

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for CMST 5

READERS THEATER

Effective: Fall 2016

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

CMST 5 — READERS THEATER — 3.00 units

Introduction to the various principles and techniques used in readers theater, a style of theater that combines oral interpretation and conventional theater to make literature come alive for the audience. Using prose, poetry, and drama literature, students will create, compile, analyze, stage, and perform one or more readers theater productions.

3.00 Units Lecture

Grading Methods:

Letter or P/NP

Discipline:

	<u>MIN</u>
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Examine the history of readers theater;
2. Practice oral interpretation of literature;
3. Distinguish between different styles of readers theater;
4. Analyze literature for meaning, intent, story, and dramatic effect;
5. Research prose, poetry, and drama literature for scriptmaking;
6. Identify theatrical effects available for use in readers theater;
7. Create one or more readers theater script(s);
8. Identify literary components that are conducive to specific readers theater scriptmaking and blocking techniques;
9. Perform in a readers theater with a strong knowledge of the art's specific techniques;
10. Write constructive critiques of student performances with suggestions and quality feedback.

V. CONTENT:

- A. History of readers theater
 1. Traced back to Greece--2,500 years ago
 2. First use of term in 1945
 3. *Don Juan in Hell*--1951
 4. *John Brown's Body*--1952
 5. First musical was *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*--1967
 6. Spread to college theater and speech departments in the 60's
 7. Spread to high schools, middle schools, then elementary schools
- B. Oral interpretation of literature
 1. Vocal factors and oral interpretation
 - a. Pitch
 - b. Volume
 - c. Rate
 - d. Texture
 - e. Articulation
 - f. Pronunciation
 - g. Resonance
 - h. Vocalizations
 - i. Sensory sensitivity
 - j. Internalization
 2. Nonverbal factors and oral interpretation
 - a. Use of body
 - b. Eye contact
 - c. Use of focus
 - d. Visualization
 - e. Facial expressions

- f. Physical appearance
 - g. Proxemics
 - h. Chronemics
 - i. Use of performance binder
- C. Styles of readers theater
 - 1. Simple
 - 2. Staged
 - 3. Story
 - 4. Chamber
 - 5. Hybrid
- D. Techniques used in readers theater performance
 - 1. Choosing a staging style
 - 2. Using focus
 - a. On-stage focus
 - b. Off-stage focus
 - c. Audience focus
 - d. Internal focus
 - 3. Using visualization and placement
 - 4. Using pantomime
 - 5. Staging entrances and exits
 - 6. Using binders effectively
 - 7. Staging with set pieces
 - 8. Choosing ensemble outfits
 - 9. Using correct stage terminology
 - 10. Guidelines for the director
- E. Creating readers theater scripts
 - 1. Types of literature
 - a. Prose
 - b. Poetry
 - c. Drama
 - 2. Literature analysis
 - 3. Types of scripts
 - a. The abstract script
 - b. The single story script
 - c. The compilation script
 - d. The interspersed script
 - e. The original script
 - 4. Techniques for scriptmaking
 - a. Choosing literature
 - b. Analyzing literature
 - c. Creating division of lines
 - d. Editing literature
 - e. Arranging literature
 - f. Writing introductions
 - g. Using transitional material
 - h. Using music in readers theater
 - 5. Theatrical effects available for use in readers theater
 - a. Set
 - b. Lighting
 - c. Sound
 - 6. Evaluating readers theater performances
 - a. Listening to a performance
 - b. Watching a performance
 - c. Effective evaluative comments

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. **Discussion** -
- C. Workshop sessions
- D. Performances
- E. **Research** - Research literature for performance
- F. **Classroom Activity** - Activities and rehearsals
- G. Peer, instructor, and self evaluation
- H. **Audio-visual Activity** - View historical readers theater performances

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. **Prose Script**: Select a short story to edit and create a script for group performance. Script should include 3 - 5 cast members and should not exceed 10 minutes.
- B. **Poetry Script Performance**: Cast, direct, and block your readers theater poetry script. Your show should include 3 - 5 performers with multiple roles for each and should not exceed 7 minutes.
- C. **Lighting and Set Design**: Develop a lighting and/or set design for your group compilation script.
- D. **Prose Analysis**: Analyze a selection of prose literature for its intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic aspects, and address scripting techniques, and how you would stage it if you were the director.

VIII. EVALUATION:

- A. **Methods**
 - 1. Oral Presentation
 - 2. Class Participation
 - 3. Class Work
 - 4. Class Performance
- B. **Frequency**
 - 1. Frequency
 - a. Weekly participation in class activities and rehearsals
 - b. One to four graded scripts
 - c. A minimum of two written analysis of literature
 - d. A minimum of two written performance critiques
 - e. One to four graded performances

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. 3rd ed., Routledge, 2013.
2. Bial, Henry, and Sara Brady. *The Performance Studies Reader*. 3rd ed., Routledge, 2015.
3. Brayshaw, Teresa, and Noel Witts. *The Twentieth-Century Performance Reader*. 3rd ed., Routledge, 2013.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

- A. Performance binder