

Theatre Arts II/III/IV: Course Expectations

Ms. Julie Williams * James E. Taylor High School

Room 177 * julieawilliams@katyisd.org * (281) 237-3653

Theatre II/III/IV is an intermediate to advanced course designed to allow students the opportunity to build upon the skills they developed in previous Theatre Arts classes and to further explore a variety of acting techniques, examine the role of the actor in interpreting various genres, explore the role of a director, and to understand the responsibility of everyone in the technical staff of a production.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, you will be able to...

- Analyze and evaluate various types of play genres and theatrical experiences
- Demonstrate knowledge of the safe and effective use of the body and voice
- Create and sustain believable characters in a variety of styles
- Examine cultural, political and social aspects of a script and/or production
- Identify the treatment of theme, character, setting and acting in a variety of fine arts productions
- Recognize the interdependence of theatrical elements
- Maintain a current theatre resume
- Practice proper audience etiquette in a variety of theatrical settings

Required Materials: Each day you come to class, you will need to have all of the following materials...

- 1 *functioning* pen in black, blue, purple, or green ink (no pink, red, orange or yellow ink)
- 1 *sharpened* No. 2 pencil with an eraser
- 1 highlighter in any color
- 1 single subject spiral or composition notebook for daily journal
- 1 three-ring binder with 5 dividers: Notes & Vocabulary, Handouts & Reviews, Quizzes & Tests, Play Reviews & Reports, and Scripts & Analyses
- Loose leaf notebook paper
- Flexible, comfortable clothing that does not need to be held on or re-adjusted every time you move
- Props, costumes, and work clothes as needed

Rules: In addition to expectations outlined in the THS and KISD Codes of Conduct, students must accept the following classroom rules and consequences to ensure a safe and fun environment for everyone...

- **Respect the Speaker.** Whoever has the floor should have your focus. Keep your eyes, ears and attention on the person talking, teaching, or performing with permission. Ignore all detractors.
- **Mind your Manners.** Be polite; consider other people's feelings. It is difficult to get up in front of others and to participate in this class, so don't make it any harder on your classmates. Refrain from talking during performances, name-calling, gossiping, and being rude during class.
- **Be Prompt and Prepared.** Bring all necessary materials to class everyday and be ready to work when you walk into the room. If you are tardy, sign the tardy sheet at the door before entering.
- **Know the Boundaries.** Do not enter off-limits areas, move around the room, or leave the room without permission. Students are not to enter the office, dressing room, black box, costume closet theatre library, PAC, or any other backstage area without direct permission from the instructor.
- **Keep it Clean.** Clean up after yourself. Throw away trash; return all books, supplies, and chairs to their proper place. Do not bring any **GUM**, food, or drinks other than water into the room.

Consequences: Inappropriate or offensive behavior will result in the following penalties...

- **Verbal or Visual Warning.** First redirection: request to stop disruptive behavior.
- **Student/Teacher Conference.** Second redirection: discussion of causes for disruptive behavior and possible solutions.
- **Detention and Parent/Guardian Contact.** Third redirection: 30 minute detention within 3 school days after school in Rm. 177 and a call/e-mail home. **GUM IS AN AUTOMATIC DETENTION.**
- **Office Referral.** Continued offense and severe infractions: referral to grade level administrator.

Grading Policy: Each six weeks, you will receive grades in three categories...

- **Major Grades (50% of final grade).** Final performances, play reviews, play reports, tests, notebook checks and projects constitute major grades. Minimum: 2 major grades each six weeks.
- **Minor Grades (35% of final grade).** Class participation, performance reviews, critic reviews, lab work, and reports constitute minor grades. Minimum: 6 minor grades each six weeks.
- **Other Grades (15% of final grade).** Daily journals, vocabulary assignments, quizzes, written class work and homework constitute other grades. Minimum: 4 other grades each six weeks.

Grading Scale: The KISD grading scale will apply to all assignments and final grades in theatre arts...

- **A 90 - 100.** Outstanding progress and mastery of subject matter.
- **B 80 - 89.** Indicates above average progress and mastery of subject matter.
- **C 75 - 79.** Average progress and understanding of the material.
- **D 70 - 74.** Below average progress and minimum passing grade.
- **F < 70.** Class requirements have not been met.

Assignment Explanations: Below you will find descriptions of some distinctive theatre assignments...

