

Introduction to Theater:
***A High School Framework Course for one or two semesters
of theater credit and instruction***

Introduction to Theater was developed in alignment with the New York City Department of Education's *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: Theater* which builds and incorporates the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts. *The Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: Theater PreK-12* is the New York City Department of Education's curriculum framework for instruction and notes indicators for student achievement in theater at various benchmark grades (2, 5, 8 and 12).

Introduction to Theater will allow students to meet a portion or the entire high school arts requirement depending on the instructional time i.e., one semester or two. This course of study provides an overview of the five strands of the Blueprint i.e., Theater Making, Developing Theater Literacy, Making Connections, Working with Community and Cultural Resources, and Exploring Careers and Lifelong Learning. Additionally, all four New York State Theater Arts Standards are addressed by this unit as well.

The course has been divided into five modules. Students begin by telling simple stories and learning to communicate meaning through the voice and through physical behavior. They move onto a study of basic acting technique, play analysis, character development and performing works of theater. Throughout the course, students will explore the origins and history of theater, learn to critique professional and student productions, reflect on and discuss theater's connection to their own lives, identify particular theater arts careers, and work with theater professionals in either long- or short-term residencies. Additionally, the course will provide baseline theater content, knowledge and skills that would allow the student to follow additional advanced course work.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

For a course of study based upon the proposed syllabus, list the units for the course, in the approximate order that they will be offered. For each unit, indicate the major learner outcome(s), the related learning standard(s) and commencement-level performance indicator(s), and the amount of time allocated to the unit. Duplicate this page if additional space is needed.

Title of course of study: Introduction to Theater

Unit	FIRST SEMESTER: Learner Outcomes Based on <i>Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: Theater Indicators</i>	Time Allocation ¹
I. Introduction - What is the “Big Idea” about theater?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students develop an appreciation of the role of theater in various cultures by exploring eras and people throughout theater history and, in particular, New York City theater. • Students enhance and develop their performance skills while learning to work in diverse styles and forms, such as improvisation, theater games, spoken word, physical theater, clowning, puppetry, reader’s theater and/or musical theater. 	<p>3 weeks/4 classes per week</p> <p>(50 minute classes)</p>
II. Exploring Basic Acting Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students enhance and develop their performance skills while learning to work in diverse styles and forms, such as improvisation, theater games, spoken word, physical theater, clowning, puppetry, reader’s theater and/or musical theater. • Students continue to develop the processes and the analytical and imaginative skills associated with acting. • Students apply an understanding of dramatic text and theater history in their critical responses as they enhance their skills to critique live performance. • Students use vocabulary that is authentic and integral to theater. • Through school partnerships and/or individual research, students broaden their horizons in theater and gain an understanding of the mission and goals of theater organizations. 	<p>4 weeks/4 classes per week</p> <p>(50 minute classes)</p>
III. Basic Play Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students increase their understanding of theater history and compare diverse productions and theater companies by using various research resources. • Students integrate an understanding of dramatic text and theater history in their responses to live performance. • Students examine the themes and context of theater works to recognize and connect personal experience to universal themes. • Students use vocabulary that is authentic and integral to theater. 	<p>3 weeks/4 classes per week</p> <p>(50 minute classes)</p>

¹ Class length = 45 minutes; any equivalent for 180 minutes/week throughout the semester is acceptable

Unit	SECOND SEMESTER: Learner Outcomes Based on <i>Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: Theater Indicators</i>	Time Allocation²
IV. Developing a Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students increase their ability as imaginative and analytical actors while continuing to participate as collaborative ensemble members. • Students improve upon and gain new performance skills through sequential and sustained activities in various theater techniques and forms, • Students use vocabulary that is authentic and integral to theater. 	3 weeks 4 classes per week (50 minute classes)
V. Performing Works of Theater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students enhance and develop their performance skills while learning to work in diverse styles and forms, such as improvisation, theater games, spoken word, physical theater, clowning, puppetry, reader's theater and/or musical theater. • Students increase their capacity in Theater Making through collaborations with theater professionals. • Students investigate how other art forms are incorporated in theater production through design, movement and musical scoring. They articulate the distinct choices that are made within the art forms to interpret and develop the theater work, i.e., costume design, choreography and sound design. • Students use vocabulary that is authentic and integral to theater. • Students assess and evaluate their own personal and performative skills through the identification and examination of theater careers. • Students cultivate a creative point of view and an affinity for theater as a part of their lives. 	4 weeks/ 4 classes per week (50 minute classes)

