



Santa Rosa City Schools Course Proposal: ETHS Acting 1 (Drama)

Proposal Submitted By Educational Services

Overview: This Ethnic Studies drama class allows students to learn about the foundations of theater, theatrical movements in the United States, character motivation, performance, script writing, and audience spectatorship and response. In Ethnic Studies Drama, students will discover how theater is a medium by which to learn about the experiences, joys, and struggles of others, with an emphasis on traditionally marginalized communities. Historically, drama has always been a tool for social change. Students will expand on this idea by exploring their own writing, plays, short stories, and spoken word to discuss cultural wealth, systems of oppressions, and the counter-narrative. Students will be able to demonstrate their own identity and cultural wealth by writing and creating dramatic narratives individually and with a class community. The end-of-year goal for the class is for students to engage in a community showcase that demonstrates what they have learned about the Ethnic Studies tenants in a Drama production.

Graduation Requirements: Specify which requirement is met. (High School only)

This course satisfies 10 VAPA credits. This course concurrently meets the Santa Rosa City Schools' district requirement for Ethnic Studies

UC a-g Requirements: Specify which requirement is met. (High School only)

This course will be submitted for approval as a "f" course by the UC/CSU systems.

Explain the rationale for course addition or modification. How does this fit in with district/site goals? Is this course replacing a current course, which course is it replacing and why? Will this course require new sections? Be explicit.

In July 2020, Santa Rosa City Schools approved Ethnic Studies as a course of study and as a graduation requirement. This course will allow students to meet their 10 unit ETHS requirement through a one year Visual and Performing Arts class by adding an option to the current drama classes. Research shows that Ethnic Studies increases graduation rates, improves attendance and results in greater engagement and higher grades.

Explain the measurable learning outcomes

Students will:

- think independently and critically about issues of race, ethnicity, identity, and power in American society
- understand the ideas of community assets and cultural wealth
- recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics
- read texts that counter the dominant narrative
- gain an understanding of how theater affects social change
- reflect on their own backgrounds and histories in a critical way
- use theater to explore their own and others' places in society
- understand and communicate connections between their experience and the experiences of others
- write clearly, effectively and creatively and will adjust their writing style as appropriate to the content, audience, and purpose of the context and nature of the subject
- synthesize personal experiences into play format
- communicate ideas to others through writing and speech
- research various forms of theater
- interpret, and respond to, the writings of various playwrights and authors
- understand and identify the various elements of a play
- provide constructive feedback of the works of their peers
- understand and put into practice elements of acting including: vocal clarity and projection; physicality; character analysis and blocking.
- understand the various elements of staging a play
- understand the various elements of producing a play

Course Description (To be used in the course catalog)

This course is designed to incorporate the ideas of Ethnic Studies into a drama class. In Ethnic Studies Drama, students will discover how theater is a medium by which to learn about the experiences, joys, and struggles of others, with an emphasis on traditionally marginalized communities. Historically, drama has always been a tool for social change. Students will expand on this idea by exploring their own writing, plays, short stories, and spoken word to discuss cultural wealth, systems of oppressions, and the counter-narrative. Students will be able to demonstrate their own identity and cultural wealth by writing and creating dramatic narratives individually and with a class community. The end-of-year goal for the class is for students to engage in a community showcase that demonstrates what they have learned about the Ethnic Studies tenants in a Drama production.

Detailed Course Design

(Course design should include the objectives, activities, assessments, and standards to be addressed in this course.)

Ethnic Studies Drama

Students will investigate cultural perspectives, community ideas and personal beliefs, as related to theater, while critiquing social constructs that have been conditioned through systems of oppression and underrepresentation as well as misrepresentation to find and develop their own voices through the medium of theater.

Unit Overviews and Key Assignments:

CA Theater Standards Essential Questions:

- Cr1: What happens when theatre artists use their culture, imaginations, and/or learned theatre skills while engaging in creative exploration and inquiry?
- Cr2: How, when, and why do theatre artists' choices change?
- Cr3: How do theatre artists transform and edit their initial ideas?
- Pe4: Why are strong choices essential to interpreting a drama or theatre piece?
- Pe5: What can I do to fully prepare a performance or technical design?
- Pe6: What happens when theatre artists and audiences share a creative experience?
- Re7: How do theatre artists comprehend the essence of drama processes and theatre experiences?
- Re8: How can the same work of art communicate different messages to different people?
- Re9: How do analysis and synthesis impact the theatre artist's process and audience's perspectives?
- Cn10: What happens when theatre artists foster understanding between self and others through critical awareness, social responsibility, and the exploration of empathy?
- Cn11.1: What happens when theatre artists allow an understanding of themselves and the world to inform perceptions about theatre and the purpose of their work?
- Cn11.2: In what ways can research into theatre histories, theories, literature, and performances alter the way a drama process or production is understood?

