind, the courage to make mistakes, and the expectation of discovery, students explore body-centered techniques from Grotowski’s “Poor Theatre,” Artaud’s “Theater of Cruelty,” The Living Theatre, the Open Theatre, Guerilla Theatre, “Happenings,” Viewpoints, contact improv, and soundscapes. Focusing on the basic questions “Why am I an actor?” “What is ‘true’ in acting/theatre?” and “What is the purpose of theatre?” students prepare a Solo Text performance based on meaningful personal experience and perform scenes from Weiss’ ***The Mahabharata,*** Van Itallie’s ***The Serpent****,* Ionesco’s ***Rhinoceros and* *The Bald Soprano***, and Albee’s ***The Sandbox***.

**Experimental Voice and Movement Project:** Students experiment with movement and voice in non-traditional ways. They are exposed to Contact Improv, a type of dance improvisation developed by Steve Paxton in the 1960's; some of Arthur Lessac's movement and vocal theories, especially the kinesthetic energies of buoyancy, radiancy, and potency, and the vocal energies of the “consonant orchestra”. They are challanged to feel words in their bodies and to find words or ideas in their movement, and to apply the techniques they learned to traditional text, (a Shakespearean sonnet) as well as to "found text" in the form of junk mail. This process culminates in an evening performance.

**The Other Shore** by Gao Xingian. Advanced acting students read, analyze and conceptualize this existential and experimental play, which challenges even the most experienced actor and director. Students are asked to accept that the rehearsal process for this production, unlike many others at ECA, is an improvised journey of discovery. It is “guided” and not directed, and the actual performance of the play is an “exercise”. Students are encouraged to explore their own choices and to continually reinvent and question their role and work within the ensemble. Students are introduced to the idea of “not knowing”, and encouraged to abandon what “should be” and instead, discover “what is.” The demands of this project include: intense focus and concentration, physical and vocal adeptness, the mastery of intricate cues off of one another, the acceptance of finding each moment based on what the playwright provides in the text, and heightened ensemble acting. In addition, actors are asked to familiarize themselves with what Gao Xingjian refers to as “transcultural theatre”. Students are asked to research various aspects of Chinese Theatre and philosophy, the work of artists who have influenced Gao Xingjian, as well as Zen Meditation and Buddhism. While traditional acting theories, such as Constantin Stanislavki’s theory of “total immersion”, call for actors to completely immerse themselves in a character, Gao Xingjian’s theory of the “tripartite actor” asks his actors to employ three separate states of existence: their own “non-acting” state, the “neutral” state and the character state. Thus, through their work on ***The Other Shore***, students are moved to think about themselves as actors/characters in new and different ways.

**Essential Questions**

Why am I an actor?

What is true in acting/theatre?

What is the purpose of theatre?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Understand oneself as an actor.
* Explore meaningful theatre.
* Make discoveries between the theatre and life.

**Course Title: Origins of Western Theatre**

**Prerequisites: None**

**Grade: 9-10**

**Course Description**

Origins of Theatre explores the beginning of the history of Western theatre dating back to the ancient Greek playwrights Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes. Aristotle’s definitions of theatre, tragedy and comedy are center pieces of the course. Origins of Theatre will also analyze myths, symbols and rituals in both a lecture and process-oriented, experiential course.

**Essential Questions**

* What is Theatre? What are the elements of great theatre?
* Where do our modern feelings about what is great theatre come from?
* Who was Aristotle? What is his ideal plot structure?
* Who are the famous Greek writers and what were their major contributions to theatre?
* What are some of the major plays of those writers?
* What made Aristophanes different from the other writers?
* What are the significances of myths, symbols and rituals?
* What are some of the rituals and symbols we use in modern day times?
* What is the significance of storytelling especially as it relates to Greek theatre?
* What is a gesture and where does it originate?
* How can we use gesture to create meaningful characters?
* How does the modern actor prepare and perform an ancient Greek monologue?

**Course Goals**

* Introduction to Aristotle’s definitions of plot, character and ideal plot structure.
* Understanding of and introduction to Greek playwrights and their plays.
* Understanding of how our modern theatre is derived from ancient Greek theatre
* Preparation and performance of a Greek monologue
* Improvisational acting exercises related to myths, symbols and rituals.
* Research and sharing of famous Greek myths and characters from ancient Greek plays.
* Class creation of a modern myth utilizing Aristotle’s ideal plot structure and Greek chorus, etc.
* Detail and focus work.
* Give and receive constructive, helpful feedback and analyze, reflect upon and remain curious about our work and the work of our classmates.

**Course Title: Survey of Theatre**

**Prerequisite: None**

**Grade level: 9-10**

**Course Description**

Students enrolled in Survey of Theatre will study representative plays from classical through contemporary drama to examine how dramatic literature has evolved over time and how plays have been and may be experienced in a theatre. Students will analyze, interpret, and evaluate dramatic literature focusing on major types, styles, and historical periods. Emphasis will be placed on discovering the socio-cultural and political contexts that may have inspired playwriting and theatrical movements. A study of textual elements will extend to include visual and aural implications. Class time will be spent reading and discussing plays, discovering connections between theatrical periods and elements of dramatic storytelling, and posing essential questions about the role of theatre in society. From time to time, students will be required to make class and departmental presentations based on topics, questions and research during the course.

**Essential Questions**

* What is the difference between Theatre and other arts?
* What is the origin of Theatre?
* What elements of classical plays are common to all types of dramatic literature?
* How are contemporary plays different from classical plays?
* How are contemporary plays similar to classical plays?
* How has theatre changed as a storytelling medium over time?
* As theatre evolves, how are audiences required to modify their ‘willing suspension of disbelief?’
* What elements make up a compelling play?
* What elements make up compelling and believable dialogue?
* What elements make up compelling and believable characters?
* How has characterization evolved in the theatre over time?
* What elements in society have inspired playwriting?
* What elements in society have inspired evolution in playwriting?
* How do plays and how does theatre reflect culture, social philosophy, politics and universal truths?

