

Westmont High School Theatre I: *Beginning Acting* Course Syllabus 2016 / 2017



INSTRUCTOR: Mr. Jeff Bengford **ROOM:** Room 6

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This year-long, activity-oriented course is designed to introduce students to the art of the actor while building upon the student's Creativity, Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration & College and Career Readiness.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To study basic principles of acting & character analysis
- To explore the use of objectives, obstacles, & choices
- To learn about theatre etiquette, the audition process and basic stage & rehearsal terms

CONTENT STANDARDS

Theatre I fulfills the California State Standards for the Visual & Performing Arts as well as the Visual & Performing Arts requirements for graduation from WHS and entrance to the UC/CSU system.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE WORK

Fall Semester:

1st Six Weeks TOPIC: Mime & Media / **PROJECTS:** Theatre Games, Etiquette, Vocabulary, Mime, Media Report

Student Outcomes: By creating and participating in Theatre, students use observation skills as they understand that the audience is an integral part of the art form.

2nd Six Weeks TOPIC: Comedy / **PROJECTS:** Characterization, Lip Sync, Scenes

Student Outcomes: Students break down a complex observation. Students become aware of the media's influence on their life. Students create a scene.

3rd Six Weeks TOPIC: Tragedy / **PROJECTS:** Scenes, Monologue Project

Student Outcomes: Students break down a complex observation. Students create a scene and a solo work.

Spring Semester:

1st Six Weeks TOPIC: Collaboration / **PROJECTS:** Theatre Research Project (including scene work)

Student Outcomes: Students understand how history & Theatre affect our culture while they gain skills in creative expression.

2nd Six Weeks TOPIC: Rehearsal Process / **PROJECTS:** One Acts, Mirror to Life Play Report, Playwriting Project

Student Outcomes: Students use their power of Critical Assessment.

3rd Six Weeks TOPIC: Production / **PROJECTS:** One Acts, Career Report, Resume, Pitch Project

Student Outcomes: Students make career connections while exercising life skills including: time management, financial budgeting, and collaboration.

Check WestmontDrama.com for the most current dates

GRADING POLICY

The grade a student receives in this course is determined by the following weighted percentages:

Class Work 40%

*This class is interactive. The more each student puts into the class, the more we will all get out of it.
Students earn points for positive cooperation in class activities and a willingness to try, ask questions, and volunteer.
Students lose points when they are disruptive, disrespectful or unprepared*

Grading Rubric

A = Takes initiative / contributes beyond required.

B = Participates often in class.

C = Satisfactory and complete. Shows interest.

D = Minimum effort. Seldom responds in class.

F = Breathing but rarely responsive.

0 = Tries to be invisible.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and promptness is expected at all times. Your grade will suffer for each absence.

- Tardies affect the student's overall class grade.
- When absent the parent, guardian or student should contact the instructor as soon as possible.
- Students absent for school activities are expected to submit their work on time or before the work is due.
- Work loses a potential grade every day the work is late. (A work submitted 1 day late = B work)

Missed Performances

Students who miss a performance will miss performance points. To make up those points, students must find, rehearse, and create their own performance. They must also find their own space, audience and recording to document their performance. Once I have reviewed the recording, I will access the work for a grade.

Assignments 40%

Written work is graded on the clarity of the work (ex: blocking in a script); format, grammar, spelling, and mechanics count. Tests and quizzes are occasionally given to evaluate the student's understanding of Theatre Vocabulary.

Students are never graded on "talent." A performance rubric is used to grade performances. (see attached)

Students will:

- participate in daily exercises, theatre games, projects and workshops.
- choose, rehearse and present a scene in the fall and a One Act play in the spring.
- create a scene book for each of the above
- present a monologue each semester
- complete a Theater Research Project (oral report + assigned scene perf. + individual response paper)
- participate in the annual One Act Play Festival: after-school rehearsals: **2:30-5:00 May 22, 23, 24**
Performances: May 25 & 26

ONE ACTS: Each class selects their own plays and student directors.

Any rehearsal or performance missed will reduce the student's semester grade by one-third.

Students are required to attend all performances of the One Act Festival whether they are performing or not.

One Act Play directors are responsible for the technical needs and clean up of their plays.

