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Theatre Arts

120

Program Development and Implementation Branch
Department of Education
Fredericton, New Brunswick
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Revised 1990

This revision of Theatre Arts 120 does not change the philosophy, rationale or objectives of the program. It merely changes all references to The Stage and School 5th edition, to The Stage and School, 6th edition.

This guide was prepared by teachers of theatre arts in
New Brunswick.

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Theatre Arts 120

The course will cover the major aspects of theatre performance, including acting and interpretation, stage craft, play management, and theatre history.

The course will outline many activities, practical and theoretical.

The course will prepare students to perform with confidence and to face an audience with assurance.

The course will ensure performance based on a firm grasp of text meaning.

The course will allow for instruction that includes both acting and interpretation skills.

The course will offer students the hints required to produce a polished work.

The course will permit students to share important techniques of costume, make-up, scenery, lighting and sound.

The course will encourage out-of-class dramatic activities (contests, festivals and invitationals).

The course will provide activities and exercises that will expand and reinforce dramatic instruction and provide review of all major language skills.

Components

- Development of performance skill
- Interpretation for the performer
- The craft of the performer
- The plays and the actors
- The craft of the stage
- Group interpretation
- Outside the class interpretation
- The history of theatre
- The history of performance
- Glossary of interpretation and theatre terms

Texts: The Stage and the School (core)
 Basic Drama Projects (core)

Prerequisites

It is expected that interested students will be given an appropriate overview of the content to be covered and the activities required of participants in this course. Students applying to take Theatre 120 will be selected by means of interview and other screening processes and by grade level completed. In general, student applications will be processed through the theatre teacher and advising staff members.

Philosophy of Theatre Arts 120

The philosophy underlying this course is based on the theory that students need to explore all facets of the performing art identified as theatre. Students need to know how to read and interpret scripted drama; need to know how to analyze scripted drama; need to know how to stage and perform scripted drama. Students must therefore have an appreciation of the history of the art form - the play and the players.

The philosophy further suggests that students of Theatre 120 be encouraged to use their imaginations; to sharpen their senses; to polish their awareness of the written and the spoken word, the art of movement; to develop skills in improvisation; to assume the instincts to create characters (performances) that are unique and believable.

The philosophy requires that students of Theatre 120 develop/study some formal acting skills as a means of providing extensive experience in script analysis and interpretation. This will require that students be introduced to the concepts of period and styles in the history of drama. The philosophy of this course will allow for the strengthening of confidence and self-esteem, the encouragement of creativity and the development of communication skills.

The philosophy further requires that students be offered training in the many technical crafts used in the effective presentation of the theatre.

This course intends to capitalize on the individuality, confidence, creativity and the communication abilities of the students.

Application:

The course, Theatre 120, offers study and action in a variety of fields and so encourages the development of a variety of skills. The course would be of value, therefore, to all students who are interested in developing special talents and attitudes.

Goals

1. to develop in each student self-discipline and a sense of responsibility toward others;
2. to develop in students an interest in theatre, and to engender a respect for the various theatre skills;
3. to develop in each student a basic stock of theatre skills;
4. to develop in students the ability to make constructive critical evaluation;
5. to develop theatre talent that may contribute to the community or even to professional theatre;
6. to develop the student's ability to be creative, interpretive, and expressive;
7. to develop the student's abilities to listen;
8. to develop the student's ability to concentrate;
9. to stimulate the student's imagination;
10. to develop the quality of the student's voice and speech;
11. to develop in the student a natural freedom of movement;
12. to develop the student's ability to perform before an audience;
13. to develop an appreciation of dramatic literature;
14. to prepare students for entry into a university level theatre course and/or the equivalent.