- **Final Performances.** You will work on various performance projects throughout the year. Final performances as well as preview performances to check your progress will count as major grades. Specific grading rubrics and timelines will be provided to you at the beginning of each assignment. You will have a minimum of 3 days notice and preparation for a final performance.
- **Play Reviews.** You are required to review one theatrical performance each six weeks. Your analysis will be written in a formal paper that will count as a major grade. Several guidelines apply to the review...
 - Papers are due the **5th Tuesday** of each six weeks. (9/22, 10/27, 12/8, 2/9, 4/6, 5/18)
 - Papers should be a minimum of two pages typed, double-spaced, with a 12-point Times or Arial font. Margins should measure one inch on all four sides. Structure, grammar, and spelling will all be included in the final grade.
 - Performances must be of full-length plays by a high school, college, community or professional theatre. No junior high, one acts, or children's productions are allowed.
 - You are expected and encouraged to see the all Taylor PlayMakers productions. If you see the current PlayMakers production, you will not need to write a paper for the **2nd, 4th, or 6th** six weeks. You only need to have your ticket or program signed by one of the directors, Ms. Williams or Mr. Woods, and turn that in on the due day of the paper.
 - You **must** have a ticket stub or a program attached to your paper. If the performance and your review can be checked and validated by other means, then 25 points will be deducted for lack of documentation. If not, no credit can be given for the paper.
 - Once a semester, you may review a professional, non-theatre production (i.e. the symphony or the ballet) if you have previously purchased tickets. The performance must be by a professional company and it must be pre-approved by Ms. Williams.
 - If you are unsure whether a performance is eligible for review, please check with Ms. Williams prior to purchasing tickets and writing your review.
 - Extensions may be granted if you have tickets for a professional production after the 5th Tuesday but before Friday of the 6th week of the six weeks. The show date, title, and venue must be presented to Ms. Williams in writing for approval one week prior to the original due date. A new due date, without a late turn-in option, will then be assigned.
 - A good play review is a personal analysis and assessment of the performance, the play, and the experience seeing it at the theatre; it is **not** a breakdown of the plot or a mere description of the production elements. You are to apply critical thinking skills to evaluate the performance, consider its objectives then judge its effectiveness, and compare the performance with others you have seen or work you would have done.
 - The Play Review Form details further information on the organization and expectations of the paper.

- **Play Reports.** You are required to report on one new full-length play you have read each six weeks. Your analysis of the play will be written in a formal paper that will count as a major grade and include a viable monologue or duet scene to present to the class. Several guidelines will apply to the paper...
 - Papers are due the 5th Tuesday of each six weeks. (9/22, 10/27, 12/8, 2/9, 4/6, 5/18)
 - Papers should be a minimum of two pages typed, double-spaced, with a 12-point Times or Arial font. Margins should measure one inch on all four sides. Structure, grammar, and spelling will all be included in the final grade.
 - A photocopy of the monologue or duet scene you are presenting from the play and an introduction and evaluation page must accompany the report paper.
 - Plays must be selected from the approved Play Report List and be brand new to you. Several options are available for loan from the Theatre and Taylor libraries. Some plays may not be suitable, please check with Ms. Williams prior to reading.
 - Plays read in English classes are **not** allowed for theatre reviews. Since those plays are so thoroughly and thoughtfully examined in English, later reviews of them cannot be fresh, unique, and based on a fully personal analysis of the text. It is impossible to remove or separate the influence of opinions expressed by the teacher and students in class, and the many, often varied representations of the text a student is exposed to from their interpretation and analysis of a play. Some examples of unavailable plays are: *Antigone*, *The Crucible*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Frankenstein*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Our Town*, *Pygmalion*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Twelfth Night*.
 - If you are unsure whether a play is eligible for review, please check with Ms. Williams prior to reading the play and writing your review.
 - A good play report is a personal analysis and assessment of the play text and your understanding of the indications for performance; it is **not** a book report or editorial commentary. You are to apply critical thinking skills to evaluate the plot, characters, and theme of the story, consider the playwright's objectives and judge their effectiveness, and then to imagine the performance of the play and its possibilities. You will also choose a specific monologue or duet scene to discuss the performance opportunities of the script.
 - The Play Report Form details further information on the organization and expectations.
- **Tests.** You will be tested several times each semester over the various materials covered in class. Tests are assessments, usually written, of an extended length for which notice is given well in advance of the assessment, at least 3 days. Typically, you will have at least one test a six weeks.
- **Notebook Checks.** You will be required to maintain a theatre notebook throughout the year to hold all notes, handouts, tests, evaluations, and scripts. Periodic checks of your notebook and its completion count as major grades. No warning is given for notebook checks; always be prepared.
- **Participation.** Active participation, unlike in other classes, is essential in the theatre classroom. The quantity and quality of your effort and engagement in class discussions and exercises each day constitute your participation. One combined participation grade will be given each week, so you begin each day with 20 points. Deductions, at a minimum of 5 points for each occurrence, are not made as needed for the following:
 - Failure to participate in the discussion or exercise - a total loss of daily points
 - Displaying a poor attitude or lack of effort during activities
 - Distracting fellow students with off-task or rude behavior
 - Working on another classes' work or homework
 - Socializing during assigned work or rehearsal times
 - Sleeping in class or head on desk without permission
 - Coming to class late, without materials, or unprepared
 - Eating, drinking, or chewing gum in the classroom (bottled water is the only exception)