Critiques 10%

Students must write two Critiques per semester. One Critique SHOULD be on the school play presented during that semester and the other must be on a show produced by a professional company, community theatre, high school or college. Shows produced by a children's theatre or a church are not acceptable. (See the attached outline to help you write a Critique.)

NOTE: The instructor is available to help students find cost effective ways to see shows.

If a student does not write the minimum 2 critiques that are required, they can not receive an A.

Extra credit and hours work toward filling in every other part of the student's grades except critiques.

Service Hours 10%.

Students must work on a Westmont show in some way or another for a minimum of 10 hours. These hours are in lieu of traditional homework. Students are responsible for updating their Time Card online at: www.WestmontDrama.com

REQUIRED MATERIALS *(the following items are recommended)*

- A. Books / plays / materials checked out to you
- B. College-ruled binder paper
- C. Black or Blue Pen(s)
- D. a DEDICATED folder or 3 ring binder with sleeves to keep your work in

CLASSROOM RULES

Show Respect

Respect each other, respect the work, respect the process, respect the director(s).

Be sensitive to the ideas, opinions and property of others.

Do not use profanity, name calling, or physical abuse.

Be here.

You must be here for class, in class and after-school rehearsals & evening performances. Roles are subject to be recast if you are absent.

Be ready.

Be warmed up, be memorized, be professional.

Late work is accepted for a lower grade.

Clean Up.

Keep the stage and the drama room clean – No food, drinks, or gum. Throw smelly trash away outside.

A Special Note:

Keep your ipods, cell phones & make-up out of the classroom. If used, these items will be confiscated. You are now warned.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Collaboration: Theatre is the most collaborative of all art forms. Our class is an artistic community, dependent on the participation and enthusiasm of each member for the success of the whole.

Dress Code: Comfortable, loose-fitting clothing should be worn at all times. No revealing or assaulting clothing is permitted.

Outside Work: Though there is time set aside in class to work on your performance pieces, you must work on your material outside of class in order to be completely successful in this course.

Scene / Monologue Selections: Students will be required to seek out new material to work on each semester. Scenes & monologues must be from published works. I own a few plays and I am willing to help you find material if you ask.

**The theater building and all the spaces in which we share our love of theatre
are extensions of the classroom and thus, all school rules are applicable.**

ACADEMIC CODE OF CONDUCT

All students are expected to adhere to the guidelines of the Westmont High School Academic Code of Conduct.

Do your own work. Any text from another source must have quotation marks placed around it and be followed by a parenthetical source citation. Any form of plagiarism or cheating will result in an immediate "F" and referral to the dean.

“Everyday is an Audition”

CUHSD Theatre Arts Performance Rubric

Name _____ Per _____ Date _____ Title _____

(used to score individual student performances; a separate rubric will be completed for each performer)

	Excellent A	Proficient B	Basic C	Below Basic D
Characterization	Stayed entirely in character, making believable, clearly motivated choices.	Stayed in character. Choices and motivation were sometimes not believable or clear .	Broke character. Choices were not believable nor clear .	Did not create nor maintain a believable character.
Acting Choices (Beats, Objectives, Obstacles, Tactics)	The actor made clear choices to achieve their objective(s).	The actor made some choices to achieve their objective(s).	The actor's choices were often unclear.	The actor made no clear choices .
Movement	Mulitple actions were clearly expressed using arms, hands, legs and torso. Smooth and appropriate blocking.	Some actions were clearly expressed using arms, hands, legs and torso. Smooth blocking.	Attempted to express actions, but movements were unclear . Choppy or stagnant blocking.	Little to no action nor blocking.
Memorization	Fully memorized	Mostly memorized (no more than 2 line errors)	Mostly memorized (3-4 line errors)	Used a script onstage
Vocal Characterization	Build, Delivery, Inflection, Pacing, Pitch, Projection, Resonance, Rhythm, Tempo, Timing, Volume	Build, Delivery, Inflection, Pacing, Pitch, Projection, Resonance, Rhythm, Tempo, Timing, Volume	Build, Delivery, Inflection, Pacing, Pitch, Projection, Resonance, Rhythm, Tempo, Timing, Volume	Build, Delivery, Inflection, Pacing, Pitch, Projection, Resonance, Rhythm, Tempo, Timing, Volume
Commitment	The actor committed to staying in character throughout the entire performance.	The actor committed to staying in character throughout most of the performance.	The actor committed to staying in character throughout some of the performance.	The actor did not commit to staying in character throughout most of the performance.
Synergy	The actors developed a strong, clear relationship.	The actors developed a clear relationship.	The actors developed a somewhat clear relationship.	The actors did not develop a clear relationship.



