

Marlborough School
Performing Arts Department
Theatre I: Fall 2019 – Period G

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**BEGINNING ACTING AND INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE:
A Lab for Developing Foundational Performance Techniques**

Course Agreements and Curricular Outline

Outline is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and/or posted on our class My Marlborough site.

This course is intended for students with an interest in theatrical and live performance. It provides an opportunity for students to explore a range of physical and creative processes that serve as gateways to further training in theater-based techniques and forms. We focus on body/mind awareness and the multiple ways the body interacts with forms and practices that lead to a deeper discipline, integration, ease, joy and sense of play. Throughout the semester, we will work to develop the practices necessary for individual presence, as well as ensemble awareness and creation. This course serves as a prerequisite to further theatre courses, but will also serve students interested in developing self-awareness, embodied creative process and research capabilities, and live performance skills.

INTENTIONS and AGREEMENTS

Theatre is a three-dimensional, holistic (whole body/mind/heart) experience and for this reason can be incredibly fun. Paradoxically, it also requires a great deal of internal discipline. While I encourage us to enjoy the pursuit of this deep play, we will also need to build a container that can support the rigor of our work. Together we create that container by agreeing to the following intentions:

- o Best effort
- o A supportive and honest atmosphere
- o Heightened awareness
- o A rigorous dedication to being fully present in the moment
- o Full participation
- o Accountability without excuses or denial
- o Respect for self, others, and the learning environment

Ideally, this class will be a unique experience – one that challenges you to move beyond your current understanding, not only of Theatre, but also of who you are and of what you are capable. In order to learn in this lab, you will need to agree to a willingness to be open and to expanding yourself intellectually, as well as emotionally, and physically. Together we will create a positive, trusting learning environment: one in which we are each emboldened to take risks and to embrace uncertainty, ambiguity, paradox, and meaningful failure.

Attendance and Participation

This is an experiential course. Therefore, in-studio participation is crucial to understanding. The work we will do is an interdependent endeavor and the absence and/or tardiness of one student affects us all. Furthermore due to the ensemble nature of the course, it may not always be possible to make up missed in-class work. COMMUNICATION IS KEY. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to communicate with me to obtain missed notes or assignments as well as to make arrangements with any collaborative partners. Arrangements for make-up work must be made **prior** to the Acknowledged Absence or the **first day** you return to school after an Excused Absence. Work cannot be made up if missed due to an Unexcused Absence. If you are only absent part of the day, work is still due as assigned.

Attendance Policy - There are three types of absences recognized in the *Marlborough Student Handbook of Expectations*:

Excused Absence is an absence due to illness, injury, bereavement, or other school-approved legitimate reasons. For this course, Excused Absences (up to six per semester) will not impact your grade, as long as you make up the work (or any additional work assigned) as required. Similarly an Excused Absence from Open Studio or the Open Studio dress rehearsal will not affect your grade, as long as you make up the missed performance according to the make-up procedure listed below. If you fail to follow the make-up procedures however, your grade will be lowered for the semester in which the absence/s occur/s.

Acknowledged Absence is an absence due to appointments, family trips and other scheduled activities such as: college visits, pre-college testing, participation in Marlborough athletic and club events, etc. For an absence to be considered an Acknowledged Absence you are required to file written notification with the Division Director and with me at least one week before the absence (see the *Student Handbook of Expectations*, Academic Policy on Attendance). In this course, an Acknowledged Absence will negatively impact your Daily Practice points for the day. In addition, an Acknowledged Absence requires you to plan ahead and schedule around the Open Studio and Open Studio dress rehearsal dates. If you miss the performance because of an Acknowledged Absence, your grade will be lowered for the semester in which your absence occurs. If it is deemed that every effort has been made to honor your commitment to the performance, you will be allowed to use the make-up procedure to ameliorate any grade reduction you may have received for an Acknowledged Absence.

Unexcused Absence is an absence due to truancy, suspension, and other unacceptable reasons. An Unexcused Absence will result in a zero for that day's Daily Practice rubric. For this course, an Unexcused Absence includes missing the Open Studio or the Open Studio dress rehearsals for what would normally be an Acknowledged Absence without following the protocol listed above. If your absence from the performance or dress rehearsal falls in this category, your grade for the performance will be a zero for the semester in which the absence occurs and you will be asked to withdraw from the class. There will be no make-up accommodations for an absence in this category.

Make-up Procedures - In Theatre I, your performance in Open Studio is used as a final assessment for the semester, just as a paper test would be used. It is equivalent to a Semester Exam: 15% of your grade. In order to make up for a missed performance or classroom presentation, you will need to make up any rehearsal time missed (including the time you are asked to sit out when your group is rehearsing, planning for your absence) and you will need to perform at an approved function. Normally, this make-up performance will be done as a solo. Other performance possibilities will be considered and you are welcome to discuss them with me. Remember that your grade will remain lowered until you have fulfilled the assessment opportunity for the semester in which the performance was missed. Your lowered grade will become permanent if the make-up procedure is not followed by the end of the quarter in which your absence occurs.

Attendance Policy before Open Studio - You must attend ALL of your classes on the day of Open Studio and the Open Studio dress rehearsal in order to be allowed to participate in that performance or rehearsal.

Tardiness - Class begins and ends on time. Punctuality is essential. Tardiness to class is distracting and alters the group dynamic. Unexcused tardiness (up to three per semester) will result in a one point reduction in your Daily Practice points. After three instances of unexcused tardiness, your Daily Practice grade will be reduced by two points. The fifth instance of unexcused tardiness, your Daily Practice grade will be reduced by three points and so on. If you are on campus, and not in your class (i.e., the Infirmary, a meeting with another teacher, etc.), it is *your responsibility* to let me know where you are. You will be allowed into class only by presenting a note explaining your tardiness. This note must be signed by the teacher with whom you were meeting, or by an administrator who can vouch for your whereabouts and reason for being tardy.

Participation - You are expected to commit fully within the studio. This includes participation in exercises and discussions, as well as incorporating critique and feedback from me, your self, (and sometimes your peers) into your work. It also includes being ready to work at all times. Observation is a key means of working and learning in the Performing Arts. If you are not speaking or performing, you are still working. Your attention supports the ensemble of performers. You are expected to be actively supportive and always ready. Everything that you do is part of the Work. This perhaps, above all else, requires the most inner and outer discipline. Be ever mindful and alert.

Additional Requirements

Process Journal – Students are required to keep a hard copy journal. Reflection and writing prompts will be given on a regular basis, but when they are not, the student is still encouraged to make entries tracking individual artistic process and their experiences within and outside of the studio. Entries are due in the last class of the week, unless otherwise notified.

Dress - Students are expected to dress appropriately for the studio – clothing that allows for fluid movement and that can be worn to work on the floor is required. The clothing needs to fit you in such a way that it does not require continual fixing during exercises. You will be asked to work without shoes. (If this is a problem, please make certain to speak with me outside of the studio immediately.)

Because of the explorative nature (both personal and physical) of the lab, as well as for safety reasons, students are discouraged from wearing jewelry and other personal adornments. Students will be given an additional three minutes after the period-starting bell to dress for class as well as an additional three minutes prior to the period-ending bell to return to uniform.

Hair - Hair must be secured in such a way that it allows full view of the face and does not require fixing during exercises.

Silence/No Chatter – The studio is a space for training and creation. There is to be no casual socializing within the studio. Please limit talking to that which is necessary for and relative to the work. Warming up vocally and physically is highly encouraged.

Cleanliness of Space and Dressing Room – The studio and dressing rooms must be kept clean at all times. If you enter the studio and there are items cluttering the space, it is **your** responsibility to clear them. Please do not enter the studio with anything other than water, your journal (if needed), a writing implement (if needed), and any assignments that are due that day. Small bags, books, shoes and additional clothing should be neatly stored in the cubbies underneath the counter in the Dressing Room. Items found elsewhere in the Dressing Room will be placed in the Lost and Found bins across from the Community Service offices. **BACKPACKS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE DRESSING ROOM** and immediately will be removed to the Lost and Found regardless of where they are placed.

General Decorum - Students are to refrain from the use of cell phones and laptops, unless specific permission is granted, as well as the consumption of food, gum and any beverages other than water during studio time. It is expected that interruptions and coming and going will not occur, especially due to the nature of the lab. If you have a specific need, please talk to me in advance.

Office Hours and E-mail Policy

Please feel free to email me with questions and/or concerns throughout the semester. You are also encouraged to make personal appointments with me at any point in time to discuss studio work, receive personalized attention or support, and/or to discuss whatever is on your mind. The most effective way to set up an appointment is to create an event using your Google Calendar, add me as a guest, and then click on 'Find a Time.' This will allow you to see when we are both available for a meeting. You may also email me at Gleason.Bauer@marlborough.org using your own Marlborough email address. If emailing, please provide me with your free periods and suggest a few options of possible meeting times. I will respond to you within 24 hours or by the end of the next business day. Please note that if you email me over the weekend, I may not respond to you until the following Monday, unless it is an emergency.

ASSESSMENTS/REQUIREMENTS

I will evaluate student learning with the following graded activities:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Percentage of Grade</u>
Daily Practice (See Rubric below.)	50%
Process Journal	20%
Performance Responses (FP, ASDC, WCC, OP, & OS)	5%
Reflection Paper	10%
Open Studio	15%
	100%

Rubric for Daily Practice – Daily each student will receive ten points based on the following guidelines:

- Appropriate dress – 1
- Appropriate hair – 1
- Maintaining silence in the space before class and during any breaks - 1
- Maintaining the tidiness of the space (including Dressing Room) – 1 (This is a point earned collaboratively.)
- Punctuality - 1
- Participation and Aware Engagement – 5 (These points are earned through participation in exercises and discussions, aware and engaged effort, accountability, honest communication, and respect.)

Please note that each semester you have up to three instances in which only a minimum of points will be deducted for neglecting to practice the above studio guidelines. So for instance, each time (up to three times) that you come to the studio without being dressed in the appropriate clothing, you will have a single point deducted from your Daily Practice Rubric. However, the fourth time you come to class without being dressed out, your daily grade will be reduced by two points. In the fifth instance your daily grade will be reduced by three points and so on. If you have questions about this policy, please do not hesitate to ask. Please remember that this Daily Practice constitutes a full 50% of your grade.

Process Journal - All students will need to purchase and keep a small hard-copy journal. Please select a notebook that is unlined.

Papers/Written Assignments – There will be one written assignment for the semester **due Friday, December 13 in class.**

Open Studio – This acts as your final assessment and presentation. It **WILL BE ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10 at 3:15 pm** and is open to the larger Marlborough community. There will be a **required** DRESS REHEARSAL on MONDAY, DECEMBER 9 from 3:15-5:30. Additional rehearsals may be necessary after school and/or during common free periods just before the performance date. OPEN STUDIO is the final project; therefore you **MUST** make arrangements to be available for the performance and the dress rehearsal. You will be graded based on your individual work, as well as on your cooperation with and support of your partners.

Late Assignments: All assignments submitted past due will be marked down by one-third of a grade for every day they are late. Please see the *Student Handbook of Expectations* for policies affecting assignments that are more than five days late.

Productions: All students must attend the **Fall Production** (November 13, 14, or 15), **The All School Dance Concert** (December 6 or 7) and the **Winter Choral Concert** (December 13) as well as at least one outside production. Informal critiques of these performances as well as of the **Open Studio** experience will be included as journal entries. **Please go through your planner now and mark the Marlborough performance dates on your calendar.** Share this information with your parents and let them know that your attendance at these events, as well as one outside performance, is a requirement for the course. Start making your plans to see the outside performance now.

Required Readings/Viewings: Students may be given handouts and/or links to required reading and/or video clips throughout the semester as applicable.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING HABITS OF HEART AND MIND

Students will:

- ~ Develop greater body/mind awareness, presence and sense of self in relation to space and others.
- ~ Deepen their ability to work creatively and consensually within an ensemble environment.
- ~ Develop extraordinary listening skills and an experiential understanding of the value of deep play.
- ~ Be familiar with embodied practices, research and performance skills that serve as the foundation for further training in both theatre and dance.
- ~ Begin to develop and articulate a personal artistic aesthetic.
- ~ Deepen their compassion for themselves and others.
- ~ Develop the capacity to tolerate ambiguity and paradoxes, and to embrace the unknown.
- ~ Nurture and deepen their connection to internal creative impulse.
- ~ Develop greater habits of persistence in the face of internal resistance and external challenges.
- ~ Begin to develop an ability to assess their personal artistic process and progress.
- ~ Deepen self-confidence.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- ❖ What is Art? What is not Art? How do you know the difference?
- ❖ What is Theatre? What is not Theatre? How do you know the difference?
- ❖ What are the elements of theatrical performance?
- ❖ What is the value of artistic discipline?
- ❖ What tools does a performer have?
- ❖ What is the work of a performer? And where else does it manifest?
- ❖ What does it mean to be a leader in the Arts?
- ❖ What am I noticing?
- ❖ Who am I and how am I changing?
- ❖ How can I apply what I am learning here to my life outside of the studio?
- ❖ What do I want to get out of this lab? And how is this changing as my learning deepens?

CURRICULAR OUTLINE

Please note that the units are not of equal length, often overlap and will be facilitated in direct response to the students' progress as an ensemble.

~ Journal entries are due the last day of class before the weekend.

~ Please take the time now to **mark the dates of the Performing Arts Department performances** in your planners and **make plans to see an outside production**. You will need to respond to these productions as well as Open Studio in your journal within one week of the performance or by the end of the Semester, depending on which comes first.

UNIT ONE: Self-Awareness and the Practice of Mindfulness

- Studio Etiquette
- Finding Neutral
- Circles of Awareness
- The Experiencer, the Witness and the Judges
- Self Perception

UNIT TWO: Group Awareness and Physical Practices

- The *Kata*
- Peripheral Vision
- Partnered Work
- Sensory Perception
- Collaboration and Ensemble
- Safety and Risk
- Group Play

UNIT THREE: Spatial-Temporal Awareness and Physical Improvisation**- The Viewpoints****Space**

Topography
 Spatial Relationship
 Architecture
 Shape
 Gesture

Time

Duration
 Repetition
 Tempo
 Kinesthetic Response

- Lane Work**- Flocking****- Red Square****UNIT FOUR: Performance Awareness, Vocal Improvisation and Textual Technique****- The Vocal Viewpoints**

Pitch
 Tempo
 Timbre
 Gesture
 Repetition
 Acceleration/Deceleration

Dynamic
 Duration
 Shape
 Architecture
 Kinesthetic Response
 Silence

~ DRESS REHEARSAL Monday, December 9 from 3:15-5:30 pm

~ OPEN STUDIO – Tuesday, December 10 from 3:15-5:30pm

~ SELF REFLECTION PAPER – Friday, December 13 in class