

Theater Focus

Description

The Theatre Focus within the Academy for the Fine Arts provides students with the opportunity to develop the foundations introduced in beginning theater programs at their home schools. Coursework emphasis for year one and year two students is on theater history, theatre criticism, character development, script analysis, vocal techniques, movement philosophies, acting training philosophies, acting techniques, script writing, theatre business, auditioning and the preparation for a student entering college as a theatre major, particularly with workload expectations and rigor. Students in the program are required to attend evening showcases, performances and extra appearances. Please note, showcase dates are mandatory and are an essential part of the curriculum. Dates for all events are available on the first day of the class and on the AFA website. After school rehearsals will be held to a minimal amount to allow students to participate in their home school's drama opportunities. All students who attend the Theatre Focus are expected to participate in their home school's theatre productions and theatre activities.

Course Sequence

Year 1

Theatrical Literacy, History and Criticism

Each semester this class will focus on a chosen Western theatrical history, drama and practices of an instructor chosen time period. Students will study the social, political, musical, cultural and historical influences of the instructor chosen time period to understand the context in which that theatre was created. Likewise, they will explore the means by which theatre was produced and practiced during the chosen time period that may include one or more of the following focuses: theatre companies, acting styles, actors, playwrights, and producers. They will also study the dramatic literature of this instructor chosen time period that will include a critical analysis of at least two texts that represents the instructor chosen time period. Students will also write several critical analysis pieces each semester that will include: at least two live performance reviews approved by the instructor; two film reviews of Academy Award winning performances; and various journals and response pieces. All writing completed in the course will use appropriate MLA formatting and rules. The class also consists of a performance lab of a Shakespearean text.

Voice and Movement I

The focus of the Voice and Movement I class is to create a greater awareness of and connection to the actor's natural voice and physical body. Further, it is to free that natural voice toward greater psychological and physical connections and improved self-awareness, imagination, expressiveness and embodiment. Students will focus on breath and vocal production, opening the physical channels of communication, exploring physical alignment, and releasing tension to begin to build vocal strength and connect the voice to creative impulses. The first year will introduce basic diction and projection skills, refining the actor's use of their voice through deepening their experience of resonance along with clarifying vowel and consonant articulation. Basic elements of speech will be explored to help the actor bring vocal clarity, energy and point of view to any text. Movement in year one will focus on the fundamentals of body awareness and control, sense, and awareness through movement. Students will discover body mechanics, physical alignment, connection to breath, and self-awareness.

Writing for Stage and Film I

Writing for stage and screen provides a chance to explore dramatic writing in a number of different ways. The class includes theatre games and improvisation activities, which illustrate narrative techniques particular to the Playwriting genre. Students read and analyze a number of plays, and apply points of craft to their own work. After experimenting with various writing exercises, students write and revise a ten to 30 minute one-act play, which is then workshopped both in class, and during individual conferences, and, finally, submitted in the young playwrights competition through CenterStage Baltimore.

Methods and Techniques I

Methods and Techniques focuses on the many different methods and philosophies of actor training, including (but not limited to) Stanislavski, Stella Adler, and Practical Aesthetics. Through the use of published plays, students will ascertain a practical understanding of terms such as action, objective, tactic, obstacle, conflict, intention, motivation, and "beat." Particular emphasis will be given to ensemble-building, imaginative play, enlarging creativity, memorization techniques, and building self-confidence.

Theatre Business I

This class concentrates on choosing contemporary and classical monologues best suited for an audition. The class will explore the audition process itself; how to find work as an actor and insights into the day to day workplace of theatre, television, film and commercials. The class will also discuss cold readings, creating showcases, voice-overs, meeting agents, contacting agencies, pictures & resumes, mailings and life as an actor professionally and regionally. Students may "cold read," prepare assigned material, receive directorial adjustments, or be put through their paces in mock callbacks. Students will spend time on the collegiate selection process along with preparation and expectations for the college application and audition process.

Year 2

Theatrical Literacy, History and Criticism II

Voice and Movement II

Writing for Stage and Film II

Methods and Techniques II

Theatre Business II

Year 3

Theories and Practices in Content

In this course, students complete final studies in selected disciplines of their focus area and complete projects and tasks that prepare the student for the post-secondary experience. Project based learning takes place with the guidance of the instructor and should demonstrate an understanding of current trends, opposing viewpoints, career pathways, and best practices of the selected topics through research, collaboration, interaction with professionals, field study, and presentations. Artifacts from projects and current issues in the arts will be addressed through regular discussion groups with other third year AFA students.

AFA Internship

Students explore career opportunities that they may consider studying in a post-secondary setting. Students are placed for one semester with adult mentors to explore the responsibilities, benefits, advantages, and disadvantages of a career choice. Each school's Transition Education Teacher-Coordinator serves as a conduit between the school and internship site. Each student will be paired with a faculty advisor. An approved project is completed during the internship and requires the demonstration of both oral and written communication skills.

AFA Capstone Project

The capstone experience may be connected to the mentor/internship; a research project; a career-related project; an arts, media or information resource design portfolio; the preparation and performance at a competition/festival/exhibition; or leadership of a school/community initiative. The capstone experience must be planned and approved in accordance with a teacher mentor and/or business partner upon completion of the application. Students must complete and submit an Application a Capstone Experience Description and a Capstone Experience Agreement. Capstone experiences will be assessed by the mentor teacher, and/or a small group consisting of academy leaders, teachers and/or professionals from the community.



Typical Activities

- Masterclasses with professionals
- Trips to view professional productions
- Participation in the FCPS Theater Festival
- Collaboration with other AFA Focus Areas
- Visits to colleges and universities
- Coaching for college audition preparation
- Performances of standard and student-created works
- AFA Showcases

Audition Requirements

- Online Application at www.fcpsartsacademy.org
- Prepared Monologue
- Cold Reading in Small Groups
- Improvisation Activities
- Interview

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Frederick County Public Schools