



RADNOR TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Course Syllabus



# ADVANCED THEATRE ARTS

Course # 05160942

## General Information

Credits: 1.0

Weighted: Unweighted

Prerequisite: None

Repeating the Course: Yes

Total Students: 20

Length: Full Year

Format: Meets Daily

Grade: 9-12

Audition Required? No

## Course Description

Prerequisites: Theater Arts or American Musical Theater

Repeat the Course: Yes; Audition Required: No, but serious work ethic and extensive experience is crucial. Theater Arts II is a course for the advanced student actor who wishes to begin building a portfolio of their performances. Students will be evaluated on in class and culminating performances in many forms: live performance, video performance, and audio performance. Students will read and consider four techniques of acting, specifically Adler, Meisner, Hagen, and Moss. Students will be expected to utilize correct theater vocabulary, and be able to intellectually analyze and create characters, plots, and storylines. Students are expected to design sets, costumes, and blocking, and students will direct scenes. Students will create their own monologues, scenes, and plays, as well as create more complex and productive improvisations. Students are expected to audition for the fall and spring plays, as well as the musical but do not necessarily have to participate onstage; All students, however, will be expected to assist the performances in some way.

*This course is open to students in grades 10-12.*

## Course Objectives:

- How do actors perform exercises for mind and body, with regards to relaxation and focus, as well as observation of self and other individuals, benefit the actor in particular?
- How does human psychology factor into the world of theater, and how does the actor have to balance the art of presenting themselves with the art of creating a character?
- How do the methods of Stella Adler, Stanford Meisner, Uta Hagen, and Larry Moss compare and contrast?
- How does a long form improvisation aid the actor's training and comfort onstage, as well as trusting and connecting with fellow actors?
- How does the actor build a character, as well as an environment? How does a playwright and the other artists on the team of a work create and build a compelling story?
- Why are trust and collaboration crucial elements in the theatre, specifically with regards to improvisation, and collaboration with fellow artists?
- How does conflict come about in a story? How does a director and actors bring forth the characters and story to the audience?

## **Common Assessments:**

### **COMMON ASSESSMENT: PERFORMANCES**

- **MONOLOGUE PERFORMANCE - Authentic Assessment - Dramatic / Comedic** - Each student will prepare both a comedic and a dramatic monologue from a work of theatre literature, or an acceptable independent monologue, approved by the teacher. Students will demonstrate extensive preparation, specifically in memorization, character, blocking, clear objective, established motivations and actions, and scenic preparation. Students will evaluate each other's scenes via Schoology, or another online collaborative entity.
- **SCENE PERFORMANCE - Authentic Assessment** - Assigned groups of students will be assigned two scenes, including both a comedic and a dramatic monologue from a work of theatre literature. Students will demonstrate extensive preparation, specifically in memorization, character, blocking, clear objective, established motivations and actions, and scenic preparation. Students will maintain focus, and demonstrate clear cooperative interaction of their characters. Students will evaluate each other's scenes via Schoology, or another online collaborative entity.
- **SHAKESPEARE PERFORMANCE - Authentic Assessment** - Each student will prepare both a comedic and a dramatic monologue or scene from a work of Shakespeare, approved by the teacher. Students will demonstrate extensive preparation, specifically in memorization, character, blocking, clear objective, established motivations and actions, and scenic preparation. Students will evaluate each other's scenes via Schoology, or another online collaborative entity.

### **COMMON ASSESSMENT: PLAYWRITING**

- **MONOLOGUE CREATION and PERFORMANCE - "IN MY LIFE" - Formative/Authentic Assessment** - Students will create their own small production of monologues entitled *In My Life*. Students will write their own monologues (*and are invited to write mini scenes as well*). These monologues will be drawn from their own experiences, fiction or non-fiction (*which will remain unknown to the audience*). As the title implies, the theme of their works will reflect their current experiences, in a variety of topics. This show will be prepared, rehearsed, and performed as a midterm grade for the public. Students will evaluate each other's scenes via Schoology, or another online collaborative entity.
- **SCENE CREATION and PERFORMANCE - "RADNOR ACTORS WORKSHOP" - Formative/Authentic Assessment** - Students will create their own small production of scenes entitled *Radnor Actors Workshop*. Students will write their own one act plays. These scenes will be drawn from their own experiences, fiction or non-fiction (*which will remain unknown to the audience*). This show will be prepared, rehearsed, and performed as a final grade for the public. Students will evaluate each other's scenes via Schoology, or another online collaborative entity.
- **IMPROVISATION - Formative/Authentic Assessment** - Students will present or create their own improvisation games, to be taught to the class. Students will begin by writing down the procedure and rules for the game. Then, the students will try it out within a small group of students, as the teacher coaches the groups. Students will then formally teach the games to the class. The game must be playable within five minutes, and a few rounds only will be played. Students will evaluate each other's scenes via Schoology, or another online collaborative entity.

