

Elements of Drama
CTY Course Syllabus

DAY	TIME	ACTIVITY (& skills)	PROCEDURE
Th – Su	9:00 – 11:30	1 hour, 30 min	E X C E R C I S E S
	12:30 – 2:30	2 hours, 0 min	S H A K E S P E A R E
	2:45 – 4:15	1 hour, 30 min	R E H E A R S A L S
Day 1 (Mon)	Morning	I. Warm-Up Exercise	I. GESTURES: One student checks Dictionary: What is a “gesture”? Meanwhile, ask another student to make a gesture, then to do it again. • TWO TYPES: (1) Literal Gestures (i.e. hitting a baseball), (2) Symbolic Gestures (i.e. Being in school makes me feel <i>small</i> .) 10 MINUTES: 3 Groups (including 1 leader @). Each student makes 1 gesture within a given/chosen THEME . Each student teaches the other group members his/her gesture. Volunteer groups perform. Audience comments: How can we make this a better gesture sequence? What other gestures would fit under this theme?
		II. Shakespearean Insults Ice Breaker	II. Students are given slips of paper with insult quotes from various Shakespearean plays. They walk around the room exchanging insults at one another to prove that they do not have to understand EVERY word in order to get the gist of what the language intends. Pairs will then block a short scene using their combined list of insults.
III. Truth or Lie: relationship with your audience, Ice Breaker		III. Students tell 2 facts about themselves, 1 of which is a lie. How did you determine when people were lying or telling the truth? If you could play this game again, what would you do to win? If we think of our guessing classmates as an audience, what theater skills are involved in “winning” (in other words, making them believe your performance?)	
IV. Rules/Honor Code Skits		IV. Time Permitting: students make up skits demonstrating understanding of CTY and classroom rules, as well as what consequences of breaking such rules. a. CTY (Lanyards, Lunch/Store, b. DRAMA (“If you can hear me...” Collaborative, RISKS...	
Afternoon	I. <i>Hamlet</i> Intro Handouts	II. <i>Hamlet</i> Intro Activity	I. Quoting Shakespeare/The Tragedies Handouts
	II. <i>Hamlet</i> Intro Activity		II.A. Direct students to open notebooks and prepare to write a series of responses. B. Discuss the students’ responses. Then direct students to detail their individual responses in a written journal entry to share with the class.
	III. <i>Hamlet</i> I.i	III. a. Lines 1-80: Lights Out Lesson: To learn and demonstrate how style and specific movement and gesture can create a dramatic performance. Divide class into Performing Companies. 10-15 minutes to discuss and rehearse the scene. Volunteer groups perform. b. Lines 81- 137: Strange Eruption/Ghost Background information c. Lines 138-190: Groups create Contemporary Improvs of this scene	
	IV. Sign-up Sheet	IV. Students sign up for roles in upcoming Shakespearean staged readings.	

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	Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercise II. Shakespearean Scenes Intro. III. Blocking IV. KWL: Theater Jobs	I. CHANGE YOUR APPEARANCE ACTIVITY. II. Distribute Scripts, Discuss rehearsal procedures and roles. Temporarily assign roles to see the scripts in action. III. MSND LP using Open Script #1: Groups identify the “power figure” in a photo of an acting scene, explaining their decision. Discuss how we can physically show character relationship and mood. Introduce some key blocking terms. Using a short script, groups block and perform a scene largely of their own interpretation. IV. Students brainstorm different theater jobs that they already Know, and some about which they Want to know.	
Day 2 (Tues)	Morning	I. Warm-Up Exercise II. Add to KWL list	I. CONFLICT IMPROV: Give pairs a setting and a conflicting objective; play scenes; class discussion (objectives, tactics, and escalation). II. Any other jobs students have thought of	
	Afternoon	I. Subtext II. <i>Hamlet</i> I.ii – I.iii	I. Using the phrase, “I’m glad you’re here this evening,” students try stressing different words to arrive at a variety of meanings. Perform them. Explain subtext tools: stress, inflection, pausing, and other nonverbal communication. Using these tools, student pairs deliver two more sets of lines: the first with suggested subtexts, the second leaving the subtext up to the group II. Discuss some of the conventions with which Shakespeare’s audience would have been familiar, such as the Royal “We” and The Great Chain of Being. Paraphrase Hamlet’s and Claudius’ speeches in small groups and make some decisions as to their mood and the subtext.	
	Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercise II. Great Chain of Theater	I. EARS TO MIND ACTIVITY II. Using the KWL on theater jobs, a skeleton of a diagram, and The Great Chain of Being as a simple model, students create a Great Chain of Theater, highlighting each of the roles we will need in class for a successful production.	
Day 3 (Wed)	Morning	I. Subtext (continued)	I. New student pairs try a more complex, but still open-ended script to create a subtext, focusing on the mood and tone of the scenes, which each pair will then perform and evaluate.	
	Afternoon	I. 4 Seasons II. Tragedy/Tragic Flaw III. Introduction to Performance Evals IV. <i>Hamlet</i> I.iv – I.v	I. Explain the 4 major genres of drama as a Seasonal metaphor: Autumn = tragedy because it starts with warmth and order (summer) and ends with disorder and death (winter), etc. Diagram this metaphor on the blackboard. II. Focusing on Tragedy, discuss the aspects of this genre, particularly as it appears in Shakespearean drama: Tragic Hero, Tragic Flaw, Catharsis, etc. III. Using a handout, each student will from here on take an active role as an audience member to help their classmates improve as dramatic experts. IV. Performance groups	
		Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercise II.	I. FORGETFUL ACTOR, HELPFUL PROMPTER ACTIVITY II. **Blank slots are reserved for group scene rehearsal time**
		Day 4 (Thurs)	Morning	I. Warm-Up Exercise II.
Afternoon	I. Commedia dell’Arte II. <i>Hamlet</i> II.i		I. Instructor performs a series of monologues based on and performed as the characters from Commedia dell’Arte II. Lines 1-83 – Polonius’ values; Performance Group: The Absent Scene	

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	Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercise II.	I. MACHINE: Students join in and form a moving, noisy machine. Promotes teamwork. II. **Blank slots are reserved for group scene rehearsal time**
Day 5 (Fri)	Morning		
	Afternoon	I. Life on the Shakespearean Stage	I. Heckling: Explore the nature and evolution of heckling and its effects in various situations. For this exercise and the rest of the day, the class will be randomly divided and assigned to seats around the room of varying comfort levels to simulate the seats in the Globe theater. Brainstorm appropriate behavior when going to a play, a movie, or a live sporting event. Come up with situations in which heckling is appropriate or acceptable in our culture. Also discuss the difference between common booing and witty remarks.
		II. Language	II. Focus on Imagery/Symbolism: To acquaint students with the idea that character interpretation goes deeper than the lines; and the use of symbolism is an easy way for creating tangibility in complex characters. Instructor places a number of symbols and words on the chalkboard, having nothing to do with any particular beliefs or fancy; they are merely to stimulate the creative juices of the students' minds. Discuss how through our lives as people, we recognize symbols in picture, in sound, in movement; we put a meaning to them (which can be good or bad) and we memorize it! Whenever we see it from then on, our reaction tends to be the same. - The same concept of symbolism can be used in creating depth in characters. To fill the space during and in between the lines.
		III. <i>Hamlet</i> II.ii	III. Performance Group and Prompt Script:
	Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercise II. III. Globe Seating Discussion	I. MIRROR ACTIVITY II. **Blank slots are reserved for group scene rehearsal time** III. Students discuss their reactions to today's seating arrangement.
Day 6 (Mon)	Morning	I. π Intro	I. Round Table Read-through of <i>Sir Cumference and the Dragon of Pi</i> .
		II. Production Needs	II. Prop, Costume, FX needs: Assistant Director, Stage Manager, Running Crew, Property and Scenic Designers, Publicity
		III. HERALDRY	III. Students design a Coat-of-arms using historical symbols of heraldry based on their own attributes. This acts as an introduction to symbolism, as the animals and pictures represent character traits.
	Afternoon	I. <i>Hamlet</i> III.i	I. Including "To be or not to be" Prompt Script
	Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercise	I. ZIP ZAP ZOP ACTIVITY
		II. π Auditions	II. Students use the Performance Evaluation "Casting Director" Handout and rate each performance. Instructor and TA will make final decisions.
Day 7 (Tues)	Morning	I. Heckling Review	I. Briefly recap the Heckling lesson
		II. KWL: Acting Advice	II. What do you Know about good acting advice? What aspects of theater do you Want advice on?
		III. Rehearsal Posters	III. Students create large colorful posters as prompts during rehearsals
	Afternoon	I. <i>Hamlet</i> III.ii	I. Acting Advice according to Hamlet: Using lines 1-37, small groups look for any and all advice Hamlet gives the Players, then create 1 page for each bit of advice: Quote, Paraphrase, and Picture (literal or figurative) on each page
	Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercise	I. MURDER ACTIVITY
		II. π Rehearsal	II. Rehearsal, with assigned parts

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Day 8 (Wed)	Morning	I. Warm-Up Exercise II. Designing Movement	I. FREEZE ACTIVITY II. Student groups, as acting stage managers, block <i>The Mousetrap</i> using chess pieces and shoeboxes. Groups must make detailed instructions, since they will be exchanging their notes with another group. Each group tries to recreate the movements given to them, discussing with each other what holes are in the instructions. See also Chart (Othello LP#13, pg 175). Use for Players Scene (with lines)
	Afternoon	I. <i>Hamlet</i> III.iii – III.iv	I. Comparative/Mixed Soliloquies, then VIDEO with scene evaluation: Intercutting Hamlet’s contemplation of killing Claudius with Claudius’ prayer can lead to fascinating discoveries. Student groups rearrange the lines within each other as they see fit. Volunteer groups perform their scenes.
	Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercise II. π Rehearsal	I. ONE-WORD STORY: Telling a story as a group, one (word, then) sentence at a time. Discussion Question: What are the parts of a story? II. Staged Reading
Day 9 (Thurs)	Morning	I. Rehearsals	I. Shakespearean Scenes and π
	Afternoon	I. Character (Heraldry) Committees with <i>Hamlet</i> IV	I. Student groups create a coat-of-arms for a major character (other than Hamlet) based on a close study of that character in Act IV. Student groups will decide on how to read through the scene, studying character’s lines; interactions with other characters; and what other characters say to, with, and about that character.
	Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercise II. π Rehearsal	I. PARTY HOST ACTIVITY II. **Blank slots are reserved for group scene rehearsal time**
Day 10 (Fri)	Morning	I. Warm-Up Exercise II. π Rehearsal	I. QUESTIONS ACTIVITY II. **Blank slots are reserved for group scene rehearsal time**
	Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercises II. π PERFORMANCE	I. A. Channel 17/Solemn Silence Activity B. “Break A Leg” Handout II. <i>Sir Cumference and the Dragon of Pi</i>
	Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercise II. Script Fair	I. THIS IS AWHAT? ACTIVITY II. Temporarily distribute new scripts. Rehearse for language familiarity. After each scene is performed, Acting Companies (same groups as Shakespeare scenes) vote on (rank preferences of) which script they want to prepare for the Final Performance. Instructor and TA make the final decision as far as which group gets which scripts. Each group decides on who gets which part.
Day 11 (Mon)	Morning	I. Final Performance Introduction II. Rehearsal	I. Instructor and TA, having made the final decision, distribute scripts to Acting Companies. II. **Blank slots are reserved for group scene rehearsal time**
	Afternoon	I. <i>Hamlet</i> V.i	I. Performance Group
	Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercise II.	I. THROW IN THE TOWEL ACTIVITY II. **Blank slots are reserved for group scene rehearsal time**
Day 12 (Tues)	Morning	I. Rehearsal	I. **Blank slots are reserved for group scene rehearsal time**
	Afternoon	I. <i>Hamlet</i> V.ii II. Development of a play	I. II. After learning some of the key terms, students map out the plot of <i>Hamlet</i> . Then, groups perform short, shorter, and then very short versions of the plot making sure to include the essential elements. Use Book-a-minute and <i>The Reduced Shakespeare Company</i> as models

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	Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercises II. Rehearsal	I. VENTRILOQUIST ACTIVITY II. **Blank slots are reserved for group scene rehearsal time**
Day 13 (Wed)	Morning	I. Warm-up Exercises	I. WHAT ARE YOU DOING ACTIVITY
		II. Rehearsal	II. **Blank slots are reserved for group scene rehearsal time**
	Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercises	I. WHOSE LINE IS IT ANYWAY ACTIVITY
		II. Rehearsal	II. **Blank slots are reserved for group scene rehearsal time**
Late Afternoon	I. Warm-Up Exercise II. Rehearsal	I. MOVE-AND-FREEZE ACTIVITY II.	
Day 14 (Thurs)	Morning	I. Warm-Up Exercise	I. Channel 17/Solemn Silence
	Afternoon	FINAL PERFORMANCE	Student Produced, All Campus Show
	Late Afternoon		
Day 15 (Fri)	Morning	I. Assorted Improv Games	I. Students choose games
II. Course Evaluations		II. Students evaluate the course	
III. Course Flashbacks		III.	
IV. Shakespearean Compliments		IV. Same as Insult Generator: Using a handout, students construct compliments using Shakespearean language	