



# School District of Marshfield

## Course Syllabus

Course Name: Drama

Length of Course: Semester

Credits: ½ Credit

Prerequisite: None

Course Description: So much more than acting, this course will provide a broad view of what constitutes "drama" and "theatre." Through a combination of textbook study, active participation, current articles, and video clips, learn about the roots and rich history of theatre; experience the basics of acting, including warm-up routines, acting exercises, and techniques to create character; become familiar with the spectrum of theatre study and careers in theatre; understand the technical components of theatre production; and gain insight into theatre's counterparts.

Learning Targets: By the end of the semester, students will

- Learn about the origins of theatre and gain familiarity with current theatre trends
- Learn methods of relaxing the body and mind
- Strengthen powers of observation and recall
- Develop an awareness of body language as a means of communication
- Understand the basics of improvisation
- Understand the communal experience of theatre and audience etiquette
- Become familiar with the areas of the stage and plan and execute stage movement
- Understand how to communicate emotions and develop a character through the voice
- Detect clues about a character from dramatic text, including physical and emotional traits
- Learn something of the history and range of both dramatic and comedic roles
- Understand the roles of director and other members of the production team
- Become familiar with the casting process and audition etiquette
- Learn about different types of sets and basic principles of set construction
- Understand the roles of technical aspects of theatre, including lighting, sound, costumes, and makeup for interpretation, mood, and emphasis
- Learn the job of the prop master and methods of building simple props

- Understand the elements of musical theatre
- Recognize theatrical forms outside the realm of traditional theatre and understand how the elements of theatre, film, and television differ

## Topic Outline – Units and Themes:

### First Quarter

- I. Overview of Theatre and Its Components (Weeks 1 – 2)
  - A. Exploring Theatre History
  - B. How to Define “Theatre”
- II. Unit One, “Begin with the Basics” (Weeks 3 – 5)
  - A. Warm Up Routines
  - B. Stage Fright
  - C. Observation and Memory
  - D. Pantomime
  - E. Improvisation
  - F. Theatre History and Enrichment
    1. Stanislavski System / The Actor’s Studio
    2. Marcel Marceau
    3. Kabuki
    4. Commedia Dell’arte to the Second City
- III. Unit Two, “Elements of Acting” (Weeks 6 – 7)
  - A. Movement / Stage Movement
  - B. Stage Directions
  - C. Voice Production and Articulation
  - D. Ensemble Work
  - Theatre History and Enrichment
    1. Ritual Dance Movement to Modern Movement
    2. Storytellers Across Time
- IV. Unit Three, “Creating a Character” (Weeks 8 – 9)
  - A. Character Analysis
  - B. Character Development
  - C. Dramatic Roles
  - D. Comic Roles
  - E. Theatre History and Enrichment
    1. Henrik Ibsen to Arthur Miller
    2. Elizabethan Drama to Bertolt Brecht and Epic Theatre
    3. Hamlet: A Role for All Eras
    4. Great Comic Playwrights

### Second Quarter

- I. Unit Four, “The Play: from Vision to Reality” (Weeks 10 – 12)
  - A. The Playwright
  - B. The Director, Producer, and Dramaturg

- C. The Cast and the Audition / Casting Director
- D. Blocking and Stage Combat
- E. Attending a Play and Audience Participation
- F. Theatre History and Enrichment
  1. Playwriting Contests of Old and Today
  2. The Evolution of the Director
  3. Leading Ladies, Edward Kynaston to Cherry Jones
  4. The Ancient Greek Chorus to *A Chorus Line*
  5. The Roman Audience of 200 A.D. to Off-Broadway Audiences

Today

II. Unit Five, "Technical Theatre" (Weeks 13 – 15)

- A. Set Design and Construction
- B. Lighting
- C. Sound
- D. Costumes,
- E. Make Up
- F. Props
- G. Theatre History and Enrichment
  1. Staging Through the Ages / Current Technology
  2. Theatre by Candlelight to Lights Up on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century
  3. Sound Effects Through Time
  4. The Art of Costuming from the Middle Ages to Today
  5. The Actor's Face of Ancient Asia to Contemporary Dramatic Faces
  6. Symbolic Props Across Time

III. Unit Six, "Theatre and Its Counterparts" (Weeks 16 – 18)

- A. Musical Theatre
- B. Other Theatre Forms
  1. Performance Art
  2. Multimedia
  3. Puppet Theatre
  4. Readers Theatre
  5. Poetry Slams
- C. Stage to Film
- D. Movies
- E. Television
- F. Critique a Performance
- G. Theatre History and Enrichment
  1. The Common Language of Music – Peking Opera to Modern Spectacle
  2. Puppetry for All Time – Bunraku to Political Puppetry
  3. Homer to Home Viewing – the Odyssey of *The Odyssey*
  4. American Film
  5. Theatre and Television: The Odd Couple

## 6. Strong Views and Famous Feuds – the Role of the Critic

**Resources:** Primary Resources include

- *Basic Drama Projects*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (Textbook)
- *Improvisation for the Theatre*, Viola Spolin
- *Raising the Curtain, Activities for the Theatre Arts Classroom*
- *Dramatics & Stage Directions Magazine*
- *American Theatre Wing, In the Wings* (online site)
- *112 Acting Games* by Gavin Levy
- *Thespians* directed by Warren Skeels
- *The Phantom of the Opera* directed by Joel Schumacher
- *Les Miserables* directed by Tom Hooper
- *Finding Neverland* directed by Marc Forster