

IB Middle Years Program Years 4-5+ Performing Arts

High School Performing Arts, Willows Preparatory School

Course Description:

“Drama in the MYP engages students in an active relationship with theatre and encourages autonomous learning and exploration. It encourages the growth of creative, reflective and communication skills through practical work. Emphasis is placed on the artistic process and the students’ understanding of this process as an essential component to their artistic development through continuous investigation, planning, goal setting, rehearsing, performing, reflection and evaluation.” – MYP Arts Guide (2021)

This class is designed to provide a broad overview of the many subject areas in Theatre Arts. Our course will focus on both Acting and Technical Theatre. We will start with overall knowledge needs such as stage directions and notation. Topics within Acting will include: Voice and Diction, Character/Script Analysis, Mask work, and Improv. We will also touch on movement for performers with a focus on characterization. Topics within Technical Theatre will include: Set, Sound, Lights, Props, Costumes, Makeup, Stage Management, and Direction.

Students will have a chance to work both independently and in groups throughout the course.

Formative & Summative assessments will inform the final mark for the class with an emphasis on class participation.

Subject Aims

- Create and present art
- Develop skills specific to Theatre Arts
- Engage in a process of creative exploration and self-discovery
- Make purposeful connections between investigation and practice
- Understand the relationship between art and its contexts
- Respond to and reflect on art
- Deepen their understanding of the world.

Course Schedule (subject to change or reordering)

Unit 1: Introduction to Theatre Classroom- *How to communicate through play and expression.*

Tying into Communication using Play & Expression, this unit will cover theatre terminology and classroom mores. The goal of this short unit is to develop trust and understanding of expectations within the performing arts classroom

Unit 2: Acting – Mock Audition Monologues- *Create a unique identity to express a unique role.*

Handling Identity using Role & Expression, this unit will begin the basics of acting as a performing art. Students will choose monologues to work on through the unit to utilize skills

such as characterization, diction and projection, character analysis, slating and transitions. We will use both MYP standards and theatre specific standards from the International Thespian Society's competition rubric.

Unit 3: Movement – Mask Project- *Utilizing space and physicality to make changes in self.*

This unit is focused on removing “face acting” from students. Covering concepts of Change, Innovation & Genre, they will learn to work with their whole body, creating new and unique structures all while learning the history and classic use of masks in theatre. Students may choose between Greek or Commedia Dell’arte (other genres to be considered on a case by case basis). This is a group project unit. *I am hoping Covid will allow for a field trip with this unit! This unit may happen later in the year to allow for that.

Unit 4: Movement – Dance- *Creating an aesthetically beautiful composition can be achieved through interpretation of the artform.*

Basics of dance are a key piece of musical theatre. This unit will give a brief overview of jazz, tap, swing, and ballroom. Aesthetics through composition & interpretation as well as Personal & Cultural expression of Beauty will be discussed in this unit. Students will use the dance basics they learned in class as well as personal knowledge of dance styles they may have to choreograph a short dance to be presented to class. This is also a group project unit.

Unit 5: Movement – Stage Combat- *Strong boundaries can be used to communicate a composition expressing an imbalance of power.*

Stage combat is a fun and exciting part of theatre. It is also more about what you *don't* do than what you do. Using Communication to relate Boundaries & Composition, students will learn about balances of power. Through use of a superhero lens, students will choreograph a fight sequence in this unit. This will be in teams of 2 or 3 students.

Unit 6: Technical Theatre- *The backbone of performance art, aesthetics and structure as portrayed to the audience.*

Our technical theatre unit will be a fast-paced look at all aspects of backstage. Focusing on Aesthetic relating to Structure & Audience, we will cover the following topics in this unit: Set, props, sound, light, costumes, makeup, stage management & Directing. Students will learn how to analyze a script to pull technical information for a performance.

Unit 7: Final Scene- *The culmination of any theatre program is performance.*

The final unit will be a group project scene. Culminating with ideas of Aesthetics, Narrative & Presentation, students will utilize acting and technical theatre techniques taught through the semester. Students will work either as a class to perform a One-Act play complete with set,

costumes, props, sound and lighting as needed. All students will take on at least one acting role and one technical role for the play.

Homework

Most homework will be prep for the next class. This can include things like reading or searching for monologues, memorizing lines, some script analysis, searching for props or costumes etc. There may be some written or artistic homework for some units. Due to the nature of this artform, homework is expected to be completed on time as classwork is based on the homework assignments (for example a student can't work on the physicality of a monologue while still holding a script – memorizing the monologue is homework). Coming to class unprepared for the day will result in being docked participation points (see below).

Participation

It is impossible to be successful in theatre without participating fully in class. Therefore, a large portion of students' formative AND summative assessments will include a participation grade. The participation will fall under MYP Grading Criteria B: Developing Skills – this standard is across all Art classes at WPS. Students will be evaluated EVERY class for participation (this will largely be formative assessments) and the criteria B evaluation of each unit's summative assessment will be taken from this tally. Excessive absences may affect your students' grade in this class – please reach out to me for extenuating circumstances.

Students should always have a pencil and their materials for the day when they come to class.

*A note about virtual learning: If we have a need to pivot online for virtual learning at any point this year, cameras are expected to be on for the entire class.

Assessments

For a detailed description of our Assessment Policies, please see our assessment Policy Handbook on our website.

Willows Preparatory School teachers create and implement both formative and summative assessments, both of which are related to each other and integral to the learning process.