Learning Outcomes

1. The student should acquire increased self-confidence and the ability to communicate well with others.
2. The student should be able to lead a small group effectively.
3. The student should be able to accept leadership of others.
4. The student should be able to express emotion and to speak with a voice that has clarity and an improved range in pitch, pace and volume.
5. The student should have an increased knowledge of characterization, blocking, script interpretation, and the rehearsal process.
6. The student should be able to perform in scenes from various types of plays, including comedy, drama, melodrama and tragedy.
7. The student should have an improved sense of what constitutes dramatic criticism and evaluation and a basic sense of what makes good theatre.
8. Students should know and be able to use theatre terms such as blocking, business, cut, gesture, mime, motivation, props.
9. The student should have knowledge of the theatre's origins and growth to the present state, with a particular emphasis on the contemporary theatre of Canada.
10. The student should have the ability to demonstrate stage craft competency.
11. The student should have the ability to plan and carry out the rehearsal process.

Physical (Space) Requirements

The ideal theatre classroom would be a studio classroom. The space must be large enough to permit vigorous mass activity. The area should be isolated or the walls sufficiently soundproofed to eliminate disturbance of other classes; an acting class **MUST** be free to make noise. The classroom should have access to changing and washroom facilities.

A major activity in acting is the simultaneous rehearsal of many two or three-person scenes. The ideal situation would be the presence of several rehearsal rooms in addition to a large classroom. If this is not possible, it will be necessary to find areas near the acting classroom. Vacant classrooms, the cafeteria, the stage, and the hallways can be used.

The acting room itself is used for three activities:

1. regular class work including lectures, demonstrations, reading, writing, and exercises;
2. rehearsal of several scenes simultaneously;
3. performance of improvisations, scenes and full length plays.

The room should have large cupboards for safe storage of lighting equipment, make up, costumes and props.

In addition to the Studio classroom, storage facilities for properties and costumes should be provided.

Relationship of the Learner Outcomes to the Core Texts

<u>Learner Outcomes</u>	<u>Basic Drama Projects</u>	<u>The Stage and the School</u>
1, 2 and 3	Chapters 1 to 6	Chapters 1 to 5
4	Chapters 7, 12 and 13	Chapter 4
5	(characterization) Chapters 15, 17, 18, 22 and 23 (blocking) Chapters 24, 8 and 9 (script) Chapter 15	Chapter 5 Chapter 10 Chapters 6 and 8
6	Chapters 19 and 20	Chapter 7
7	Chapter 29	Chapter 8
8	Glossary Index	Glossary Index
9	Appendix A	Chapter 9
10	Chapters 21, 22 and 23 and 25 and 26	Chapters 11, 12 13 and 14
11	Chapter 27 and Appendix C	Chapter 10 Part II

Themes Sources in the Core Texts

<u>PAGES OR CHAPTERS</u> <u>S/S</u>	<u>B.D.P.</u>
Ch. 2, 3	1
p. 121 & 122	2
p. 18, p. 121, 122	3 Theme: "Inner Resources"
	4
	5
p. 42, 109	6
p. 23, 43 & 44	7
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p. 114-117. 134 & 135	8
	9 Theme:
p. 136, 137	10 "Movement"
	11
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Ch. 4	12
	13 Theme: "Oral Interpretation"
	14
	15
	16
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p. 100	17 Theme: "Characterization"
	18
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Ch. 7 p. 255-269	19 Theme: "Playing the Part"
p. 250-255	20
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Ch. 15 p. 250-255	21 Theme: "Make-up"
	22
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Ch. 14 p. 459	23 Theme: "Costuming"
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Ch. 10, 12	24 Theme: "Directing"
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Ch. 12 & 13	25 Theme: "Set and Lights"
	26
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Ch. 10 p. 235	27 Theme: "Production"
	28
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Ch. 8, p. 281	29 Theme: "Evaluating a Play"

I. OUTLINE OF COURSE

The following is an outline of material considered essential to the successful realization of the philosophy and goals for the one year programme Theatre 122.

