

**Highlands High School**  
**Introduction to Theatre/Directing**  
**2016-2017 Course Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Jason Burgess

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**Website:** [www.highlandstheatre.com](http://www.highlandstheatre.com)

**Phone/Extension:** 859-815-2512

**Grade(s)** 9-12

**1 Credit**

**Prerequisite(s)**

An interest in the study of any aspect of theatre such as acting, directing, designing, etc.

**Description of Class:**

Students will study the history of theater as well as specific plays. In addition, students will practice improvisation, pantomime and mime, voice, diction and acting techniques. The students in this class need not be experienced actors, yet they must have a serious attitude toward drama analysis and exploring their own talents. Students will be expected to contribute to class discussions, to give and receive constructive peer criticism and to perform.

**Comments**

Students are required to assist with each of the productions by the Drama Department. This may involve acting, a crew position, ushering, set building, or simply being an audience member. Most of this work will be done during class time but occasionally, students will be asked to assist after school hours. This will be done with consideration to student schedules and with flexibility.

**Materials:**

- Three ring binder with pockets
- Loose leaf paper for binder
- Pencils
- Highlighters
- An open mind

**Standards**

*In this class, students will:*

- Learn the fundamentals of the stage
- Learn the fundamentals of acting
- Learn the fundamentals of improvisation
- Learn the history of theater
- Perform short monologues and scenes in class
- Read plays and analyze characters and plot
- Learn about technical theater
- Attend plays and critique them
- Learn to write a short play or monologue
- Learn to write a play review

## **Behavior and Classroom Expectations**

- Be on time and prepared
- Be respectful of teacher and peers
- Participate and stay on task
- Be safety conscious
- Leave distractions outside this classroom

## **Consequences for Behavior Problems**

**(Serious offenses result in immediate referral.)**

1. One Verbal Warning
2. Private Detention
3. Parent Conference
4. Referral to Administrator

## **Grading Rubric**

Participation	33%	(Evaluated daily by instructor)
Written work, tests	33%	Notes, journal, plans, short answer tests
Performances and presentations	34%	Exercises and performances presented for the class

Please remember, Theatre as a subject and a craft is very subjective and does not always lend itself to objective grading – I can't necessarily count the number of wrong (whatever that may mean) answers – assignments will be scored/graded under the fairest circumstances, but also considering the best interest desire to motivate growth in the student as a person, thinker, and actor.

## **Attendance**

- Regular participation in class discussions and activities is paramount to success.
- Your learning will occur through doing, observing, and evaluating performances. Any day you miss hurts your learning and that of the class.

## **Make-up Work**

**Students are responsible for obtaining and completing all notes, classwork, homework, quizzes, and tests assigned on days of absences.** Arrange with Mr. Burgess to make up quizzes or tests. You must complete missed assignments in the allotted time after your absence or you will receive a zero.

**If for some reason you do not attend class on the day of a performance, be aware, you will be required to perform when you return to school, or receive a zero.**

## **Extra Credit**

To encourage students to attend plays, extra credit can be earned as follows:

- Student attends a stage play or musical during a semester
- Within 5 school days of attending the play, student turns in 100 word report & ticket stub

- Student will be awarded **1 point added to his or her final class grade** (maximum 5 extra points)

### **Required Class Materials**

- Folder: Yes! Paper or plastic organizer to hold Acting materials  
 Journal: Yes! Composition book, 50-100 pages  
 Paper: Yes! White college-ruled  
 Writing: Yes! Neat handwriting, **black or dark blue pen**  
                   **Always bring a pencil** for writing in scripts  
 Scripts: Yes! **Always** bring any script you have been assigned  
                   Reprints of script from teacher will cost \$ .25 per page  
 Clothing: Yes! Student's clothing must allow full participation in acting exercises  
                   and performances

### **Textbook (All texts remain in the classroom unless checked out for the night):**

- The Stage and the School
- Theatre- Art in Action
- Basic Drama Projects
- Acting Tips by Jon Jory
- **Scripts** are the property of either Highlands High School or Mr. Burgess. You will check out scripts for use and they must be turned back into the theatre library when you are finished. You will be charged \$10.00 for every unreturned or damaged script.

### **Course Outline/Calendar:**

**(Please note this list is a general idea. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the topics or order included on this list depending on the needs of the students.)**

#### **First Semester**

**Fundamentals of the Stage**  
**The development of the play**  
**Character Development**  
**Improvisation**  
**Solo Acting**

#### **Second Semester**

**History of Theater**  
**Play writing**  
**Evaluating/Writing about theater**  
**Stage Voice**  
**Scene Acting**

## Mr. Burgess's Expectations

### Classroom Expectations

1. **Attention** – Be attentive to whom is speaking at all times
2. **Commitment** - Stay on task and commit to projects to optimize output and minimize distraction.
3. **Trust** – Have faith and rely on your classmates and myself to be there for you.
4. **Opportunity** – Seize moments to excel in every activity of the classroom.
5. **Respect** – Respect, honor, and take care of everyone in the classroom.

### Classroom Rules

✓ *Cell phone policy:*

Consider my classroom a performance. Any theatrical performance asks the audience to please turn off all cell phones, pagers, blackberries or anything else that makes noise. I am asking the same thing of you. If I hear (remember vibrate still makes a noise), see, or even sense that you are using your phone to communicate via text message, voice communication, or email without my consent, then this is the sequence of action:

*1<sup>st</sup> offense* – I take your battery/phone for the rest of the day, you can pick it up after school.

*2<sup>nd</sup> offense* – I take you battery/phone for the rest of the day, you will be given an extra assignment that must be completed by the next day.

*3<sup>rd</sup> offense* – All of the above and I give your phone to Mr. Schneider and you must meet with him and accept the proper discipline to get your phone back.

✓ **Macbooks**

Use of laptops during class for note-taking or web research related to the course can be helpful to learning. But if you are the kind of person who cannot resist the temptation to take a peek at email or other websites, you should just keep your laptop off and stowed away. If it looks to me like you are distracted, I will ask you to turn the screen around so that I and the rest of the class can see what you were looking at.

✓ **Emails/Schoology Messages**

No replies after 10pm  
No email assignments

✓ **Office Hours**

I am constantly here because of rehearsals and other events. I am extremely flexible and can meet before or after school. Just check with me on my availability.

✓ **No bathroom breaks, errands, or anything outside of the classroom for the last 10 minutes of the class.**

✓ **You must be in your seats when the bell rings at the beginning of class. Use the bathroom during your class change. DO NOT bring your things into class, drop them**

off, and then go to the bathroom during the class change, which then results in you being late to my class. You are not in my class just because you stuff is. You are late. If you are late once, it is a warning. After that, you are with me after school for 15 minutes. It doesn't matter what you have going on after school. Respect my classroom and I will respect your activities and lives outside of it.

- ✓ Dress code – please be in dress code but also be in comfortable clothes to move around in. We will play a lot of acting and movement based games that will be hard to play in restrictive clothing.

**Parent Acknowledgement**

Parents, please read this syllabus with your child, then complete the next page and have the student return it to Mr. Burgess promptly.

**Intro to Theatre Course Syllabus Acknowledgement (Syllabus and other information is available at [www.highlandstheatre.com](http://www.highlandstheatre.com))**

Student Name (please print)

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Mother/guardian (please print):

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Father/guardian (please print):

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**We, the student and parent or guardian, have read the syllabus for Intro to Theatre. We understand the information and the expectations for this course.**

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Student Signature

Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature (Just one)

Date