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The Honourable Sean Conway, Minister

Curriculum Guideline

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DRAMATIC ARTS

ONTARIO ACADEMIC COURSE

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■ INTRODUCTION

This Ontario Academic Course (OAC) guideline replaces the honour graduation section of the Ontario Ministry of Education guideline *Dramatic Arts, Intermediate and Senior Divisions, 1981*. It is an advanced-level, single-credit course intended for students who are planning to pursue various academic or applied studies at the post-secondary level. This OAC will represent the highest expectations in student achievement within the dramatic arts program in the secondary school. Although some students may plan a career directly or indirectly related to drama, others will find that the competencies developed in the course will be helpful in many academic, occupational, and social situations.

■ PREREQUISITES

Students taking the OAC in dramatic arts must have at least one advanced-level Senior Division credit in dramatic arts and must show a level of maturity and skill appropriate to the course's expectations. Such students will have the ability to:

- apply listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to the processes and forms of drama;
- think imaginatively and creatively in the dramatic mode;
- communicate dramatically, both verbally and non-verbally;
- work within dramatic forms both as individuals and as members of a group;
- understand and work within various conventional dramatic forms;
- experiment with new dramatic structures and techniques.

A student who does not have the prerequisite credit in dramatic arts may be admitted to the OAC if, in the judgement of the principal, the above competencies have been acquired through other acceptable means. See section 5.6 of *Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions (Grades 7-12/OACs): Program and Diploma Requirements, 1984* (OSIS).

THE DRAMATIC ARTS PROGRAM

RATIONALE

This OAC shares the overall philosophy, aims and objectives, teaching and learning strategies, and methods of evaluation that are outlined in *Dramatic Arts, Intermediate and Senior Divisions, 1981*. Thus, anyone developing an OAC in dramatic arts must be familiar with the 1981 guideline.

As with other courses in dramatic arts, the OAC is based on the following premises:

- Drama is both a learning process and a form of artistic expression.
- Drama is the acting out or the playing out of a role in a social situation.
- Drama involves the exploration and representation of meaning through the medium of the whole person, including body, voice, mind, and emotion.
- Drama involves the human capacity to project into imagined roles, characters, and situations and is a particularly appropriate vehicle for exploring current values and themes such as multiculturalism, racism, and sexism.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

According to the 1981 guideline, every course in dramatic arts was to include a balance of five stated aims, which were to be achieved through a predominantly experiential approach. The aims and objectives of this OAC are essentially the same as those of the former honour graduation course. Each aim has several objectives, which receive varying degrees of emphasis in different grades of the dramatic arts program. The aims and objectives are restated here in a slightly refined form:

Aims	Objectives
1. The development of personal resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ To develop the student's leadership potential
2. The acquisition of an understanding of self in relation to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ To expand the student's understanding of his or her personal and cultural heritage, as well as the heritage of others■ To extend the student's sensitivity to the economic, physical, political, and social milieux■ To develop the student's sense of responsibility towards the community

Aims

3. The practice of communication skills
4. The stimulation of a sense of inquiry and a commitment to learning
5. The creation and appreciation of dramatic art forms

Objectives

- To promote the growth of the student's awareness and appreciation of the diverse values in Canadian society
- To encourage constant improvement of the student's skills in all aspects of language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)
- To enhance the student's powers of discrimination and self-evaluation
- To enhance the student's ability to reflect on, analyse, interpret, conceptualize, synthesize, and organize experience
- To provide the student with the opportunity to work within dramatic forms as an individual, as a member of a small group, and as a part of the whole class
- To encourage the student's understanding of various traditional dramatic forms
- To encourage the student to explore new dramatic structures and techniques
- To involve the student in various specialized aspects of theatrical production
- To encourage the student to explore the playwright's art
- To encourage the student to use dramatic forms as media of communication between himself or herself and the community
- To make the student aware of the impact of new technologies on dramatic forms

OAC REQUIREMENTS

The objectives for the OAC will be reached through a greater concentration on the practical use and application of dramatic forms than was the case in previous dramatic arts courses. Students will be expected to investigate sources that have dramatic possibilities, explore themes and topics, and analyse and create scripts. This concentration will involve a balance among and an integration of exploration, interpretation, and communication.

The *exploration* phase develops the context for communicating those ideas, concepts, and themes that will be illuminated during the interpretive stage. During the exploratory phase, students will be involved in research and in the reporting of the results of that research. They will locate, choose, edit, and collate materials that may be derived from a number of sources, such as the following:

- written sources, including historical sources, contemporary writings, and dramatic literature;
- oral sources, including discussions, interviews, panels, and debates;
- visual sources, including painting and sculpture, film, graphic art, and theatre;
- auditory sources, including live performances, recordings, and tapes.