General Components of Drama

I. Acting: development of skills

- A. Inner resources
 - 1. Actor's purpose
 - 2. Illusion of reality
 - 3. Believable action
 - 4. Observation
 - 5. Concentration
 - 6. Sense recall
 - 7. Imagination
- B. Emotion
- C. Movement
 - 1. Stage Areas
 - 2. Stage directions
 - 3. Stage positions
 - 4. Principles of movement
- D. Oral Interpretation
 - 1. Voice development
 - 2. Character lines
- E. Characterization
 - 1. Analyzing
 - 2. Creating

II. Production: technical elements

- A. Makeup: general purposes
- B. Costume: general purposes
- C. Directing
 - 1. Composition
 - 2. Movement
 - 3. Prompt Book
- D. Set: general function
- E. Lights: general purpose (basic)

III. History of Theatre: general

II. OUTLINE OF COURSE

Material for Extended Study

- I. Acting Skills
 - A. Improvisation: extended
 - B. Mime
 - C. Scripted Scenes
 - D. One Act Plays
- II. Theories of Acting
 - A. Stanislavski
 - B. Guthrie
 - C. James-Lange
- III. Voice Training
- IV. Technical Elements
 - A. Advanced Makeup
 - 1. Straight
 - 2. Character
 - 3. Special
 - B. Costumes
 - 1. Research
 - 2. Design
 - 3. Construction
 - C. Set
 - 1. Design
 - 2. Types
 - 3. Special
 - D. Lighting
 - 1. Plotting
 - 2. Special
- V. History: excerpts from period plays

OUTLINE OF COURSE

Material for Advanced StudyOptional Extras

The application of the theoretical aspects of Drama 120 (as covered in the basic course and/or the advanced level).

The class is required to do scenes from the following plays: (selected)

(A) Acting:

'Betrayal'	'Four Seasons'
'The Crucible'	'Medea'
'Death Of A Salesman'	
'Antigone'	
'The Rivals'	
'A School For Scandal'	
'Barefoot In The Park'	
'Butterflies Are Free'	
'Hamlet'	

(B) Technical:

'Count Dracula' (lighting, special effects)
 'The Wizard Of Oz' (lighting, costumes, makeup, special effects)
 'Macbeth' (lighting, special effects)
 'Oliver' (set, lighting, costume)
 'Camelot' (set, lighting, costume)
 'Oklahoma' (lighting, choreography)
 'Jesus Christ Superstar' (vocal, accompaniment)
 'Cats' (voice, choreography, make-up)
 'Sweeney Todd' (set, make-up)

Lesson Plans

Sample Lesson Plan:

Unit: History of Drama (Theatre)

Goals - The work in this unit is designed to help students meet the goals listed in the Theatre 120 Course preamble; to develop an interest in theatre by examining several periods of the history of theatre, and to develop an appreciation of dramatic literature.

Learning Outcomes - The student will gain some knowledge of the theatre's origins and growth (in this particular lesson series, the Greek theatre is examined) and the students will be given an opportunity to perform in scenes from various Greek plays (with particular emphasis on tragedy).

Note: It will be assumed that the students have been exposed to at least a brief look at 'Primitive drama' and considered in what ways such as 'ritual' is also 'drama'.

Text References: 'Basic Drama Projects'
P. 242-244
'The Stage and The School'
Ch. 9 p. 293-298
Ch. 6 p. 234
Ch. 7 p. 250-255
Pt. 2 p. 175

Lesson (#2 of a series of lessons) Theme: 'Greek theatre buildings'

- (1) Utilize Part 1 of the filmstrip series 'Play Production' - the frames relevant to Greek theatre or examination photographs of Greek theatre buildings (e.g. BDP P. 242, S.S. P. 294, 295) and plays.
- (2) Discuss with students the physical characteristics of Greek theatre buildings:
 - the shape of the theatre building,
 - physical 'layout' & 'location', seating area, acting area,
 - scene building, entrances & exits, platform,
 - wings
 - building materials
 - terminology: theatron, orchestra, skene, proskenion,
 - paraskene (relate these to modern theatre terminology)

- (3) Discuss how the structure of the theatre influenced acting and presentation - consider size, distance between audience and playing area, etc., (evaluate how the Greeks overcame the limitations of the theatre):

rhetorical drama
broad gestures
masks
thick-soled shoes
costumes

Seatwork: draw & label a diagram of a Greek theatre building (simplified schematic diagram).