**Course Goals**

During this intensive course, students will be exposed to plays from a variety of time periods. The goal of the course is for students to generate and answer questions concerning how theatre has evolved over time and how that evolution may be useful to them as actors and interpreters of plays in the modern world. Students will present their questions and thoughts to their classmates in an ongoing forum during which all students will learn: a. appropriate techniques for responding to a playwright’s work; b. appropriate techniques for providing constructive criticism; and c. techniques used by theatre artists over time to collaborate with other theatre artists in order to realize unique theatrical visions. Students will take away a clear knowledge of the evolution of play formatting, the evolution of scene and play structure, an appreciation for the evolution of acting technique for developing unique characters on the stage, and an appreciation for authentic voices in the theatre. It is my hope that students will leave with the confidence to trust the validity of their own questions about the evolution of theatre and will use those questions as a springboard to create their own unique visions as practicing theatre artists.

**Course Title: History of Theatre I**

**Prerequisite: None**

**Grade level: 9-10**

**Course Description**

Students in History of Theatre I begin the course with a discussion about the nature of art, theatre, and how the theatre began. Students study the origins of classical Greek Theatre of the 5th century BC, exploring Greek Drama through the story of the Oresteia, or “The Curse on the House of Atreus,” concluding with the play ***The Trojan Women***, Euripides’ thinly disguised criticism of Athens’ war crimes against the isle of Melos. Students choose a monologue from the play, research his/her character, and perform in both a contemporary acting style and in the style of the classical Greek period with masks, expanding range of movement and gesture. The second half of History of Theatre I begins with a brief study of religious conflict in 16th century England and its significance to the development of the theatre of the Renaissance. Using rehearsal clothes and props to approximate period costuming, students are given classes in Shakespearean acting style which conclude with a period style performance of a Shakespearean monologue.

**Essential Questions**

How did political, sociological and cultural influences contribute to the development of the theatre in a specific historical period?

How did the theatre function in each historical period?

What are the main literary concepts/elements in the dramatic literature of a given theatrical period or form?

How is the dramatic literature of various historical periods performed for and related to contemporary audiences?

What acting techniques and skills must a contemporary actor master in order to perform plays in a historical acting style?

How has theatre history contributed to the development of contemporary theatre?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Be an appreciative & informed audience member.
* Understand the value of theatre throughout time.
* Understand how theatre functioned in various historical periods.
* Appreciate the influence of the theatre in our own times.
* Identify and describe historical trends in theatre.
* Acquire an experiential understanding of historical plays through performance.
* Apply methods of analysis to dramatic literature.
* Identify the main literary concepts/elements in dramatic literature and describe how each play reflects its time period.

**History of Theatre II**

**Prerequisite: History of Theatre I**

**Grade level: 10**

**Course Description**

Students in History of Theatre II begin the course studying 19th century Melodrama, and the influence of the theories of Darwin and Freud on the subsequent transition to Early Realism. The class’s exploration of the development of ‘Alternatives to Realism’ includes a spontaneous Dada performance, a Surrealist “automatism” experiment, and a 1960’s “Happening.” Topics include Symbolism, Expressionism, Theatre of Cruelty, Theatre of the Absurd, Grotowski’s “Poor Theatre,” Guerilla Theatre, Happenings, The Living Theatre, The Open Theatre and Solo Text or “Spoken Word” performances. Students choose individual research topics from one of the Theatre forms above, writing formal research papers and giving a class presentation in which the individual student shares his/her research using visual and aural aids and related experiential activities. A major part of each presentation is class participation and active discussion. Students rehearse and perform monologues or scenes from representative plays of one or more of the studied Theatre movements.

**Essential Questions**

How did political, sociological and cultural influences contribute to the development of the theatre in a specific historical period?

How did the theatre function in each historical period?

What are the main literary concepts/elements in the dramatic literature of a given theatrical period or form?

How is the dramatic literature of various historical periods performed for and related to contemporary audiences?

What acting techniques and skills must a contemporary actor master in order to perform plays in a historical acting style?

How has theatre history contributed to the development of contemporary theatre?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Be an appreciative & informed audience member.
* Understand the value of theatre throughout time.
* Understand how theatre functioned in various historical periods.
* Appreciate the influence of the theatre in our own times.
* Identify and describe historical trends in theatre.
* Acquire an experiential understanding of historical plays through performance.
* Apply methods of analysis to dramatic literature.
* Identify the main literary concepts/elements in dramatic literature and describe how each play reflects its time period.

**Course Title: Improvisation I**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II, Scene Study, Production, History of Theatre and Movement**

**Grade Level: 11**

**Course Description**

In this course, students are introduced to games, exercises and improv scenarios in order to expand their improvisation experience and acting skills. Students learn basic improv rules and guidelines such as “accept and build” and “don’t deny,” as well as how to listen actively and work with a partner to create improvisations with a discernable beginning, middle and end. Students learn how to avoid “preconceiving” or “censoring” in an improv scenario, and instead learn methods and techniques to overcome the fear of taking a risk or the fear of failure. Students are challenged to overcome the feelings of “I can’t” or “brain freeze”, and learn skills to avoid “the improv that never ends”. Students develop quick thinking, mental agility, concentration and spontaneity. Students focus on observing people to help develop character choices. Students learn how to incorporate the principles of improvisation into any acting process.

**Essential Questions**

What principles of Improv enable the student to be successful?

How can listening carefully enhance improv interactions?

How can a relaxed and focused approach allow students to be successful at improvisation?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Understand the basic ideas of “Listen”, “Accept and Build”, “Don’t Deny”, “Move a Muscle, Change a Thought”, and to say, “Yes plus…” to ensure a greater possibility for success in improvisation.
* Make the strongest possible choice.
* Use audience suggestions to build an improvisation.
* Observe people, and be able to expand range and character choices.

**Course Title: Improvisation II**

**Prerequisite: Improvisation I**

**Grade Level: 12**

**Course Description**

The “Ever Chasing Alchemy” Improvisation Class and Troupe is focused on exploring and developing the students’ improvisation skills: spontaneity, focus, mental agility and concentration. Students develop confidence in their “moment to moment” work as they explore various Improv scenarios, games and conflict-resolution scenes, and discover successful approaches to working with their scene partners. Students are also challenged to investigate different characters to expand their range, their view of themselves and their abilities.

**Essential Questions**

What principles of improv enable the student to be successful?

How can listening carefully enhance improv interactions?

How can a relaxed and focused approach allow students to be successful at improvisation?

How do the principles of improv translate to more conventional approaches to a character in a play?

How can the student take the sense of “play” and “fun” into their other traditional theatrical experiences and rehearsal processes?

How does the student stay concentrated, focused and relaxed and “in the moment”?

**Course Goals:**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Understand the basic ideas of “Listen”, “Accept and Build”, “Don’t Deny”, “Move a Muscle, Change a Thought”, and to say, “Yes plus…” to ensure a greater possibility for success in improvisation.
* Make the strongest possible choice.
* Use audience suggestions to build an improvisation.
* Observe people, and be able to step outside oneself to expand range and character choices.

**Course Title: Mask Improvisation**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II and Scene Study**

**Grade Level: 9-12**

**Course Description**

The objective of this course is for the student to learn to perform effectively with a mask and in turn learn to be a better performer without a mask. Through improvisation and the exploration of exercises in both the neutral and character masks, students will learn about themselves physically, emotionally and psychologically. Students will discover that masks demand total commitment (physical, mental, emotional) to make them come alive. Student will discover that images can transform their psychophysical being and will learn to acknowledge the characters within. Student will recognize and learn how to use the actor’s divided consciousness and discover the external and internal world as rich with potential resources for the imaginative actor-creator.

**Essential Questions**

What kind of masks, both literal and figurative, do people use in everyday life?

What is my inner life while wearing a mask, and how can I communicate it through the mask?

Who am I, both physically and mentally, behind a mask?

**Course Goals**

After this course, student will be able to:

* Understand the importance of movement and gesture for the actor.
* Create and build specific characters through movement and gesture.
* Improve acting skills through the use of specific stage movement techniques, including pantomime, Viewpoints and neutral masks.
* Create and develop scenarios, utilizing structured improvisations, theatre games and other acting techniques.
* Give and receive constructive, helpful feedback, and to reflect upon, describe, analyze, and interpret one’s own and others’ work in the class.
* Collaborate with scene partners and the ensemble in building imaginary circumstances.

**Course Title: Movement for Actors I**

**Prerequisite: None**

**Grade Level: 9-10**

**Course Description**

In Theatre Movement, students explore exercises and improvisations designed to help them increase their awareness of physical detailing, both in themselves and in others around them. For their individual growth, students learn warm-up exercises designed to activate specific body parts in isolation and release excess tension. From these exercises, students gain a better understanding of their physical strengths and limitations. In class work, students experiment with new ways of communicating with their bodies. In paired exercises, students explore improvisations designed to heighten their sensitivity to, and trust in, their partners. Group improvisations help students to develop an understanding of what it means to work as an ensemble. Students also learn and explore a portion of the movement vocabulary developed by Rudolf Laban, founder of movement analysis and Labanotation.

**Essential Questions**

What are the various ways I can communicate nonverbally with others?

How can I make use of the physical characteristics unique to me when communicating with other actors?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Develop techniques to safely warm up individual body parts and release tension.
* Increase awareness of the distinctive physical characteristics unique to each actor.
* Improve the ability to work collaboratively with others in nonverbal ways.
* Develop new ways to use movement and gesture when communicating with other actors.

**Course Title: Movement for Actors II**

**Prerequisite: Movement for Actors I**

**Grade Level: 10**

**Course Description**

In Movement Two, students explore exercises and improvisations designed to heighten their awareness of their own physical characteristics, strengthen their non-verbal communication with other actors and develop a better understanding of how gesture and movement applies to their acting. For their individual growth, students learn warm-up exercises designed to activate specific body parts in isolation and release excess tension. They explore group improvisation to free the body for physical expression. This work also helps them to both expand and specify their choices in gesture, posture and overall movement. Students work extensively with partners in order to develop strong non-verbal communication skills. They use these exercises to pursue objective and action both in isolation and in scene work. Students complete two movement assignments and one project. The first two assignments are movement observations – one self-observation and one observation of the non-verbal communication of others. For their final project, students compare and contrast the physical expression and detailing of an actor of their choice.

**Essential Questions**

How can physical characteristics unique to my body be developed and adapted when creating a character for the stage?

How can I adapt my movement and gestures in order to communicate more expressly with other actors?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will:

* Develop techniques to safely warm up the body.
* Increase one’s ability to express oneself nonverbally.
* Increase awareness of how distinctive physical characteristics which are unique to each actor can be adapted when creating characters for the stage.
* Use movement and gesture in new and unexpected ways in order to physically express actions and intentions to other actors.

**Course Title:** **Hip Hop Theatre**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II, Scene Study and Production Class**

**Grade level: 10-12**

**Course Description**

In this course students explore how to create theatre out of contemporary rhythms, movements, stories, politics and aesthetics. Splitting time between praxis and "book learning," students briefly review the history of the spoken word movement, from Beat and Last Poets, to Choreopoems, to slams, and the origins of Hip Hop culture and its commodification by the record industry. Students then examine contemporary groups that use the above aesthetics in their work. Students gain a working knowledge of the history of Hip Hop culture and the major areas of cultural production (MC’ing, B’boying, Tagging, and DJ’ing). A suggested reading list and film/videography is available for students who have a desire to do advanced research. At the end of the course, students prepare a presentation of individual and group work for the public.

**Essential Questions**

What is Hip Hop Theatre?

What is the style, structure and form of Hip Hop?

What is Hip Hop Theatre’s relationship to spoken word and poetry?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Create individual theatre pieces in the style of Hip Hop Theatre.
* Create an ensemble Hip Hop piece based on a social issue.
* Understand the history of the spoken word movement, through the present Hip Hop culture.

**Course Title: Musical Theatre Scene Study**

**Prerequisite: Voice and Speech I, Acting Techniques I**

**Grade Level: 9-12**

**Course Description**

Musical theatre scene study class explores popular themes and genres of American musical theatre through an in-depth study of one or several musicals, which may span various historical periods.