- **Critic Reviews.** You will be required to read and report on theatrical reviews and articles in the arts sections of the Houston Chronicle, New York Times, American Theatre Magazine, etc. at least once a six weeks. A reading quiz may also be given when specific arts sections are assigned.
- **Performance Etiquette.** Much of your time in class will be spent watching the work of other students; your attention to and evaluation of those performances is a major part of your skill development in the class. Therefore, your audience behavior during performances is graded.
- **Journals.** Most days a journal topic will be written on the board at the start of class. If no new topic is written, then you will have a free write journal for the day. When the tardy bell rings, you should be writing a response to the prompt according to the following guidelines:
 - All entries must include the date, an appropriate title for the prompt and/or response, and be at least one-half page in length. 10 points will be deducted from each entry for a lack of date and title. *“Journal”* and *“Free Write”* do not count as titles.
 - All journal entries should be thoughtful, in-depth evaluations of the ideas and/or questions in the prompt. Free Write entries should be topical and related to your progress in the class. Ignore phrases like *“I don’t know,”* and *“I’m not sure”*; they are a waste of time and paper. Exercise your perfectly healthy minds and give the prompt your best shot. You will never know or be sure until you put some thoughts to it.
 - Journal spirals should remain in the classroom and available for grading at all times; one combined grade is given for all entries assigned during each week.
 - If you are absent, you must check with a fellow classmate to see if any important information was given in the journal you missed. If so, record that information and complete the journal accordingly. If not, write a free write for the day(s) you missed.
- **Quizzes.** Quizzes may be given over notes, vocabulary, scripts, presentations and performances at any time with 0-24 hours notice. They may be written, verbal or performance based.

Procedures:

- **Tardy Policy.** The THS Tardy policy will be strictly enforced in theatre arts. When you are late, you must sign the sheet at the door to enter and then join the class activity without disruption. Failure to sign the tardy sheet will result in a loss of daily points and classroom consequences.
- **Restroom Breaks.** Restroom passes will be given in case of emergency or special circumstances with a nurse/parent note. You should never interrupt class discussion or a performance with a request to leave the room; please use an appropriate time and manner to make a request. The dressing rooms are not available for use during class unless there is an emergency situation.
- **Class Dismissal.** The instructor dismisses you at the end of class, not the bell. The entire room must be ready for the next class before anyone can leave. Please refrain from packing up early.
- **Attendance.** You will often be involved with group projects where others will depend on your presence; attendance, therefore, is essential. Performance preparation and/or rehearsal time missed must be made up on your own time; extra class time will not be given.
- **Make-Up Work.** Make-up work will be accepted within 5 school days of an absence. It will be your responsibility to get any missed assignments from me before or after class when you return. Performances and tests must be re-scheduled within 10 days of absence to receive full credit.
- **Late Work.** Late work will be accepted for all assignments for only 2 days after the due date; 15 points will be deducted each day the assignment is late. If you need more time for an assignment for extenuating circumstances, you must address the situation with Ms. Williams for approval.
- **Extra Credit.** Extra credit may be assigned on an individual basis if it is requested by the student prior to the 6th week of the six weeks. An extra Play Review or Play Report is the most common form of extra credit; the second paper would be due on the standing due date for the six weeks.
- **Open Door Policy.** If you ever need to speak with me directly, one on one, please feel free to pull me aside before or after class, stop by during my 5th period conference, schedule time to meet me before or after school, or drop me an e-mail. Though I would prefer it not interrupt class, I would be more than happy to discuss any problems or concerns you may have. If you ever need my assistance for anything, please do not hesitate to ask. This applies to your parents as well.

