

Acting Styles: Classical/Commedia

PEIMS Code: N1170124

Abbreviation: ACTMET2

Grade Level(s): 10-12

Award of Credit: 1.0

State Approved Innovative Course

- Districts must have local board approval to implement innovative courses.
- In accordance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §74.27, school districts must provide instruction in all essential knowledge and skills identified in this innovative course.
- Innovative courses may only satisfy elective credit toward graduation requirements.
- Please refer to TAC §74.13 for guidance on endorsements.

Course Description:

This course is part of a cluster of courses designed to develop proficiency in acting by promoting an understanding of the methods, principles, practices, and vocabulary common to all acting styles from Greek through Shakespeare to modern texts. In this course, students study the acting style of the Greek theatre, the Commedia dell'Arte, Shakespearean plays, the Restoration, and Melodrama. The students learn the processes used to research characters. They study appropriate stage diction and learn to project their voices to portray characters. The course requires the students to develop and use a process of character development. This course emphasizes the complexity and thoroughness required to become a successful performer.

Essential Knowledge and Skills:

- (a) General Requirements. This course is intended for intermediate to advanced actors. Theatre I or the innovative course Acting Methods are recommended prerequisites.
- (b) Knowledge and Skills.
 - (1) The student develops the concepts and skills necessary to perform the large vocal and physical characters required for the Greek theatre. The student is expected to:
 - (A) examine the theatrical elements of Greek tragedy, including the use of the chorus, mask, presentational acting style, and deus ex machina;
 - (B) examine the theatrical elements of the Greek comedy, including the use of physical comedy and broad characters;
 - (C) create characters of emotional size in Greek theatre using physical attributes such as posture, gesture, and a presentational acting style;
 - (D) create characters of emotional size in the Greek theatre using vocal attributes such as projection, enunciation, and vocal clarity; and
 - (E) collaborate with a partner to rehearse and perform scenes incorporating large vocal and physical characters and the chorus from Greek theatre in a presentational style.

- (2) The student develops the concepts and skills necessary to perform stock characters and plots from scenarios for the Commedia Dell'Arte. The student is expected to:
 - (A) examine the elements of theatre used in the Commedia Dell'Arte including use of improvisation, stock characters and plots, masks, and presentational comedy;
 - (B) communicate a physical character by using the masks of the stock characters in the Commedia Dell'Arte including Pantalone, Dottore, Capitano, Columbina, and Arlecchino;
 - (C) incorporate the elements of clowning and physical comedy including tumbling, juggling, takes, and pratfalls into extant Commedia dell'Arte scenarios;
 - (D) incorporate the stock characters and plots found in the Commedia Dell'Arte into extant Commedia dell'Arte scenarios; and
 - (E) collaborate with a partner or a group to create and perform scenes incorporating stock characters in extant scenarios and modern Commedia Dell'Arte scripts with the elements of comedy and clowning skills.
- (3) The student develops concepts and skills of complex language and truthful acting required in the Shakespearean theatre. The student is expected to:
 - (A) examine the structure of a Shakespearean text, including free verse, iambic pentameter, and prose and the variations of these structures within a Shakespearean text;
 - (B) examine the poetic elements, illustrative language, and rhetorical devices of a Shakespearean text;
 - (C) recognize the acting elements of theatre used in a Shakespearean text, including truthfulness, mistaken identity, and the importance of the audience;
 - (D) examine the elements of language as it is used in a Shakespearean text, including using dialogue to set the scene, explaining motivation, and communicating action without sets and props; and
 - (E) collaborate with a partner to rehearse and perform scenes from Shakespearean comedies, tragedies, and histories incorporating knowledge of structure, poetry, acting devices, and language elements.
- (4) The student develops the concepts and skills necessary to incorporate language, satire, posture and gesture to portray characters in Comedy of Manners plays. The student is expected to:
 - (A) examine the elements of the Comedy of Manners as used in a Restoration play, including satire, miscommunication, and amorous intrigues;
 - (B) examine the elements of language used in a Restoration play, including the pun and the double entendre;
 - (C) incorporate posture, gesture, and the fan to portray stock characters such as lovers, fools, schemers, jealous husbands, and meddling parents in a Restoration play; and
 - (D) collaborate with a partner or a group to rehearse and perform scenes from the Restoration theatre using satire, language, posture, and gesture to communicate character.
- (5) The student develops the concepts and skills necessary to portray the characters of the Melodrama. The student is expected to:
 - (A) examine the stereotypical characters found in the Melodrama, including villains, heroes, and "sweet young things";