In addition to exploring the trademark style of each composer and librettists, (including the function of songs within the musicals and the structure of the musicals) students focus on basic vocal technique, acting technique, and movement for each style.

Students explore scenes into song, perform solo, duet and ensemble numbers, and typically share their work in a public performance.

**Essential Questions**

How does performing in musical theatre compare or contrast with performing in straight theatre?

What special skills and techniques are necessary for the musical theatre performer to be successful?

How do I analyze a piece of music?

How do I best use my voice as a singer?

What are my strengths and challenges as a performer in musical theatre?

How do I incorporate the skills of acting, singing and dancing into a seamless performance of a believable and compelling character?

How do I stay fully in character while singing and being “present” in my voice?

**Course Title: Oral Interpretation**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II, and Scene Study**

**Grade Level: 10-12**

**Course Description**

Oral Interpretation is a performance class based on the idea that literature is an expression of profound human experience, and that the best way to share personally meaningful literature is to act or read it aloud to another person. The study of literature through oral performance includes the development of skills in the analysis and interpretation of prose, poetry and dramatic literature, with an emphasis on vocal and physical techniques. Students learn to "hear" the author speaking through the written word and apply skills which enable the student to read the material aloud to an audience, creating a shared experience among author, reader, and listeners. Thus the student learns to communicate thought orally with clarity and expressiveness. The teacher and student assess the individual student’s acting skills at the outset of the course, and then set realistic goals for the quarter. The teacher and student review the student’s progress following each assignment or exercise. Students receive feedback and evaluation in these areas: empathy, class collaboration and cooperation, storytelling, readings, performances and subsequent constructive criticism from his or her peers.

**Essential Questions**

How has culture been preserved and shaped from the earliest times through the spoken word?

What are the differences between acting and oral interpretation?

How can an interpreter read with an attitude of “physical readiness?”

How can the human voice be used to identify setting in terms of time, place, and atmosphere for specific literary genres?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Construct and articulate clear and informed interpretations of literature.
* Understand and experience literature through effective vocal and physical performance skills.
* Write, interpret and perform personal and non-personal stories.
* Identify the reasons for “stage fright” and develop effective methods for managing nervousness.
* Understand the use of introduction and transition when preparing literature for performance.

**Course Title: Playwriting**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II, and Scene Study**

**Grade Level: 9-12**

**Course Description**

The course explores, defines and celebrates the student’s voice in theatrical terms. Towards that end, numerous writing exercises are done together in class. A variety of short exercises (5 to 10 pages) are assigned in order to evoke and welcome the voice that already exists within each student, to experiment with form, to practice writing dialogue and to develop courage. Many of these exercises focus on problems of structure, language and theatrical risks. Since plays are written to be performed, the students read and share work in class. Because we are celebrating the process of writing, there is no criticism directed toward the first draft. Detailed feedback and discussion focus on work that is assigned and in manuscript form. Along with the exercises, everyone is expected to complete and revise one draft of a short (10 page) play. Selected plays and monologues are presented as staged readings. Short plays created can be adapted from other sources or can be original works.

**Essential Questions**

How do I free my creative voice as a writer and performer?

How is a play different from other written genres?

How do I work as a team player within an ensemble project?

What makes a compelling story or a compelling moment on the stage?

How can I be truthful in my acting?

How do I take a fairytale or existing pieces of literature and adapt them for the stage?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Create an ensemble piece that is written and performed by the class.
* Contribute to the process of writing and acting.
* Write monologues and scenes which are inspired by folklore, fairy tale, novels or other sources.
* Analyze a scene for beats, objectives, obstacles and actions.
* Structure a story for the stage.

**Course Title: Play Production: Classical through Contemporary/Dramatic and Comedic**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II, History of Theatre, Movement and Scene Study**

**Grade Level: 9-12**

**Course Description**

Students in this course begin by choosing, memorizing, and auditioning with specific monologues from the play. They are then cast in specific roles, and spend their class time rehearsing for a staged production. Students begin the rehearsal process with a thorough reading of the play, and analysis of the units of action (beats) within the play, with a focus on understanding how events and characters move the play forward. Students use the script to build characters, develop character relationships, study, memorize and perform the play. Students are encouraged to make strong choices in acting, voice and movement, and to stay open to directorial concepts in blocking. It is not uncommon for music to be included in a production, which gives students the opportunity to dance, sing or play instruments. As students explore the world of the play and their characters, they organize their thoughts and ideas in multiple written assignments, including detailed character analysis and script analysis assignments. Students may also do in-depth research on the themes and time period of the play; the life, work and dramatic theories of the playwright; and the play’s production history. In addition to concentrating on the needs of telling the story of a particular play, students gain an understanding of the demands involved in the rehearsal process of any play and in working as a member of an ensemble.

During the rehearsal process, students work with a director, a movement coach, and a voice coach. Student actors may also contribute to the production’s technical needs through building and painting the set, running an ad campaign for the program, building and collecting stage props and costumes, and designing a poster and program. One or two students are chosen to perform the role of Stage Manager for rehearsals and the running of performances. The Stage Manager assists the directors and supervises actors, organizes rehearsals, and creates the production’s promptbook. They also serve as communication liaisons for directors, actors and technical production staff. Some students are chosen to work with a professional costume designer from Long Wharf Theatre and learn how to design, pull, and build costumes. Students integrate all skills and research into final performances for the public.

Past Productions have included***The Crucible*** (Miller), ***As You Like It*** (Shakespeare)*,* ***Twelfth Night*** (Shakespeare), ***Metamorphoses*** (Ovid), ***A Dream Play***(Strindberg**)**, ***A Midsummer Night’s Dream***(Shakespeare**)*, Antigone***(Sophocles), ***Broken Hearts*** (adaptation of Oscar Wilde fairy tales), ***Caucasian Chalk Circle*** (Brecht), ***Chamber Music*** (Kopit), *Dark* ***of the Moon***(Richardson and Berney)*,* ***Electra****,* (Euripedes), Fools (Simon),***The Greeks*** (John Barton, adaptor), ***The Other Shore***(Gao Xingjian), Rhinoceros(Ionesco), ***Still Life with Iris***(Dietz*),* ***The Tempest***(Shakespeare)*,* ***The Weird Sisters***(Jafferis- an original Hip Hop Opera), *Yerma,* (Lorca)and various commissioned plays.

**Essential Questions**

What is the world of this particular play?

What styles of acting, movement and speech are appropriate for this play?

How do I build a character based on what I am given in the script?

What are my strengths and challenges as an actor in a play of this genre?

What interpersonal skills do I need to practice to be a strong ensemble member?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Master the style, techniques and skills of acting in a production.
* Employ a variety of tactics in pursuing character objectives.
* Demonstrate a compelling stage presence.
* Demonstrate self discipline throughout the rehearsal process.
* Demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively within an ensemble, showing sensitivity to fellow actors and staff.

**Course Title: Play Production: Musical**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II, History of Theatre, Movement and Scene Study**

**Grade Level: 9-12**

**Course Description**

In this course, students are cast in specific roles following formal acting, singing and dance auditions, and spend their class time rehearsing for a fully staged musical production. Class sessions give students the opportunity to master rehearsal practices and performance techniques such as blocking, singing in solo and ensemble rehearsals, exploring movement and learning choreography. Students collaborate with multiple directors and their peers to create stage business, form character relationships, and build solid characters through intense external and internal character work. Students participate in music rehearsals and acquire a working knowledge of musical terminology, technique and rehearsal etiquette. Students analyze and interpret both the thematic concepts and the practical elements of the script, articulating their thoughts in detailed written assignments. Students are chosen to serve as stage managers, who assist the directors and supervise actors, organize rehearsals, and create the production’s promptbook. They also serve as communication liaisons for directors, actors and technical production staff.

Some students are chosen to work with a professional costume designer from Long Wharf Theatre and learn how to design, pull, and build costumes. Students participate in all aspects of mounting the production and have opportunities to help build sets, and learn about marketing through selling program ads. Students learn how to incorporate costumes and makeup into their acting. Through technical rehearsals, students learn how to make adjustments into a performance space, how to collaborate with live musicians, how to work with set pieces, and how to integrate their acting with lighting and sound cues. Students also gain techniques in working with microphones. The course culminates in a series of productions for the public. All actors participate in a strike following the final performance. Past productions have included ***The Pirates of Penzance, The Cole Porter Revue, Pippin,*** and ***Into the Woods.***

**Essential Questions**

What are the demands of performing musical theatre as opposed to those of a straight play?

How do I incorporate the skills of acting, singing and dancing together into a seamless performance?

What are my strengths and challenges as an actor in the musical theatre?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively within an ensemble, showing sensitivity to fellow actors and staff.
* Master the skills and techniques of the musical theatre – Singing, dancing, acting.
* Employ a variety of tactics in pursuing character objectives.
* Demonstrate a compelling stage presence.
* Demonstrate self discipline throughout the rehearsal process.
* Gain a basic knowledge of musical terminology, singing techniques and rehearsal etiquette.

**Course Title: Acting Techniques III and IV -- Scene Study**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II, Movement and History of Theatre**

**Grade Level: 9-12**

**Course Description**

Scene Study classes focus on helping the student to understand how to break down a scene into specific beats with clear objectives, obstacles and actions, and to appreciate the importance of talking, listening and connecting to a scene partner. Students are challenged to make the strongest possible active choices as they discover their character’s objectives in the scene and super objective of the play. Scene study is like “exercise” for the actor, and prepares the actor for work in production. Scene study class usually focuses on a particular topic or genre of play, and students read several representative plays. Students research and complete written assignments and oral presentations on the history and roots of a particular playwright or theatrical development. They may also write a detailed character analysis once they are assigned scenes and characters. Students may be challenged to work on characters that are against their type or the type of roles they are usually cast in, so that they can expand their range while they develop their technique. Students are challenged to take these risks and to reach beyond their perceived limitations. Students spend time working on their assigned scenes, memorizing and creating effective movement and blocking. The class culminates in a public performance, either shared with the Theatre Department or the public.

Past scene study classes have included The Federal Theatre Project and The Group Theater, Absurdism, Advanced Scene Study, African American Theatre, Asian Theatre, (Beijing Opera, Kathekali Dance Theatre, Kyogen, Noh, Kabuki and Bunraku Puppet Theatre) Comedic Styles, Commedia del’ Arte, Contemporary Scene Study – Comedic and Dramatic, Greek Theatre, Historical Styles, Modern Realism, Restoration Theatre, Scene Study through Political Theatre, Scene Study through Time, Scenes from the World of Arthur Miller, Shakespeare Scene Study, World Drama (Sophocles to August Wilson).

**Essential Questions**

How do I analyze a scene and break it into beats?

How do I determine objectives, obstacles and actions for each beat?

How do I connect with my acting partner?

What are the demands for the actor in this particular play or genre?

How do I create a character through voice and movement?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Experience and understand the entire process of scene study.
* Comprehend various approaches to the interpretation and performance of plays from a particular genre.
* Gain an historical understanding of the plays and playwrights of the genre.
* Understand the basics of concentration, observation, motivation and improvisation.
* Understand and be able to apply the concepts of beats, objectives, obstacles and actions.
* Possess a method for approaching any scene in any play and develop a personal rehearsal process.
* Acquire self-confidence and explore creativity in making choices, both physical and vocal.
* Expand rehearsal and performance potential.

**Course Title: Technical Theatre**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, and II**

**Grade Level: 9-12**

**Course Description**

Technical Theater is a course designed to provide students with a basic understanding of the aesthetics and practical application of all phases of technical production. This includes the study of visual aesthetics, the physical theater, scenic design, scenery construction and painting, property construction and design, costuming, lighting, sound

engineering, and back stage organization. Production work is required. Students will run all technical aspects of production.

**Essential Questions**

How do theatrical, technical elements support the artistic vision of playwright and director?

Why is safety the most important focus of technical theatre?