Follow-up: Read the assigned pages in the texts plus other sources: find how the Greeks adapted their simple staging to a more 'complex' style.

Sample lesson plan: Developing the Effective Voice

Objective: Learn basic exercises to develop an effective voice.

Reference: Stage and School: Chapter 4 p. 59

Method:

I) Breathing Control

- 1) explain difference between breathing regularly and breathing for speech (S. & S. p. 62)
- 2) have class do exercises for breathing p. 62 & 63

II) Relaxation:

- 1) explain importance of relaxation (S. & S. p. 63)
- 2) begin relaxation exercises for speech
 - a) for relaxed jaw
 - b) for open throat
 - c) for flexible lips
 - d) for flexible tongue
 - e) for romance
 - f) for speech and breathing

Stage & school
p. 55-58

p. 63-66

III) Testing for learner outcome

Method:

- 1) Practical - students should show a marked improvement in speech; it may be measured by progressive ability to master certain compositions (see attached Gilbert & Sullivan
- 2) Practical: students can analyse their own voice problems and plan methods for improvement
- 3) Objective testing: students can be tested objectively on the exercises that improve various parts of speech, relaxation, etc.

Objective Sample question: list three methods of relaxing the throat.

Subjective Sample question: explain your particular difficulties with consonant pronunciation, and explain how you might overcome them.

Lesson Plan - Sample

Make-up

Reference: Stage & School - ch. 15, p 488
Basic Drama Projects: p. 135

Objective:

- To introduce students to basic principles of make-up.
- To familiarize students with the tools of make-up.

Introduction:

uses of make-up: straight - for clarity
character - involves changes in original face

general considerations: size of theatre
lighting
style of play
character (developed later)

First Principle: chiaroscuro: highlight & shadow

Demonstrate changing shadows with a darkened room and a flashlight.
Shine the light on a face from different angles, and note changes in shadows and their effect.

The Makeup Kit: Go through the various items in the makeup kit, and explain their general purpose. Ideally, students might have purchased a small kit of their own.

The Makeup Worksheet (Stage & School, p. 491)

Give each student a copy of the worksheet to record what he used in his first attempt at makeup.

Demonstration:

Find a volunteer and do a straight make-up job on him, explaining the principles involved as it is being done.

Hands-on practice:

Divide students in groups of two, and have them begin to apply make up on each other. At this point they will be unsure of themselves, so have them all do the same step at the same time. Allow for creativity later. Monitor them carefully, and have lots of cold cream and tissues around.

SAMPLE TEST

Stage and School - Chapter 11 - Stage Settings p. 385-403 (first half of chapter)

I. Stage Terminology

In the space provided, define the following stage terms:

- a) act curtain:
- b) book:
- c) counterweight system:
- d) fly:
- e) pit:
- f) places:
- g) returns:
- h) sight lines:
- i) strike:
- j) wings:

II. Purposes of Scenery

A play is usually presentational, or representational. Explain the difference between the two, and support your explanation with examples.

III. The Development of Scenic Design

Write a short essay on the history of stage design, utilizing the following terms: Duke of Ferrara, periaktoi, raked stage, canvas drops, conventional sets, apron, orchestra, boxset, realism, Gordon Craig.