- (B) examine the exaggerated and sensational plots found in the Melodrama;
 - (C) analyze the elements of the Del'Sarte system of gesture and the function of the audience in the melodrama; and
 - (D) collaborate with a partner or a group to rehearse and perform scenes from the Melodrama using stereotypical characters, exaggerated plots, and the Del'Sarte system.
- (6) Creative Expression/Performance. The students perform characters in scenes from plays from the classical theatre. The student is expected to:
- (A) create and sustain characters from classical and early modern texts using a process of character development that is complex and repeatable; and
 - (B) transfer skills and techniques used in one acting style to the skills required in different acting styles within the context of this course.
- (7) Historical and cultural relevance. The student relates theatre to history, society and culture. The student is expected to:
- (A) read, research, and analyze culturally diverse texts and determine appropriate character choices using a comprehensive character development process in scenes and scenarios;
 - (B) research and analyze the historical periods and stock characters to determine appropriate character choices within the appropriate style in scenes and scenarios; and
 - (C) create characters from varied cultural and societal communities.
- (8) Critical Evaluation and response. The student responds to and evaluates theatre and theatrical performances. The student is expected to:
- (A) develop and incorporate the skills necessary to be a supportive and focused audience member;
 - (B) apply both positive and negative criticism for a proper written and verbal critique of student and professional work;
 - (C) transfer knowledge of one time period to another for the ensuing class or project within the context of this course; and
 - (D) apply appropriate theatrical vocabulary to communicate between director and actor, actor and stage manager, and actor and actor.

Recommended Resources and Materials:

- Adler, Stella. *The Technique of Acting*. Bantam Books. 1988
- Brockett, Oscar. *History of the Theatre, 10th Edition*. Pearson. 2007.
- Brown, John Russell. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*. Oxford Paperbacks. 2001
- Grantham, Barry. *Playing Commedia*. Heinemann Frama. 2000.
- Hagen, Uta. *The Art of Acting*. Applause Theatre and Cinema Books. 2000
- Lecoq, Jacques. *The Moving Body*. Routledge. 2000.
- Nicol, Allardyce. *Masks, Mimes and Miracles*. Cooper Square Press. N.Y. 1963.
- Rolfe, Bari. *Mimes on Miming*. Panjandrum Books. Los Angeles. 1979.
- Access to library sources such as books and periodicals
- Access to electronic research tools
- Access to professionals in the theatre field
- Access to guest speakers, actors, directors, lecture-demonstrations

- Access to master classes in acting

Recommended Course Activities:

- Students will perform scenarios and scenes from the Greek Theatre, the Commedia, Shakespeare, the Restoration and the Melodrama
- Create authentic characters using comic techniques
- Students will create a character notebook for characters from classical texts
- Demonstrate process of character development
- Demonstrate understanding of theatrical vocabulary at appropriate levels
- Demonstrate an understanding of different approaches to character study
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history of acting
- Understand elements and requirements of a rehearsal
- Participate in master classes provided by professionals in the theatre
- View professional performance, live or recorded
- Research actors and acting styles

Suggested methods for evaluating student outcomes:

- Formative and summative evaluation to monitor student progress and mastery of course content
- Vocabulary tests at appropriate levels
- Skills in improvisations and scenes
- Ability to know and apply the appropriate acting types
- Monitoring by instructor of individual progress
- Individual conferences between instructor and student
- Scheduled semester exams and juries on comprehensive work

Teacher qualifications:

- Any secondary theatre certification (e.g. Theatre: EC-12) as defined by SBEC rules, [TAC §231.241](#)
- Recommended: Experience in professional/community theatre
- Recommended: BFA and/or MFA in Acting.

Additional information: