

**Marlborough School**  
**Fine Arts: Performing Arts Department**  
**Theatre III: Fall 2015 – Period I**

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**ADVANCED PERFORMANCE TRAINING -  
A CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT LAB**

**Course Agreements and Curricular Outline**

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

Designed to continue the work of Theatre II, this lab will be based on practices that view the mind/body as an interdependent whole – practices that stoke a unified whole into experiencing ignited imagery, bold precise action, and deep somatically derived emotion. The course is both physically and mentally rigorous and requires a deep commitment to the discipline of performance. The approach incorporates exercises attributed to Steven Wangh's ***Physical Approach to Acting*** (inspired by Jerzy Grotowski.) Other diverse influences will also be in play including: Patsy Rodenburg's Circles of Awareness, the actor training techniques of Tadashi Suzuki's Actor Training Method and the Viewpoints as developed by Mary Overlie and Anne Bogart. Students will experiment through exercises and will then have the opportunity to apply these exercises on monologues and scenes. Students will be asked to keep and share a learning journal of their experience and will be assigned a variety of readings and exercises to explore outside of class time.

**INTENTIONS and AGREEMENTS**

Theatre is a three-dimensional, 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:

- Best effort
- A supportive and honest atmosphere
- Heightened awareness
- A rigorous dedication to being fully present in the moment
- Full participation
- Accountability without excuses or denial
- 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 be successful in this lab, you will need to agree to demonstrate 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 even 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 studio 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 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 Absences 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 rubric will be reduced by two points. The fifth instance of unexcused tardiness, your Daily Practice rubric 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**

**Learning 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 usually will be due on

Friday. If we do not meet on Friday, the entries are due the last day we meet of that 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 enhancements. Students will be given an additional three minutes after the period-starting bell to dress 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 hard-copy journal, a writing implement, 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 e-mail 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 use the Scheduling Assistant feature in your Marlborough Outlook account, or by emailing me at [Gleason.bauer@marlboroughschool.org](mailto:Gleason.bauer@marlboroughschool.org) using your own Marlborough e-mail 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 e-mail

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:

<b><u>Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage of Grade</u></b>
<b>Daily Practice</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Journal</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Performance Responses</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Papers/Written Assignments</b>	<b>20%</b>
<i>Play Reading Responses</i>	10%
<i>Self-reflection Paper</i>	10%
<b>Open Studio</b>	<b>20%</b>
	<b>100%</b>

**Rubric for Daily Practice** – Daily each student will be awarded 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

*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 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 do not 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.*

**Learning Journal** - All students will need to purchase and keep a hard-copy learning journal.

**Papers/Written Assignments** – There will be one written assignment for the semester **due Friday, December 11**. In addition, you will need to choose a total of eight plays to read throughout the 15-week semester. You will be required to post your responses to these plays on our Haiku course site. You are highly encouraged to use the website as an on-line forum for discussion of these responses as there will be little time to discuss them in class. A selection of plays from which to choose is available on Haiku. You are advised to make an action plan now as to how you will accomplish this goal. **Four of the Play Reading Responses will be due at the end**

**of Quarter One on Thursday, October 15 at 5pm and the final four will be due at the end of the Semester on Friday, December 11 at 5pm.**

**Open Studio** – This is your final assessment and presentation. It **WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9 at 3 pm** and is open to the larger Marlborough community. There will be a **required** DRESS REHEARSAL on TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8 from 3-5:25. 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 your cooperation with and support of your partners.

**Late Assignments:** All assignments and presentations 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 **Middle School Performance** (October 22 & 23), the **All School Play** (November 19, 20 & 21), and the **Winter Choral Concert** (December 11) as well as at least one outside production. Informal critiques of these performances 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 will be provided a partial listing of plays from the Western Canon. Please select your eight scripts from this list or speak with me if there is something that you would like to read that is not on the list. Please note that you must receive approval before your choice will be credited. Create an action plan during the first few weeks of this course and be sure to pace yourself accordingly throughout the semester, as this is a self-directed activity designed to get you in the habit of reading plays. In addition, 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, discipline, control and sense of self in relation to space and others.
- ~ Deepen their ability to work creatively and consensually within an ensemble environment.
- ~ Deepen a set of extraordinary internal and group listening skills.
- ~ Further explore and develop a personal warm-up.

- ~ Gain an experiential understanding of the value of precision.
- ~ Deepen their practice within a variety of contemporary performance training techniques.
- ~ Further develop and articulate a personal artistic aesthetic
- ~ Continue developing the capacity to tolerate ambiguity, paradox and to embrace the unknown.
- ~ Nurture and deepen their connection to internal creative impulse.
- ~ Learn to appreciate and handle text and blocking as containers for personal energy and artistic impulse.
- ~ Learn how to develop character based on the balance between personal artistic input and the external information provided by text and direction.
- ~ Broaden their knowledge of the Western theatrical cannon.
- ~ Develop greater habits of persistence in the face of internal resistance and external challenges.
- ~ Deepen the ability to assess personal artistic process and progress.
- ~ Deepen self-confidence.

### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

- ❖ What is Character? What is the matrix of my own character as a human being?
- ❖ What is my own personal aesthetic?
- ❖ What makes a play good/interesting/worthy of production?
- ❖ What is paradoxical about acting and the art of performance?
- ❖ What are the elements of theatrical performance?
- ❖ 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 course? And how is this changing as my learning deepens?

## **CURRICULAR OUTLINE**

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

**~ Learning Journals are due each Friday. If there is no class on Friday, entries are due the last class day before the weekend.**

**~ Make sure to mark your calendar with all of the Performing Arts Department dates of performance as you are required to include informal reviews of these productions in your journal. And plan now to see a performance outside of Marlborough.**

**~ You will need to add informal responses to at least eight plays that you have read from our Incomplete List of the Western Canon to our Haiku Discussion Page. Please make sure to plan accordingly so that you are not attempting to read four plays in the final weeks of each quarter.**

### **UNIT ONE: Deepening Awareness and Revisiting Group and Personal Practice**

- Mindfulness
- Circles of Awareness
- *Kata*
- Partnering
- The Experiencer, Witness and Judges
- Personal Practices
- *Corporels & Plastiques*
- Incorporating Text into Personal Practice

### **UNIT TWO: Character Explorations**

- Self as Character
- Physical Sources
  - The Feet
  - Points of Lead
  - Gesture
- External Sources
  - Imitation
  - Image
  - Animal
- Vocal Sources
- Internal Sources
  - Metaphor



- Character as Self

### **UNIT THREE: Character and Text**

- Analytical Sources – Who, What, Where, When, Why, How
- Intention/Action
- Tactics
- Obstacles

### **UNIT FOUR: Monologue/Scene Work and Rehearsals**

#### **IMPORTANT DATES:**

**~ DRESS REHEARSAL Tuesday, December 8 from 3-5:25 pm**

**~ OPEN STUDIO – Wednesday, December 9 at 3**

**~ SELF REFLECTION PAPER – Friday, December 11**