IV. Major Twentieth Century Styles

Match the following:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| A. Symbolism | 1. ___ mechanical skeleton as background |
| B. Expressionism | 2. ___ a token of meaning |
| C. Impressionism | 3. ___ distorts main scene element |
| D. Constructivism | 4. ___ no attempt to be realistic |
| E. Theatricalism | 5. ___ seeks to stir intense emotions |
| F. Stylization | 6. ___ uses neutral background |
| G. Formalism | 7. ___ nonrealistic design that sets a mood. |

V. Types of Sets

Describe the main differences between the following types of sets, including their major advantages, disadvantages and uses, and where applicable sketch simply the design differences you are explaining.

- A. Box sets
- B. Unit sets
- C. Permanent Set
- D. Profile Set
- E. Prism set
- F. Drapery set

Unit Testing

Sample ASSIGNMENT - (1) THE PROMPT BOOK

Select a play (1 Act or Full-length) and develop a working prompt book. Include the following: set floor plan, blocking patterns, stage business, lighting and sound cues, and any other relevant details. Utilize generally accepted abbreviations for stage movement and stage areas.

(Suggested time allocation to assignment 2-3 weeks)

(2) SET & LIGHTING

- (a) Select a play (1 Act or Full-length). Design and construct a set model based upon the author's description, your interpretation of the play, and the practicality of presenting the design on your school stage.
- (b) Design a lighting plot for the play you selected in part (a).

Unit Testing

GROUP PROJECT

Each group select an appropriate scene (2, 3 or 4 characters, male-female ratio etc.) from a scripted play (note suggestions in both your core texts).

Prepare your selection for stage presentation: select a director, assign rôles, rehearse and perform.

Submit rôle scoring and script scoring notes before staging your scene.

Method of evaluation:

- (a) group responsibility for general success of the 'performance': utilizing available stage materials and facilities, interplay of characters, blocking, movement, stage business, etc.
- (b) individual performance: character interpretation, voice, body language, action and interaction, tempo, etc.

PRACTICAL: Development of Acting Skills

- (a) Improvisation: (these activities are designed to encourage individual awareness of the 'stage'; to sharpen powers, memory, concentration and imagination).

EXAMPLE: see the seven activities in the section 'Inner Resources' (Pages 1-40) in 'Basic Drama Projects'. Each activity is accompanied by an evaluation sheet.

For further reference see Chapters 2 ('Improvisation') and Chapter 3 B.D.P.

- (b) Mime: (the purpose of this activity is to encourage meaningful movement, significant gesture, and animated facial expression).

EXAMPLE: see 'The Stage and School' Ch. 3 (P. 47-49)
Evaluate the following qualities: concentration, imagination, believability, sense of detail, continuity, etc.

An evaluation sheet would be similar to the activity sheet on P. 9 in 'Basic Drama Projects'.

Note: The above test question is designed to evaluate, in a comprehensive manner, a student's understanding and application of the theory of drama covered by the THEATRE 120 course.

This is but one method of evaluating the course - THEATRE 120. In this example the two questions would constitute a 2 hour 'examination'.

FINAL EXAM - PROPOSED

To illustrate drama evaluation process, Tennessee Williams' The Glass Menagerie has been selected as a testing medium for both its inherent qualities and its availability (See Three Worlds of Drama). It is assumed that the play has been available to the entire class.

Part I: Staging

Discuss the possibilities for staging The Glass Menagerie in your school as suggested by the author-script. Consider each of the following topics:

- a. stage space
- b. essential lighting
- c. set design
- d. costumes
- e. props
- f. music
- g. make-up
- h. special effects

Part II: Acting- Directing

Select a character from The Glass Menagerie and do the following:

- a. Write a character analysis of your selection and include the following motivation, personality traits, personal history (real or imagined), goals, and methods of achieving goals.
- b. Discuss the process by which you as a director of an actor (please specify) might attempt to reach your character interpretation. Include at least the following in your essay:
 1. research (author, setting, social mores)
 2. improvisation as a means to characterization
 3. acting techniques in establishing a living character
 4. externalization and internalization of traits
 5. role scoring (selectivity)
 6. script scoring