How does the technical team collaborate with the acting ensemble?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Define basic terminology of the following theater arts – lighting, sound, set construction, rigging.
* Identify different design elements.
* Use theatrical tech equipment and perform tasks in accordance with established safety regulations.
* Use creativity and function to design performance support elements.
* Understand the inner workings of a live stage performance.
* Synthesize knowledge of these arts into technical theatre.

**Course Title: Theatre for Social Change**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II, Scene Study and Production**

**Grade Level: 10-12**

**Course Description**

The Theatre for Social Change class focuses on developing an original performance piece that explores a particular social issue. “The Living Newspaper,” developed by the Federal Theatre Project in the 1930’s, serves as a model. Students have input into the issues explored, conduct research – both through existing written material and interviews, investigate artistic expression, and develop and write a script. In the past students have collaborated with members of the community such as Yale School of Drama directors and playwrights, Yale-New Haven Hospital personnel and patients, social workers, therapists, filmmakers, 12-step program members, and social activists. Students study the basics of dramatic structure and theatrical writing, while investigating, defining and celebrating the individual student voice. Students are encouraged to practice many forms of writing including poetry, monologue, dialogue, prose, stage scenes and musical compositions, all the while being challenged to avoid negative societal stereotyping. Students keep journals and engage in a variety of writing and acting exercises on the given topic. After the script is in place, students begin the process of rehearsing and developing a performance piece, which is shared for the public. As they rehearse, students are challenged to find acting, physical and vocal techniques that most successfully convey their message, furthering a practical understanding of student actors’ bodies, voices, and imaginations. On occasion, existing text or scripts which explore a social issue are used in place of developing an original script.

Past titles and topics of Theatre for Social Change have included, ***The Ferguson Project – a Living Newspaper, Children Annoy Parents/Parents Annoy Children, As I Sat on the Green*** - (Homelessness in New Haven); ***Bang, Bang You’re Dead*** – (Violence in Schools); The Bullying Project - ***Hear Your Laughter, Hear Me Cry***; ***The Federal Theatre Project***- (political, social and cultural problems of the Great Depression); ***Feminist Theatre***; ***The Hospital Project-*** (people living with terminal and chronic diseases); ***I’ve Got You Under My Skin*** – (the HIV/AIDS epidemic); ***The Laramie Project*** – (Violence against Homosexuals); ***Solo Text*** – (personal narratives, emerging from oral cultural stories and traditions); ***Voices from the Street: In Search of the American Dream; That Time of Year Thou May’st in Me Behold*** - (Aging and the Elderly); ***The Visitor’s Guide to America*** - The Immigration Project; Political Theatre; ***The Weird Sisters*** – (based on the true life stories of three young women in New Haven, who struggled with, and triumphed over abandonment, abuse, and addiction).

**Essential Questions**

What is Theatre for Social Change?

What are the basic social, moral and ethical deliberations involved in this topic?

What personal experience and knowledge do I have to bring to this topic?

How do we explore this topic in ways that are both personal and universal? What are my personal convictions about both an individual’s and a society’s obligations to address human suffering and need?

How do I free my creative voice as a writer and performer?

How do I take action in the face of fear?

How do I work as a team player within an ensemble project?

What makes a compelling story or moment on the stage?

How can I be truthful in my acting?

How do I take someone else’s story and explore it on stage?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Identify and describe historical functions and trends of theatre for social change throughout history.
* Identify the historical role theater with a conscious social perspective has played in relation to issues of social change/justice.
* Collect and organize oral and written research on the particular topic of the class.
* Structure writing and acting to explore motivation and character.
* Perform using effective vocal and physical performance skills.
* Create, rehearse and perform a dramatic performance based on students’ interviews, and exploration and immersion in the topic.
* Raise awareness of the topic among school peers and the wider community.
* Formulate a personal philosophy of the theatre’s impact as an agent of morality, ethics, and/or social change.

**Course Title: Theatre for Young Audiences**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, and II**

**Grade Level: 9-10**

**Course Description**

Theater for Young Audiences is a performance class. Theatre for Young Audience students study rehearsal techniques, character building, and stage movement, and practice the acting techniques they have learned in previous courses. Written work includes character and text analysis in addition to adapting folktales from around the world into short, dramatic plays. Students rehearse their adapted stories both during class and in rehearsals outside of class. In recent years, the course culminated in a performance tour to area elementary schools during the spring. Students incorporate elements of storytelling, dramatic and comic scene work, believable character creation, stagecraft, contact improvisation and other stylized movement in devising their production. Class time is devoted to adapting folktales into dramatic works and rehearsing the plays in an effort to produce a professionally polished performance tour appropriate for elementary school aged children.

Students will be assessed on whether they apply the breakdown of objective and action to scripted material and their ability to let their analytical work transform into characters. Student actors will experience production week adjusting to costumes, make-up, lighting and sound in technical and dress rehearsals. They will perform for children of all ages. A student stage manager will supervise and call the show. The production will be followed by performance analysis, criticism and self-assessment. Past productions have included***Folktales from Around the World 2013 & 2014, Wiley and the Hairy Man, Jack and the Three Sillies****,* and***Fairy Tale Remix****.*

**Essential Questions**

What is the purpose of Theater for Young Audiences?

What kind of theatre does a child process?

What story elements are age appropriate for K-6 students?

How can we best teach the lessons of folktales dramatically?

What elements of folktales lend themselves to dramatic and comic transformation?

What are the demands for the actor in the style of play we are creating?

What styles of acting, movement and speech are appropriate for this style of play?

How do we determine character objectives, obstacles and actions for the style of play we are creating?

How do we design a traveling set that defines the world of our production, is durable enough for many performances, and is compact enough to carry to each performance and set up in 15 minutes or less?

What interpersonal skills do I need to practice to be a strong ensemble member?

What is the unifying question we are trying to ask through our folktale adaptations?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Create original adaptations of folktales from around the world to perform by the class on tour to elementary schools.
* Contribute to the process of writing, blocking, building the set, and acting
* Uncover the themes and lessons in folktales and find unique ways to dramatize them for a modern young audience through brainstorming, discussions, improvisations, movement, and story adaptation.
* Identify the basic elements of dramatic structure, including characterization, dialogue, exposition, narrative arc, and style
* Analyze scenes for beats, objectives, obstacles, and actions
* Rehearse and polish our production so that it may be performed at a professional standard of excellence.
* Master the style, techniques and skills of acting in a production.
* Employ a variety of tactics in pursuing character objectives.
* Demonstrate a compelling stage presence.
* Demonstrate self-discipline throughout the rehearsal process.
* Demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively within an ensemble, showing sensitivity to fellow actors and staff.

**Course Title: Voice and Speech I**

**Prerequisite: None**

**Grade Level: 9-10**

**Course Description**

In Voice and Speech I students are introduced to the basics of voice and speech with a focus on projection, exploring range and resonance, and diction for the stage. Students engage in a variety of activities and exercises which prepare the body and voice to perform optimally, and encourage students to explore unknown territories of their voices.

**Essential Questions**

How do our bodies make sound and shape speech?

How does an actor prepare the body and voice for performance?

How is voice and speech heightened for the stage?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will:

* Understand and appreciate the necessity of warming up the voice for performance
* Understand that voice and speech is heightened for the stage
* Possess an awareness that experimentation with voice and speech is a necessary part of the actor’s artistic process

 **Course Title: Voice and Speech II**

**Prerequisite: Voice and Speech I**

**Grade Level: 10-11**

**Course Description**

Voice and Speech II is a review of the foundational skills explored in Voice and Speech I with further emphasis placed on the rhythm, sounds, and qualities of speech. Students explore voice and speech through a focus on Arthur Lessac’s Body Energies and Consonant Orchestra, and begin to mine the expressive possibilities of speech sounds and their application within text. Students also begin to focus on the architecture of text and how it may be conveyed in performance.

**Essential Questions**

What are the energies of Radiancy, Buoyancy, and Potency?

What is Lessac’s consonant orchestra?

How do I discover the architecture of a text?

How can different energies in my body affect the way I use my voice and speech?

How is rhythm inherent in language, and how to do I make use of it in performance?

How can I change my voice to convey different intentions or actions?

What are techniques I can use to color words and ideas for artistic effect?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will:

* Be able to identify the architecture of a text and convey it to an audience through artistic techniques.
* Be able to perform a piece of text in multiple ways through varying the voice and body.
* Employ the aesthetic qualities of consonants for artistic effect.
* Be able to identify the rhythm in a piece of prose or poetry, and convey it effectively in performance.
* Be able to convey meaning of words through the variation of vocal qualities.

**Course Title: Voice and Speech III**

**Prerequisite: Acting I, II, History of Theatre, Scene Study, Movement, and Production**

**Grade Level: 11-12**

**Course Description**

In Voice and Speech III students explore the capacity and functionality of their unique vocal instruments and apply various techniques to the performance of text. Students gain a clear understanding of the human anatomy and the physical processes of respiration, phonation, articulation and resonation. A major focus of this course is the connection of text and sound to the body, so that the spoken word on stage is organic and believable. The methods of Kristin Linklater, Cicely Berry and Arthur Lessac guide the students’ exploration. Students are encouraged to explore text in abstract ways, so that they can fully express the essence, energy, emotion and physicality of words and ideas. Students may create original performance pieces based on personal, poetic, and non-traditional texts. An introduction to the International Phonetic Alphabet and the work of Edith Skinner are also included in this course. The IPA is the standard of speech training in any major theatre conservatory. Students write, read, and speak all the sounds of the IPA for American English, and acquire the technical terminology of phonetics as it applies to every sound in speech: vowels, voiced and unvoiced consonants, diphthongs and triphthongs. All in all, the goal of the course is for students to free their voices from personal habits that can be limiting, and to become acutely aware of an abundance of choices for voice and speech on the stage. Students commonly share their work with the theatre department in a short performance/sharing at the end of the course.

**Essential Questions**

How do our bodies make sound and shape speech?

What is a “connected voice”?

Why is text analysis important in the study of voice and speech?

How do phonemes carry meaning?

What are effective ways to make text come alive on the stage?

What is vocal heath?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will:

* Understand human anatomy and physical processes as they apply to the production of voice and speech.
* Uncover personal habits and tendencies in one’s unique voice and speech.
* Gain techniques to keep the voice healthy and use it efficiently.
* Gain techniques for text analysis and vocal interpretation.
* Apply voice and speech techniques to the performance of text.

**Course Title: Voice and Speech IV**

**Prerequisite: Voice and Speech III**

**Grade Level: 12**

**Course Description**

Advanced Voice and Speechbuilds upon the work of Voice and Speech III and focuses on the acquisition of dialects and accents, an essential skill for any actor. Students review the concepts of the IPA, as the understanding of the symbols inform all the vowel and consonant shifts that take place in various accents and dialects. Students learn the difference between an accent and a dialect and are challenged to become accurate speakers of at least 3 different dialects or accents during the term. In the past, the dialects and accents students have studied have included Stage Standard, New York, Brooklyn, American Southern, Appalachian, Swedish, Chinese, Japanese, Yiddish, Middle Eastern, Spanish, Russian, German, French, Irish, Standard British, and Scottish. Students learn the science-based method for acquiring any new dialect and are exposed to numerous written and recorded resources toward this pursuit. Students are encouraged to appreciate the geographical nuances of an accent, as well as the music, rhythm, and musculature of any dialect. The course often culminates in a performance of short dialect scenes, which are presented to the theatre department.

**Essential Questions**

What are the differences between spoken and written language?

Why are these differences important for the actor?

What are the characteristics of vowel, consonant, diphthong and triphthong sounds?

What are the basics of Stage Standard Speech?

How do I acquire a dialect or accent for the stage?

How do different languages compare in terms of placement, resonance, muscularity, musicality and sound?

**Course Goals**

After this course, each student will be able to:

* Accurately identify (both aurally and visually) the 52 sounds and symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet used in American English.
* Accurately reproduce the above 52 sounds and symbols of the IPA, both in writing and in

speech.

