

**THEATER ARTS COURSE  
2007**

**Course Description:** This one-semester course is designed for those students who have an interest in theater. Students study acting, direction, lighting, make-up, costuming, set design, and set construction. Students will have an opportunity to apply what they learn in a final project that will use all the above areas of theater. They will also be encouraged to join the Drama Club and use their learned skills in the school's theatrical productions. This course is a prerequisite for the Advanced Theater course.

**STANDARD 1.1 (AESTHETICS) ALL STUDENTS WILL USE AESTHETIC KNOWLEDGE IN THE CREATION OF AND IN RESPONSE TO THEATER.**

**Descriptive Statement:** The experience of theater, both the performance of it and the observation of it, strengthens our appreciation of the world, as well as our ability to be creative and inventive decision-makers. The acquisition of knowledge and skills that contribute to aesthetic awareness of theater enhances these abilities. Through experience in theater, students develop the capacity to perceive and respond imaginatively to works of drama. These experiences result in knowledge of forms of artistic expression and in the ability to draw personal meaning from works of theater.

Key skills necessary to an understanding of aesthetics include the abilities to identify artistic elements within a theatrical work to articulate informed emotional responses to the work, to engage in cultural reflection, and to communicate through the use of metaphor and critical evaluation. Aesthetics involves the following key understandings: appreciation and interpretation; stimulating imagination; the value and significance of the theater arts; theater as object; the creation of theater; developing a process of valuing; and acquaintance with aesthetic philosophies.

**Strands and Cumulative Progress Indicators**

**By the end of the Theater Arts course, students will:**

**A. Knowledge**

1. Observe the art form of theater
2. Explain that theater can generate personal feelings
3. Interpret basic elements of style in theater as the foundation for a creative project

**B. Skills**

1. Communicate observational and emotional responses to works of theater from a variety of social and historical contexts.

**ACTIVITIES: Students will:**

1. Observe theatrical works (both live theater and also performances on film and television)
2. Compare and contrast different styles of acting, directing, playwriting and screen writing, cinematography, and set design
3. Learn about the life and times of Konstantin Stanislavsky, and the major impact he had on modern acting (Stanislavsky’s contributions were so important, that acting styles can be referred to as “before Stanislavsky” and “after Stanislavsky”)

**INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES: Students will:**

1. Evaluate scenes from different styles of plays that require various acting techniques
2. Appreciate the theater arts as shown by the direction, writing, set design, and costumes of live productions; and for film, appreciate the above and also the cinematography

**EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS: Students will:**

1. Be graded for papers that they write concerning the aesthetic quality of plays and movies that they watch
2. Be assessed for their class participation in discussions related to dramatic aesthetics

**STANDARD 1.2 (CREATION AND PERFORMANCE) ALL STUDENTS WILL UTILIZE THOSE SKILLS, MEDIA, METHODS, AND TECHNOLOGIES APPROPRIATE IN THE CREATION, PERFORMANCE, AND PRESENTATION OF THEATER.**

**Descriptive Statement:** Through developing performances in theater, students enhance their perceptual, physical, and technical skills and learn that pertinent techniques and technologies apply to the successful completion of the tasks. The development of sensory acuity (perceptual skills) enables students to perceive and acknowledge various viewpoints.

**Strands and Cumulative Progress Indicators**

**By the end of the Theater Arts course, students will:**

1. Portray characters and describe basic plots and themes in creative drama.
2. Experiment with the use of voice and movement in creative drama and storytelling.
3. Employ theatrical elements to create and express stories in various cultural settings.

4. Show how different uses of and approaches to theater can communicate experiences.

**ACTIVITIES: Students will:**

1. Create characters, relationships, and situations through the use of improvisation.
2. Develop characters from written skits, commercials, and scenes from plays.
3. Write biographies of all the characters they create.
4. Produce their scenes using theatrical elements such as blocking, set design, costume, and special effects.
5. Translate their theatrical work into a film format using videotape.

**INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES: Students will:**

1. Work in separate performance groups and develop their projects communally.
2. Share their thoughts and impressions of the characters they are creating with the entire class.
3. Perform their biographies, starting from early childhood of the character and going through to the beginning point of the projects.
4. Perform their skits, commercials, and scenes using all theatrical elements that they've learned.
5. Videotape rehearsals and performances, and then comment on their work.

**EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS: Students will:**

1. Be graded for their individual contributions to the rehearsal process.
2. Be graded for their group efforts during rehearsal.
3. Be graded for written biographies.
4. Be graded for individual and group work in final performances.
5. Be graded for theatrical elements such as direction, movement, set design, costumes, and special effects.

<p><b>STANDARD 1.3 (ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES) ALL STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF THEATER.</b></p>
--

**Descriptive Statement:** In order to understand the performing arts, students must discover the elements and principles both unique and common to theater. The elements, such as color, line, shape, form and rhythm, time, space and energy, are the basis for the creation of works of art. An understanding of these elements and practice of the principles ensure the strengthening of interdisciplinary relationships with all content area curricula and their applications in daily life.

## Strands and Cumulative Progress Indicators

### **By the end of the Theater Arts course, students will:**

1. Identify basic elements of theater such as setting, costumes, plots, scenes, and themes.
2. Explore the use of voice, movement, and facial expression in conveying emotion in creative drama and storytelling.

### **ACTIVITIES: Students will:**

1. Create set designs for their various projects.
2. Choose appropriate costumes for their characters.
3. Analyze plots and themes of scenes.
4. Experiment with different ways of talking, moving, and emoting so that they can get in touch with their characters.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES: Students will:**

1. Work in groups and discuss and debate the best setting for their projects.
2. Work in groups and decide what costumes will complement the different characters in their scenes.
3. Demonstrate for the entire class the different ways their characters might talk, move, or emote.

### **EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT: Students will:**

1. Be graded for their individual contributions to their group's discussions and decisions.
2. Be graded for the group's accomplishments.
3. Be graded for their originality and imagination in creating the different elements of their characters.

<b>STANDARD 1.4 (CRITIQUE) ALL STUDENTS WILL DEVELOP, APPLY AND REFLECT UPON KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROCESS OF CRITIQUE.</b>
--

**Descriptive Statement:** Through the informed criticism of works of theater, students will develop a process by which they will observe, describe, analyze, interpret and evaluate artistic expression and quality in both their own artistic creation and in the work of others. Through this critical process, students will arrive at informed judgment of the relative artistic and aesthetic merits of the work examined.

## Strands and Cumulative Progress Indicators

**By the end of the Theater Arts course, students will:**

**A. Knowledge**

1. Explain that critique is a positive tool.
2. Define the basic concepts of acting, directing, set design, costume, lighting and sound, and special effects.

**B. Skills**

1. Orally communicate opinion regarding theater based on observation
2. Express how individuals can have different opinion toward theatrical works.

**ACTIVITIES: Students will:**

1. Discuss and debate the relative merits of plays and films they have observed.
2. They will give constructive criticism to works that are created within the class.

**INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES: Students will:**

1. Read professional critics' reviews of plays and films that the students have already seen.
2. Critique the critics' work, and say how they would write their own review.
3. Write reviews of plays and films.
4. Write reviews of each other's work

**EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS: Students will:**

1. Be graded for their class participation in the debates about the qualities of the works they've observed.
2. Be graded for their written reviews of plays and films.
3. Be graded for their written reviews of each other's work.

**STANDARD 1.5 (HISTORY/CULTURE) ALL STUDENTS WILL UNDERSTAND AND ANALYZE THE ROLE, DEVELOPMENT, AND CONTINUING INFLUENCE OF THEATER IN RELATION TO WORLD CULTURES, HISTORY, AND SOCIETY.**

**Descriptive Statement:** In order to become culturally literate, students need to understand the historical, societal, and multicultural aspects and implications theater. This includes how theater and cultures continue to influence each other.

**Strands and Cumulative Progress Indicators**

**By the end of the Theater Arts course, students will:**

**A. Knowledge**

1. Recognize works of art from diverse cultures.

**B. Skills**

1. Identify family and community as themes in theater.

**ACTIVITIES: Students will:**

1. Observe films from diverse cultures and eras.
2. Identify family and community in these various films.

**INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES: Students will:**

1. Debate the merits of the foreign films they've watched.
2. Analyze how the roles of family and community are illustrated in these films.

**EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT: Students will:**

1. Be graded for class participation in the debate about the foreign films.
2. Be graded for essays relating to the roles of family and community in these films.

**RESOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THEATER ARTS COURSE**

Bernardi, P. (1992). *Improvisation starters*. Cincinnati, OH: Betterway.

Cassady, M. (2000). *Spontaneous performance*. Colorado Springs, CO: Meriwether.

Cohen, L. (Ed.) (1973). *Scenes for young actors*. New York: Avon.

Engelsman, A. & Engelsman, P. (1997). *Theater arts*. Colorado Springs, CO: Meriwether.

Ross, J. (2007). *The performance of your life!* Chester, NJ: Author.

Stevens, C. (2001). *Sensational scenes for teens*. South Pasadena, CA: Sandcastle.