During the *interpretation* phase, students will experiment in order to develop their conclusions into dramatic forms that they can use to transmit their understanding to others. These forms will include both the traditional and the innovative. In addition, students will endeavour to understand how the work in progress relates to them personally, to the community, and to universal human experience.

In the *communication* phase, students will present their work to others. In doing so, they will show, in a variety of ways, their increasing skill in communication and the quality and breadth of their understanding. It is very important that they take the time to reflect on and evaluate what has happened.

Students will learn that these three phases are not discrete. While any one phase may be emphasized at a given time, the other two are part of the integrated process.

COURSE CONTENT

The OAC will follow a unit approach. The course will consist of three units, at least one of which must concentrate on Canadian drama or on Canadian content. Each unit must be presented at a level of difficulty appropriate to an OAC and must be directed towards the accomplishment of the prescribed objectives. Each unit will take approximately one-third of the required 110-hour allotment.

Several suggestions for units are listed below. Most have been selected from among those currently employed in the final year of exemplary dramatic arts programs throughout the province. Any combination of three of these units, or their equivalent, will be chosen, provided that at least one of the units concentrates on Canadian drama or Canadian content:

Sample Units

American Drama
British Drama
Canadian Drama
Changing Roles in Society
Comedy
Culture Clash
Documentary Drama
Drama in the Canadian Mosaic
Drama for Children
Drama of Greece and Rome
Drama of Other Cultures
Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama
The Family
Foundations of Modern Drama (expressionism, realism, symbolism)
Future Society
The Immigrant Experience
Justice and the Individual
Masks
Medieval Drama
Mime
Modern Drama
Nineteenth-Century Drama
Puppetry
Renaissance Drama
Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Drama
Ritual
Roots
Seventeenth-Century French Drama

■ PLANNING THE COURSE

Story Telling
Street Theatre
Theatre As a Political Instrument
Theatre Movements of the Twentieth Century
Third World Drama
Tragedy

In some jurisdictions a full dramatic arts program is available to students in every year of the Intermediate and Senior Divisions. For this reason, some of the units listed above may have been presented in courses that preceded the OAC. It is important, therefore, that the planning for a specific OAC recognize the previous experience of students and that units that complement and expand the content of previous courses be developed.

WRITTEN WORK

Written work is a required component of the OAC. Students should be involved in various types of writing that are pertinent to the dramatic experience. These include anecdotal reports; character sketches; critical reviews; directors', designers', or stage managers' notes; reports of interviews; production notes; prompt books; scripts, written either in groups or individually; student journals, logs, or diaries; and writings in role.

Students will also become acquainted with dramatic works, both through script study and through attendance at live performances, in ways that illuminate or direct their work within a given unit. Although opportunities may be limited for students in remote or isolated schools, they should still be exposed to some form of live or recorded performance. Such experiences can involve local school productions, local community productions, quality television drama through commercial networks or the resources of TVOntario, touring productions, or in-school visits by professional performing artists.

PRINCIPLES

If philosophical consistency is to be maintained within the overall dramatic arts program, the following principles must be central to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the OAC in dramatic arts.

- There will be a balance of two kinds of knowledge: that gained through dramatic activities and that acquired by planning and reflecting on those activities. Part of the purpose of all courses in dramatic arts is for students to gain affective understanding (felt knowledge) of what they may already know cognitively (rational knowledge).
- Students will develop both their verbal and non-verbal abilities to convince, defend, explain, inform, instruct, and report.
- Students will become familiar with a variety of theatrical styles and will explore forms that are appropriate to each style.
- Theatre will be thought of not only as a process of communication between actor and audience, but also as an organizational art form involving designers, directors, managers, producers, and others.
- While seminars, written reports, and research assignments will be part of the OAC, the dominant learning medium will be active experience within dramatic contexts. The focus of all work will be on the analysing, interpreting, and synthesizing of experience. Presentations to others are but one outcome of the student's experience.
- The purpose of any study of theatre history is to gain insight into universal concepts, themes, and structures. Any study of theatre history must be an integral part of the total program, directly related to units in which students are involved.
- An essential focus of dramatic arts is the formation of positive attitudes and the development of competency in the expression and communication of ideas and feelings.
- Appropriate provisions will be made for students identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC).