### **COMMON ASSESSMENT: TECHNICAL DESIGN**

- **SCENIC DESIGN - Formative Assessment** - Students will choose from a list of musicals and plays for which to design a complete, color scenic model. Not necessarily to scale, but within a budget. Students will contact vendors to get a "quote" for backdrops/legs, and will have to estimate costs of lumber and materials. The use of technology in designing, textures, colors, etc is highly encouraged.
- **SOUND and LIGHTING DESIGN - Formative Assessment** - Students will choose from a list of musicals and plays, which have scenic designs and models completed by the other students, for which to design a simple plot for microphones, sound effects, soundscapes, and lighting images. Technology use is expected, specifically a graphical representation of the plots, using Apple Pages, Microsoft Word, or image based apps, such as Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, etc.
- **COSTUME DESIGN - Formative Assessment** - Students will choose from a list of musicals and plays, which have scenic, sound, and lighting designs and models completed by the other students, for which to design a costume plot for all characters.

### **COMMON ASSESSMENT: CRITIQUE and CONNECT**

- **ONE PLAY, ONE MUSICAL, and ONE MOVIE - Formative Assessment** - By the end of the course, each student must have attended one play, one musical, and one movie. The performance must be at the high school or collegiate level or higher. Radnor productions do not count towards this assignment. It must be a play, and the other must be a musical, and the movie must be in theaters. Those students encountering challenges in completing this assignment may approach the teacher for alternative ideas. Professional touring shows that are brought to the high school may count towards this assignment. Students will create a magazine, reviewing each of the three pieces they see. A program and ticket must be procured from the shows, and a ticket stub must be procured from the movie. Students will share their magazines with a colleague for peer evaluation, and must furnish a copy to be posted in the classroom, as well as a digital copy for the

teacher, posted on Schoology or other collaborative website.

## Major Strands of Study:

### 1 - UNIT ONE: Fundamentals of Theatrical Presentation (Q-1)

- 1.1 - WARMUP / RELAXATION / CONCENTRATION
  - 1.1.1 - RELAXATION/WARMUP Activities - Importance of.
  - 1.1.2 - MEMORIZATION
- 1.2 - TOOLS of PERFORMANCE – Voice, Body, and Mind
  - 1.2.1 - BODY- Poise, Posture, Expression
  - 1.2.2 - PANTOMIME
  - 1.2.3 - VOICE- Mechanism Diction, Projection, Articulation, Pitch
- 1.3 - ACTOR as PERFORMER vs. ACTOR as CHARACTER
- 1.4 - OBSERVATION and the HUMAN PSYCHE
  - 1.4.1 - Observing self behaviors
  - 1.4.2 - Observing others and their behaviors
  - 1.4.3 - Seeing, Hearing, and Feeling - Intensely

### 2 - UNIT TWO: The Method(s) of Acting (Q-1)

- 2.1 - PRESENTATIONAL vs. INTERNALIZED METHODS
  - 2.1.1 - Presentational Method - Pre-Stanislavsky - Kabuki, commedia del arte, etc.
  - 2.1.2 - Stanislavsky - “Method” acting - the Modern Theatre
  - 2.1.3 - The Methods of Uta Hagen, Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner, and Larry Moss

### 3 - UNIT THREE: Stella Adler and Sanford Meisner (Q-1;Q-2)

- 3.1 - STELLA ADLER
  - 3.1.1 - Book: *The Art of Acting* - Jigsaw Reading/Reports
  - 3.1.2 - Adler Exercises
  - 3.1.3 - Finding the Larger Than Life Theme
- 3.2 - SANFORD MEISNER
  - 3.2.1 - Book: *On Acting* - Jigsaw Reading/Reports
  - 3.2.2 - Meisner Exercises
  - 3.2.3 - Instinct - Acting from the heart, not the head