² Class length = 45 minutes; any equivalent for 180 minutes/week throughout the semester is acceptable

ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

Assessment of Student Learning and Achievement

1. Various techniques that will be used to assess student achievement throughout the course (e.g., formative and summative feedback, independent and group projects, periodic exams etc.):

Teacher Assessment:

- Daily observation of student work during exercises and rehearsal
- Review of written student work and notebooks
- Periodic oral and written reports, journals, quizzes/tests
- Formative and summative performance assessments; theater games, scene study, improvisation, skill-based techniques using teacher-generated rubric standards.
- Use of a rubric for describing and assessing rehearsal and presentation
- Review of performance of theater pieces created during class
- Videotape of work to be evaluated after performance, using rubric
- Engaging in dialogue with a teacher and peer critiquing session.

Student Self-Assessment:

- Reflective journal writings.
- Student-generated rubric for describing, revising and assessing process during scene work, etc.

Peer to Peer Assessment:

- Students observe and discuss each other's work.
- Students apply self or group generated rubrics for describing, revising and assessing sharings/presentations.

2. Outline of the proposed final examination/student assessment on the course:

Written exam breakdown

Final Examination:

- Part I – 20 to 25 multiple choice questions covering the theory and content of the five units
- Part II – 5 to 10 short answer questions covering the theory and content of the five units
- Part III – a critical response essay on a specific topic covered in the course

Performance exam:

Part IV -- Students will partake in a performance assessment of an on-demand presentation of a short scene and/or monologue

The performance project will be summatively assessed using a rubric generated by the teacher, reflecting criteria and concepts covered in class discussions. It will be provided to the students before they commence work on their project.

Theater and the Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards refer to the Theater in relationship to other areas of the curriculum (i.e. select recommended plays to read as part of ELA, etc.). While there are no specific Common Core State Standards for Theater, the focus of these Standards are preparing and developing students to engage in higher-level thinking towards becoming literate citizens. The following CCLS Capacities resonate deeply in the Arts and can serve to support instruction and teacher self-assessment.

Attribute	Self-Assessment Questions
Students demonstrate independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is sufficient time allotted for independent work? • Is independent and creative thinking encouraged?
Students build strong content knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does lesson/unit integrate strong theater content knowledge? • Does curriculum reflect a diversity of relevant plays, theater history, dramaturgy and/or critique/reviews for students to consider?
Students respond to the varying demands of audience, task and purpose and discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do students show evidence of their understanding of audience, task, purpose and discipline? • Does instruction include opportunities for students to explore and address the theatrical relationship of a performer to: the material, one's self, fellow cast members, audiences, etc.?
Students comprehend as well as critique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there opportunities for students to reflect and provide constructive feedback based on the work of peers, the work of professional artists? • Are they being instructed on techniques for critiquing? • Do students understand the value of critiquing?
Students value evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are students able to justify their creative choices as artists? • Are they able to defend their interpretation of a theatrical piece or performance by citing evidence from production? • How and when is time allowed to encourage this process?
Students use technology and digital media strategically and capably	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do certain lesson plans allow for the exploration of theater technology to enhance production value? • Is there a time to consider the impact of new media and technology on performance, design, the theatrical experience as an audience? For Social media feedback?
Students come to understand other perspectives and cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is time dedicated to explore the "world of the play" and the how theater is always grounded in contextual choices—social, time period, cultural considerations? Does the lesson reflect the diversity of theater and the artists contributing (from playwright to design teams)?