

**Highlands High School
Acting/Directing/Playwriting
2016-2017 Course Syllabus**

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Grade(s) 10-12

**Dual Credit Available through
Western Kentucky University**

Prerequisite(s) for Acting:

Introduction to Theatre or teacher recommendation

Prerequisite(s) for Directing:

Introduction to Theatre, Acting and/or teacher recommendation

Prerequisite(s) for Playwriting:

Introduction to Theatre, Acting, Directing and/or teacher recommendation

Description of Class:

Acting introduces the fundamentals of drama, acting and play production. Students will explore the origins and history of drama and will learn to appreciate quality stage presentations. Students will develop the skills to communicate clearly with the audience as well as classmates and create believable moments as characters on stage. Students will build self-confidence and self-awareness as they prepare and perform monologues, scenes and improvisations in class.

Directing studies the principles, procedures, and practices of stage direction. Beginning with a non-verbal approach to composition and movement study, and progressing to more formal text work, the various exercises culminate in the direction of a one act play for public performance at the end of the school year.

Playwriting is designed to develop the writer's individual theatrical style through the writing of scenes and a 1-act play (or work toward a full-length play). You explore the dimensions of writing for the stage through key areas of craft, including language, dialogue, the essentials of dramatic form, and structure. You also focus on dramatic tension (behavior, action, and the spoken word) and character--fulfilling theme through the depiction of characters with distinct voices and histories. This course is designed to give the student the fundamentals of play construction and theory, using writing techniques and exercise, and in-class feedback. The goal is to complete a one-act play or one act of a play. The class will culminate with a final presentation of scenes, read by actors brought in for that purpose.

Comments

Acting/Directing/Playwriting is a good course for those who want to gain confidence on stage and in leadership, have fun, to explore the craft and methods of acting and directing, and more. Students are required to assist with each of the productions by the Drama Department. This may involve ushering, auditioning, etc. 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.

Objectives

In Acting, students who succeed in this class will:

- Develop concentration, overcome self-consciousness and deal with stage fright positively
- Use voice and movement expressively, creatively and with originality
- Work to create trust and make believable connections with fellow actors
- Identify and create basic elements of drama
- Strive to excel and work beyond one's comfort zone
- Appreciate and understand live theatre
- Apply and demonstrate acting styles, methods, and techniques through script analysis and performances
- Read and analyze a variety of works from theatrical literature.
- Develop listening, speaking, and observation skills.

In Directing, students who succeed in this class will:

- Develop the ability to analyze a text for dramatic action
- Incorporate ideas and concepts from various art forms in order to analyze dramatic texts.
- Articulate an "approach" for the direction of a playtext
- Be able to articulate their vision to core theatre artists
- Offer intellectual insight, constructive criticism, and effective direction to actors and designers
- Explore creative solutions to immediate and ongoing rehearsal issues
- Develop an awareness of the responsibilities of an artist to society, and the responsibilities of a society to its artists

In Playwriting, students who succeed in this class will:

- To write in standard play form.
- To supply exposition that enables the audience to understand the "rules" of the drama.
- To write active dialogue.
- To write characters with clearly defined objectives and identifiable dramatic arcs.
- To write a scene with a beginning, middle, and end.
- To construct narrative through dramatic action.
- To define a list terms such as the following: dramatic event, character, arc, scene, tone, story, plot, thematic, tragedy, comedy, etc.
- To read and discuss dramatic literature in relation to his/her own writing and the writing of classmates.
- To submit his/her writing assignments on time to the instructor for grading.
- To complete all reading assignments on time and demonstrate his/her knowledge of the readings in class discussions.

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

Cell Phone Policy

- As a matter of courtesy, please turn off or put on silent all cell phones, pagers, and other communication and entertainment devices prior to the beginning of class. Notify me in advance if you are monitoring an emergency, for which cell phone ringers should be switched to vibrate.

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.

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	33%	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 and Topics Covered (Not all listed):

- Foundations of Acting
- Acting styles such as Stanislavsky and more
- Dialects
- Stage Combat
- Movement
- Voice
- Monologue work
- Scene work
- How to break down a script

Directing:

- Play Analysis
- Composition
- Picturization
- Movement
- Working with the Actor
- Themes
- Concept
- Play Production

Playwriting:

- Structure
- Developing Characters
- Dramatic Action
- Language
- Theatricality
- Themes
- Rewriting
- Producing

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.

Acting/Directing/Playwriting Course Syllabus Acknowledgement (Syllabus and other information is available at www.schoolology.com and at www.highlandstheatre.com)

Student Name (please print)

Mother/guardian (please print):

Father/guardian (please print):

We, the student and parent or guardian, have read the syllabus for Acting/Directing/Playwriting. We understand the information and the expectations for this course.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature (Just one)

Date