



## Course Descriptions

### Drama

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#### Drama I

*10.0 Credits, Prerequisite: Audition and Acceptance by Drama Faculty*

Drama I is a one year course **mandatory** for all incoming freshmen drama majors. It begins with an effort to give students a comprehensive background and experience in speech, voice and diction. The early emphasis is on having students recognize their own strengths and weaknesses in these areas. Students practice numerous exercises designed to help them develop a clean, pleasing, audible and well-modulated voice. Through further exercises, students learn the skills needed to develop carefully controlled and well-coordinated movements. Students also practice and perfect the basic movements involved in live dramatic presentations. In addition, students study the history of drama from its earliest pre-European beginnings; the literature of the Greek/Roman theatre, as well as mythology and a variety of dramatic theories and theater philosophies. Students will also be introduced to basic research skills and techniques. It is through scene studies and presentations that students learn basic performance skills. Students also gain experience in technical theater needed to present plays and begin to acquire knowledge of today's theatre careers.

#### Drama II

*10.0 Credits, Prerequisite: Drama I*

Drama II is a one year mandatory course designed to prepare students to read, choose, and edit scripts of a more advanced nature; to block movement; to develop characterizations – physical and emotional; to project the voice; and to use a variety of vocal techniques. The emphasis in Drama II is on the works of William Shakespeare. Students are taught how to read Shakespearean scripts and are required to submit written critiques on at least five of his plays. The theatre history component begins with the medieval times up to the Restoration. In addition, students are introduced to the American Musical Theatre and its associated genre/influences (i.e. opera, operetta, vaudeville, minstrelsy, burlesque, the “Dance Hall” era, etc.). Students continue to study stage movement, character development, stage terminology, dance, improvisation, theatre games, etc... Students attend performances of plays presented by professional companies; analyze the production aspects; and learn how to apply

insights gained to their own performances. All of this is in preparation for a major production, for which students memorize parts, build sets, carry out publicity arrangements, sell tickets, run the various backstage crews, as well as manage the house and stage on the night of performance.

### **Drama III**

*10.0 Credits, Prerequisite: Drama I, II*

In this third year course, students are formally introduced to the acting theories and methods of Sanford Meisner and Konstantin Stanislavski. The concepts of character delineation and development are dealt with extensively, while continuing work with theater games and improvisation. Students are introduced to the fundamental skills and techniques of directing. The use of technical devices to establish mood, atmosphere, and identity are incorporated. Students write their own materials and/or choose scripts for production. The Theater History component for this year begins with the Restoration and progresses to/through the Pre-Modern Era (late 1800's/early 1900's), including Chekov, Ibsen, and Strindberg. Ethnic theater and performance histories are also brought up to date.

Various methods of production – both conventional and innovative – are discussed, researched and ultimately put to use through actual studio performances and productions. Students analyze their productions and learn how to apply insights gained to expand their creative capabilities. Additionally, they continue to build skills in the administrative and technical aspects of production.

### **Drama IV**

*10.0 Credits, Prerequisite: Drama I, II, III*

This course is designed to continue the 4<sup>th</sup> year students' experience in the study of Meisner/Stanslavski introduced in Drama III. Students select areas of specialization (acting, directing, technical theatre, theater admin. stage management) with an eye to theater careers. In addition, they serve as interns and/or apprentices in their areas of specialization with community and regional theater and performing arts groups. Each student is **required** to select a vehicle, cast it, rehearse and mount a production to be presented in a mini-assembly in school. After completion of their **senior project**, they must submit their 'director's book' for a portfolio grade. Students continue to choose and write scripts; prepare and/or adapt them for film or recording; and for eventual presentation.

Theater History begins with the Pre-Modern Era (including Chekov, Ibsen, and Strindberg) through the Avant Garde/Experimental Theaters to present day performance. Current trends in Ethnic, age, and gender-specific theater/performance genre are also discussed. Students are also expected to make further exploration and study in their chosen fields and to learn how to prepare themselves for auditions, casting and employment.

## **Solo Performance/Repertoire**

*5.0 Credits, Prerequisite: Drama I, II and/or audition with teacher recommendation*

Solo Performance/Repertoire is a one year elective course open to junior and senior Drama majors. The course is made up of four units: Unit 1: Dramatic storytelling, Unit 2: Reader's Theatre, Unit 3: Ensemble performance, Unit 4: Solo performance. Each unit deals with specific content and is designed to enable students to achieve a specific set of outcomes. Outcomes are cumulative and will be described in terms of key knowledge and skills.

## **Fundamentals of Technical Theatre I**

*5.0 Credits, Prerequisite: None*

The Technical Theatre course offering at Arts High School is Fundamentals of Technical Theatre I and is an elective course which prepares students for entry-level technical positions in the entertainment industry. These may include, but are not limited to, stage rigging, stage building, sound engineering, lighting, costume building, makeup design, and scene design and scenic painting.

Students gain practical experience with 'hands on' training on all Arts High School department productions and serving as assistants on professional shows and other departmental performances appearing in the Arts High School Theatrical Season. The course of study for Fundamentals of Technical Theatre I will focus on the development of skills necessary for the practicing theatre artist. Technical theatre skills examined in this course will include general craft construction, fundamentals of scenery construction, rigging, costume construction, basic electricity, wiring, theatrical fixtures and hanging/focusing lighting instruments. The class provides the basic skills and technical knowledge necessary to becoming a competent well-rounded stage technician. Additionally, this introductory course examines the collaborative nature of technical theatre design, utilizing the department's resident scenic, costume and lighting/sound designers.