Formative Assessment (20% of semester grade) – _assessments that provide smaller amounts of feedback on specific learning objectives and/or require students to demonstrate their knowledge of specific targeted aims in order to drive future instruction (e.g. at WPS: lesson exit ticket, daily warm-ups, comprehension quizzes, etc.).

Summative Assessment (80% of semester grade)– _assessments that are designed to provide evidence for evaluating student achievement using required MYP subject-group specific assessment criteria² (e.g. at WPS: written assessments, projects, presentation, performances, etc.).

In this class, Summative Assessments are the final project for each unit. These will be performed live in class and **makeups will not be allowed** – please note that missing class for a group performance affects more than just your student.

Recording Work

Students will be expected to keep a process journal. This may look different for each unit but will include recording of presentations for grading purposes. Please ensure you sign the waiver allowing video/photo so this can be done. These videos will never be shared outside the classroom – please reach out to me directly if this is a concern for your family.

Student Conduct

In order to maintain a safe and enjoyable time at school, students are expected to behave in a responsible manner. Violations of student conduct expectations may result in disciplinary measures, which are explained later in this document. The following are expectations of all WPS students:

- Demonstrate courteous and respectful behavior at all times, including with use of school equipment/property and other people’s belongings
- Follow staff instructions promptly
- Arrive to class fully equipped, ready to engage and in a timely manner
- Keep up to date with academic submissions and timelines
- Discuss your academic needs with your classroom teachers
- Walk in shared spaces and speak at a respectful volume while others are working and learning
- Conduct themselves with a sense of decorum

When applicable, follow all guidelines outlines in the COVID-19 Handbook.

Zero Tolerance Policies

Willows Preparatory School has zero tolerance for alcohol, drugs, tobacco, weapons, age inappropriate material, graffiti and repeated instances of bullying behavior. If any students are found in possession of or engaging in any related activities of the above, whether on campus and/or during school hours, appropriate referrals will be made and consequences/outcomes will be documented on the student’s file.

Consequences

Any student misconduct will be documented and may result in the following:

- A referral to Head of School or Assistant Head of School
- Support services through Counselor referral
- Meeting with parent, teacher, and administration
- Probation from extracurricular activities or other privileges (i.e. sport, clubs, lunch outside)
- Restricted use of facilities

Misconduct issues of a more serious nature, such as those related to zero tolerance policies include:

- Suspension – You are expected to keep up with your schoolwork during this time, as no allowances will be made in this regard.
- Expulsion – You are permanently disenrolled from Willows Preparatory School

Technology

Every student at WPS has their own Microsoft Surface. WPS’s official Laptop/Technology Policy is found at the end of this document.

Teacher-Student E-mail Communication

You have the opportunity to reach out to teachers and staff using email; however, when applicable, face-to-face communication is preferred. Student email addresses should only be used for communication about academic issues or to ask questions in a respectful and professional manner. Students are expected to check email on a daily basis. If a student receives an email or message from another student that is confusing or inappropriate, please notify a teacher or staff member immediately. Willows Preparatory School reserves the right to access all WPS student emails, reset all passwords, and if necessary, suspend all email activity.

A Note about communication: theatre can sometimes push boundaries, if a topic pushes yours please feel free to talk to me about it. If you would like your concern addressed anonymously you can drop a note in my “Questions/Comments/Concerns” box and I will see it.

Cell Phones and smart devices

We understand that cell phones and other smart devices are an essential part of daily life. Smart watches while linked to cell phones are considered cell phones. Please make sure that the watches are on Do Not Disturb mode during the school day. Students are permitted to bring cell phones to school each day subject to the following conditions:

- Cell phones should remain OFF when students are present on the school campus. Cell phones must be stored in book bags during the 1st semester (or for however long COVID-19 Handbook guidelines are in place) or in student lockers.
- Students may use their cell phones to contact parents upon request. All authorized cell phone use must occur at the Front Desk in the main building and/or under the supervision of an administrator or teacher.

If a member of staff can see or hear a cell phone, the phone will be confiscated and turned over to the front desk. Confiscated phones will be returned at the end of that school day from the front desk after a parent is notified about the violation of this policy. All incidents are documented and recorded—repeat violations may result in additional consequences.

****Please note: There may be times when students will be allowed to use their phone or smart device in the Performing Arts classroom for recording themselves or playing sounds for certain units. This use will be exclusively for academic purposes and only at the teacher’s discretion. Students will not be**

allowed to share any recorded video of any student other than themselves. Photo/Video privacy will be strictly adhered to.

In case of a personal emergency on campus (illness, personal situation, etc.) the student's first line of contact is a staff member. In family emergency situations, parents should contact the front office if they need to reach a student.

Classroom Computer Use

Laptops will be used regularly in class for lessons, notes, and activities. Students should not be checking emails, grades, chatting via Teams, or any other activities on their computer unless the teacher has given them permission. If a student is found not using a computer appropriately, the computer will be taken away until the end of class and the following will take place:

- 1st Time: A warning from administration.
- 2nd Time: An email sent home to parents.
- 3rd Timer: Meet with administration and discuss possible repercussions.

WPS Students will no longer be allowed to use headphones for personal use in any place of the school building unless a) the headphones are being used for specific class content (i.e. sound editing a video for a project); or b) they are being used before or after school hours (8:30am-3:30pm). Students should not have Spotify or any other streaming music program on their school computers.

Student Name (Print) _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Please return by September 10, 2021