TEACHING STRATEGIES

A wide variety of dramatic activities and approaches must be employed in the development of course content. In the exploratory phase of each unit, research assignments, student-led seminars, and discussion groups will allow students, both independently and in groups, to realize course objectives. These objectives involve the development of leadership skills, including organization and planning, and the communication of ideas in both oral and written forms. Through decision making and problem solving at the exploratory stage of their experience, students will examine their premises and assumptions and reach conclusions or solutions that will later be tested within the dramatic mode.

In the interpretive phase of each unit, students will become proficient in role playing and in the analysis and interpretation of text. They will be involved in spontaneous and polished improvisation, as well as in storytelling, play making, and rehearsal techniques.

In the communicative phase, students will reflect on the experience they have gained and participate in individual and group performances. They will test their skill in imparting ideas and concepts to others, assess the extent to which they have shown imagination and displayed originality, and be able to evaluate their skill in the use of various dramatic art forms. The activities in this phase will involve a certain amount of risk on the part of each student; it is the willingness to accept that risk and to be judged on decisions made and acted on that makes learning in dramatic arts unique and special.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

In his or her role as planner, facilitator, catalyst, evaluator, side coach, and participant (in role), the teacher is the most important resource for the dramatic arts program. The teacher must plan a meaningful program, which both adheres to the expectations of this OAC and meets the unique needs of the community and the students. At all times the teacher must provide opportunities for students to experiment and develop, to think for themselves, and to act on the decisions that they make.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Dramatic Arts, Intermediate and Senior Divisions, 1981 (pp. 20-30) described a wide variety of evaluation strategies to be employed. The formats and checklists included in the 1981 guideline remain appropriate both to the objectives and to the level of difficulty of this course.

Daily observation of student work and the transactions between teacher and student will form the major sources of information for the evaluation of student achievement in all dramatic arts OACs. Nevertheless, an examination worth no more than 30 per cent of the final mark must be held. Whether the examination takes the form of a written test or a practical demonstration, or a combination of the two, it must be derived from appropriate course objectives and principles.

The following breakdown indicates the percentages of marks and the criteria that must be applied in the assessment of student achievement in each of the three phases that provide the basis for planning the activities of this OAC.

1. *Exploration* (a minimum of 30 per cent of the total mark)
 - the extent to which the student is able to assume leadership and carry a project through to its conclusion
 - the skill shown in participatory dramatic activity and in written work
 - the level of expertise shown in organizing and planning dramatic activity
 - the ability to work as an individual and as a member of a group
 - the extent to which the student co-operates in the realization of group endeavours
 - the extent to which the student understands his or her contribution both to the process and to the product
2. *Interpretation* (a minimum of 30 per cent of the total mark)
 - the depth of understanding that the student exhibits, particularly as it relates to the cultural heritage he or she is exploring
 - the extent to which the student is responsive and sensitive to the work with which he or she is involved
 - the ability of the student to relate his or her own experience to the work at hand
 - the level of ability shown in interpreting and analysing all dramatic activity
 - the application to dramatic experiences (improvised or scripted) of knowledge gained
3. *Communication* (a minimum of 30 per cent of the total mark)
 - the student's skill in the communication of ideas and concepts
 - the imagination and originality that is evident in the student's communication to others of what has been learned
 - the ability of the student to accommodate the ideas and thoughts of others
 - the expertise exhibited in the use of various dramatic techniques
 - the extent to which the ability to reflect on experience is evident

COURSE OUTLINE

The requirements for the contents of a course outline are described in section 4.8 of OSIS. The course of study developed from the outline should describe the three units in detail. It should also specify formats, teaching strategies, and methods of evaluation that are linked directly to the three phases of exploration, interpretation, and communication.

COURSE EVALUATION

The following should form the basis of any evaluation of a specific OAC in dramatic arts:

- an analysis of the congruence of the aims and objectives of the course with the aims and objectives stated in this document
- evidence of planning that ensures that the OAC offered is designed in the context of the whole dramatic arts program in a school (see *Dramatic Arts, Intermediate and Senior Divisions, 1981*, pp. 13-15)
- an analysis of how well the course accomplishes the outcomes outlined in the “Principles” section of this document

All OACs must:

- maintain a balance of emphasis both in time allocation and in the evaluation of the exploration, interpretation, and communication stages, with a minimum of 30 per cent of the final mark being allotted to each stage;
- be organized into three units of approximately equal length;
- contain at least one unit that concentrates on Canadian drama or Canadian content;
- outline the nature of the formal examination that is worth up to 30 per cent of the final mark, as well as the principles and objectives to which it relates.