### 4 - UNIT FOUR: Uta Hagen (Q-2)

- 4.1 - UTA HAGEN
  - 4.1.1 - Book: *The Art of Acting* - Jigsaw Reading/Reports
  - 4.1.2 - Hagen Exercises
  - 4.1.3 - Re-creating reality and truthfulness onstage

### 5 - UNIT FIVE: Successful Improvisation through Rules and Regulations (Q-2, Q-3)

- 5.1 - THE RULES of IMPROVISATION
  - 5.1.1 - An Oxymoron? Improvisation through Rules
- 5.2 - THE THEATRE GAME
  - 5.2.1 - Moving an Exercise from Game to Story - Long Form Improvisation
  - 5.2.2 - Trusting Your Partners
  - 5.2.3 - Making Your Partner Look Like a Theatrical Genius
  - 5.2.4 - Drawing from Stock Characters
  - 5.2.5 - The Amazing “What If?”

### 6 - UNIT SIX: Scene Work and Analysis Master Class (Q-3)

- 5.1 - SCENE ANALYSIS
  - 5.1.1 - Fleshing out your characters, settings, relationships, conflicts, designs, props
- 5.2 - BLOCKING and CHOICES
  - 5.2.1 - Establishing the Reality of the environment, props, and actions
  - 5.2.2 - Subtext - What is *Really* being said?
  - 5.2.3 - The Master Class as a format
  - 5.2.4 - Articulating issues/challenges, and working through them
  - 5.2.5 - Rehearsing it so often it becomes - Emotional and Truthful

### 7 - UNIT SEVEN: Auditioning/Playwriting(Q-4)

- 7.0 - Auditioning
  - A.1.1 - The Portfolio: Pictures, Multimedia, Résumé, and Audition Material
  - A.1.2 - Recording and Editing Your Work
  - A.1.3 - “Nailing” the Audition - And Still Not Getting the Part
- 7.1 - Playwriting - Writing our own One Act Play
  - 7.1.1 - Scenework: The Complex Interweaving of Character, Image, and Story
  - 7.1.2 - Characters and Conflict - When Motivations, Wants, and Needs Intersect
  - 7.1.3 - deus ex machina - Outside Forces at Work in a Scene
- 7.2 - Discovering the Characters
  - 7.2.1 - What are the Characters’ Wants and Needs?
  - 7.2.2 - What are the Characters’ Motivations?
  - 7.2.3 - Why Does the Character Take Action?
  - 7.2.4 - How Does the Action work Towards an Objective?
- 7.3 - Discovering the Story - The Director and Technical Elements
  - 7.3.1 - What is the Story? - Exposition, Development, Conflict, Resolution
  - 7.3.2 - The Micro and the Macro Elements and Actions
  - 7.3.3 - The Nuance and Subtlety of Technical Elements

### E - ENRICHMENT:

- E.1 - Other Techniques of Acting
  - E.1.1 - Viola Spolin
  - E.1.2 - Michael Chekhov
  - E.1.3 - Larry Moss
  - E.1.4 - Viewpoints

- STUDENT – Journal (any type), 3 ring binder, loose leaf paper, writing utensil(s), blank CDs and DVDs
- Flash Drive
- Google Account
- Website (Jimdo.com)
- Scripts of Plays (*Discretion of the Teacher*)
- Film performances from select shows (*DVDs and online sources*)
- *Basic Drama Projects* – Textbook – Dr. F. A. Tanner, University of Southern Idaho
- *The Art of Acting* - Stella Adler
- *A Challenge for the Actor* - Uta Hagen
- *On Acting* - Sanford Meisner
- *The Intent to Live* - Larry Moss
- *The Upright Citizens Brigade Comedy Improvisation Manual* - Besser, Roberts, and Walsh
- *Creative Play Direction* - Cohen/Harrop
- *The Drama Sourcebook* - Neil K. Johnson
- *Fundamentals of Acting* - Brigham Young University
- *The Dynamics of Acting* - Snyder
- *Acting: The Creative Process* - Albright and Albright
- Assorted pedagogy works