Theatre Critiques

A Critique is a formal, written discussion of a performance of a play or musical.
The Critique should contain **five** paragraphs.
Use MLA Format for your heading and margins.

Two Critiques are required per semester

Short Paragraph 1 - The Basics

Introduce the name of the play, author, place of performance, date of performance, and director.
In a few sentences talk about the basic theme of the play and discuss the general plot.

Paragraphs 2 & 3 - The Acting

React to two of the performers in the play. Be sure to use their names.
Were they believable: true to the play, the production, the theatrical conditions?
The following items should be discussed in your review.
You should respond with more than "yes" or "no" answers.
VOICE: How did the actor use their volume, tempo, vocal quality, articulation?
BODY: How did the actor use gestures, movement, and stage business?
EMOTIONS: Were the emotions true to the character?
FACIAL EXPRESSIONS: How did the actor use their face?
PROJECTION: How did the actor project orally and visually to the audience?



Paragraph 4 - The Design

The following items should be discussed in your review.
You should respond with more than "yes" or "no" answers.
SET: Did the set establish the correct mood and background for the play?
LIGHTS: Did the lighting convey the proper mood, emphasis, and illumination?
COSTUMES & MAKE UP: Were the costumes and makeup true to the period and characters?
SOUND: How did the sound effects and music contribute to the show's mood?

Short Paragraph 5 - Your Reaction

What was your opinion of the play?
Avoid generic phrases like: "two thumbs up" or "3 out of 5 stars"

DO:

1. Back up all your opinions with valid reasons.
2. Be objective, fair and constructive. Indicate good points along with those you felt needed improvement.
3. Be sincere. Believe what you say.
4. Use MLA Format for your heading and margins.
5. **Attach a program for the performance you saw (unless you saw the show with me as a field trip)**

DON'T:

1. Don't be overly critical. Approach a performance with an attitude of enjoying it.
2. Don't be arrogant. Be humble, kind, and remember the challenges of doing live theatre.

A Format for Writing Theatre Reviews

Created by Jeff Bengford

Paragraph #1	When	On Thursday, June 11	
	What	I saw an original musical called <i>Tiger Stripes</i> written by Doug Soucha presented by TheatreWorks	
	Where	at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts.	
	Plot	This <i>brilliant new work</i> is about... (the italicized words above are appropriate for <i>Tiger Stripes</i> but you should choose your own words for the show you are evaluating)	
Paragraph #2	Who	During the show, I very much enjoyed the performance of...	
		Actor's name	
		Character they played	
		Discuss the use of their "tools" Voice, Body, Facial Expressions	
		Give examples	
Paragraph #3	Who else	I also would like to discuss the performance of...	
		Actor's name	
		Character they played	
		Discuss the use of their "tools" Voice, Body, Facial Expressions	
		Give examples	
Paragraph #4	Wow!	In addition to the <i>fine</i> work of (actor's names) I was also <i>impressed with</i> the technical aspects of the show.	
		Discuss the sets, lights, costumes, props	
Paragraph #5	Wrap it Up	I <i>enjoyed</i> this production and...	

Make sure **YOUR** words are appropriate for the show **YOU** saw

Monologue



NOTES

1) INTRODUCTIONS: Students should **clearly** introduce both of their pieces.

A typical introduction might sound like this:

Hello, my name is Tom Hanks. Today I will be performing two monologues. The first will be Jack from The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde and my second piece will be the title character from Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus.

Once the student has finished their introduction, they should take a moment to get into character and then begin.

2) TRANSITIONS: The transition from one monologue to the next is almost like a third piece. Students should take the time to clearly show the end of their first piece, hold their final moment, and then **SILENTLY** but efficiently prepare to begin their second piece. This “preparation” might include the striking or addition of a chair, the loosening of a collar or hair, or the realignment of the body. The transition should **NOT** include a costume change or additional introductions.

3) TIME: Students should be given a specific time limit for their 2 pieces. (5 minutes is typical) Timing does not begin until **AFTER** the introduction.

4) Students should always say “thank you” when they are done.