* Employ the basics tenets of Stage Standard Speech to text.
* Understand the various ways our speech mechanism produces vowels, consonants, diphthongs and triphthongs.
* Speak Standard British (and up to two other dialects or accents) accurately while employing artistic expression.
* Be prepared for any situation one might encounter in speaking for the stage.

**Course Title: Physical Theatre**

**Prerequisite: Movement I & II**

**Grade: 12**

**Course Description**

In Physical Theatre: Dance in Theatre and Theatre in Dance, we will explore and experiment with the different ways that these two disciplines intersect, overlap and find expression on the stage. We will look at the range from the minimalist physicality of Samuel Beckett’s work to the highly risk-infused physicality of Britain’s Frantic Assembly and DV8, from the deeply personal and vulnerable presence of German choreographer Pina Bausch’s dance-theatre work to the outwardly entertaining appeal of musical theatre.

The course is divided into roughly three areas of study: physical theatre, dance theatre (expressionist dance), and musical theatre. Physical theatre will address open-ended techniques for developing movement and story, from minimalist to maximalist. Using the techniques of Frantic Assembly and American choreographer Liz Lerman, students with explore creating movement and blending words and movement. Dance theatre will look specifically at the work of German choreographer Pina Bausch and employ her methods towards exploring personal stories. And musical theatre will look briefly at creating dance with music. In each unit, poems, songs, and theatre scenes will be used as the basis for creating text and movement studies. Students’ final project will be to create a dance based on a song.

Students are encouraged to bring their passions and personal experience into shaping the progress of this class. We will investigate the work of artists interweaving dance and theatre, employ their methods to tell our stories, and find humor, joy and fun in the process.

**Essential Questions**

* What is Physical Theatre?
* What are the ways dance principles are used in theatre productions?
* What are the ways theatre principles are used in dance productions?
* How can students expand their involvement in theatre by increasing their knowledge of dance and physicality as it relates to different forms of theatre production?

**Course Goals**

* Be introduced to different ways that dance, movement and physicality are used in theatre productions
* Be introduced to different ways that character, narrative and emotion are used in dance productions
* Broaden students’ knowledge of theatre and dance artists working with physical theatre, expressionist dance, musical theatre
* Develop compositional skills and techniques for creating choreography
* Experiment with different techniques for employing movement to tell stories, express emotion and engage the audience
* Collaborate with class mates and build a dynamic, supportive ensemble
* Engage more deeply with movement possibilities used in the theatre production process
* Give and receive constructive feedback, reflecting upon, describing and analyzing one’s own work and that of their peers

**Course Title: Viewpoints**

**Prerequisites: Movement I & II**

**Grade: 10-12**

**Course Description**

Viewpoints is a systematized technique for movement improvisation and in-the-moment composition. It was first articulated by dancer and choreographer Mary Overlie. Even though primarily a dance artist, Overlie has taught extensively in the theatre, namely the Experimental Theatre Wing at New York University’s Tisch School for the Arts. Many theatre artists have been exposed to her ideas, including Anne Bogart of SITI Company (New York) and Tina Landau of Steppenwolf Theatre Company (Chicago), who together have further delineated and adapted Overlie’s ideas for their theatre creative and production processes.

This course will introduce the student to the Viewpoints technique and training practice. We will go through the nine Viewpoints, delineated by Bogart and Landau, breaking down each one so the student understands the extensive possibilities within one Viewpoint. As we accumulate our understanding of each individual Viewpoint, we will open our explorations and work with interrelating Viewpoints. As the coursework develops, we will introduce themes and experiment with the Viewpoints as they apply to theatrical content (narrative, given circumstances, and site specific).

**Essential Questions**

* What are The Viewpoints?
* How can learning The Viewpoints open new possibilities for the student’s engagement in the creative process of theatre productions?
* How can The Viewpoints help the student awaken their inner instinct and develop their movement improvisational skills?
* How does practicing The Viewpoints build a strong, cohesive ensemble?
* How can The Viewpoints help the student understand movement and stage composition so they can participate on every level of the creative and production process?

**Course Goals**

* Be introduced to the nine Viewpoints as developed by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau
* Cultivate and practice a high level of discipline in the body’s attention and action
* Develop skills for listening, sensing and observing, valuing even the subtlest of actions as important and pertinent
* Collaborate with class mates and build a dynamic, supportive ensemble
* Understand the compositional principles underlying theatre movement and staging and implement The Viewpoints as tool for experimentation and scene building
* Engage more deeply with movement possibilities used in the theatre production process
* Awaken, connect to and hone one’s inner impulse for in-the-moment decision-making
* Explore, improvise and compose employing The Viewpoints to specific themes
* Give and receive constructive feedback, reflecting upon, describing and analyzing one’s own work and that of their peers

**Course Title: College Prep/Audition**

**Grade: 12**

**Course Description**

College Prep/College Audition is a nine week course designed to support seniors as they prepare and complete the process of college application and audition. Following the first two intensive weeks, the course will focus on the professional preparation of a contemporary monologue for use at a college or conservatory audition. During the second quarter, students will focus on the professional preparation of a classical monologue for use at a college or conservatory audition.

**Course Content**

* Academic Resume Completion
* Theatrical Resume Completion
* Requesting College Recommendations – must be requested 6 weeks in advance of your application deadline
* Completion of Common Application and College Essay
* Peer editing for College Essay
* Precisely organizing your application process
* College interviews – presenting your best self, not your best, most nervous self

**Essential Questions**

* What am I looking for in a college?
* What questions should I ask of the colleges I am considering?
* How should I organize my application process?
* How do I prepare an academic and theatrical resume?
* From whom should I seek recommendations?
* How should I appear at a college audition or interview?
* What questions should I ask during a college interview?
* What questions should I be prepared to answer during a college interview?

**Course Goals**

 Upon completion of this course:

* Your college applications should be practically complete and of exceptional quality.
* You will have requested college recommendations from teachers who know and support you best and you will have provided them with all of the information they need to write you an excellent recommendation.
* You will have prepared a contemporary monologue for a college audition and you will be ready to excel in any audition venue with that monologue.