Unit 1: Understanding Ethnic Studies through dramatic arts. What is Ethnic Studies? Why Ethnic Studies Theater?

This unit provides an introduction to the key ideas of identity and its social construction, as well as race, ethnicity, and national origin. Students will look at Luis Valdez's *In Lak Ech* as it pertains to Ethnic studies and helps establish a class

identity. Students will learn Tara Yosso's Cultural Wealth Model so that they can better understand themselves, others, and--within theater--characters and their relationships. This unit touches on the role theater has played in our history and explores the role of performing arts as an expression of self; students will explore the power of telling their own stories and sharing them through performance of the written word. Students will become accustomed to presenting to each other and the class in a low-stakes, supportive environment.

Essential Questions:

1. What is identity? How do we define ourselves? What makes up your identity?
2. What is the difference between race, ethnicity, national origin?
3. What is the cultural wealth model?
4. Why do people tell their stories? How and why has theater been an important vehicle for sharing stories and histories?
5. How has race been socially constructed in theater?
6. How does theater impact how a person identifies themselves?
7. Why is theater a powerful and important medium within U.S. culture?

Core Assignments:

1. Students will investigate cultural perspectives, community ideas, and personal beliefs. (TH:Cn10 - Empathize)
2. Students will study the basic components of drama and acting. (TH:Pe5 - Prepare)
3. Students will bring in an object that represents their identity. They will present their items in small groups. This assignment will address presentation skills. (TH:Cn11.1 - Interrelate)
4. Students will learn the narrative arc (exposition, rising action, climax, resolution). They will create a short narrative that reflects their own background/identity and voice. They will work in groups to mold their narrative into monologue structure. Students will present their monologues to the class as a "rough draft" and audience critique will focus on the monologue structure, power of word choice, etc. rather than on the performance or story itself. Students will have an opportunity to revise this work in a later unit. (TH:Cr1 - Envision/Conceptualize, TH:Cr2 - Develop,)
5. Students will learn the basics of improv ("yes, and") as a tool for showing allyship and standing up for injustice. (TH: Pe5 - Prepare)

Unit 2: The Role of Theater for Social Change

This unit will introduce students to the concepts of motivation, performance, audience spectatorship, and understand theater as a tool of social change. Students will justify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theater work and make choices that are more reflective of

and respectful to diverse perspectives. Students will learn about social movements and how theater has played a role in social change. They will formulate a deeper understanding of a drama/theater work, consider the author's intent, the intended audience, and the cultural biases that are directly or indirectly apparent in the work.

Essential Questions:

1. What role has theater played in social movements in the past?
2. How does the audience's role as "spect-actor" contribute to the audience's understanding?
3. How has the state of the American Theater evolved in regard to race and gender identity, and where does it stand now?
4. What does it mean for a theater company to be inclusive? Why does it matter when many groups are not represented?
5. Can we use Forum Theater to address problems of inequality and unfairness within the school system?

Suggested Core Assignments:

1. Using Luis Valdez's *El Teatro Campesino* as a model, students will learn the definition of a social movement and how art has played a role in pushing against the dominant narrative and spoken truth to power. (TH:Cn10 - Empathize).
2. To introduce students to the history and function of American theater, students will explore (via lecture, research, jigsaw, or study groups) various forms of theater and discuss various social/ historical movements reflected in the theater. Students will synthesize and share their learning through their choice of media (Slides, podcast, video, dance, music, presentation). (TH:Re7 - Reflect) [The Rise of Social Activism in Theater](#)
3. Students will research current productions in various cities--and their own--and analyze the shows on offer: who are the playwrights (gender, race, ability, etc)? Is the production a modernized adaptation of an older work? If so, whose voice/what perspective is included? Theater size/funding? etc.(TH:Re7 - Reflect, TH:Cn11.2 - Research)
4. Students will use excerpts from *The Century Cycle* (ten plays by August Wilson, one per decade) to investigate the progression of the African American experience in the 20th century. Link to [PBS American Masters Denzel Washington/James Earl Jones as Troy](#)
5. To introduce students to performance and Forum theater, and to establish performance norms, students will play Theater Freeze Tag (and/or other theater games). For example, in Freeze Tag, students will receive a "starting point" scenario and begin their scene; as spectators watch, they call "freeze" and take the place of the performers on stage; the new students

adopt the stances of the previous, but change the scenario. For this assignment, scenarios will focus on identity, community, and conflict. Students would be free to change the scenario/scene to create a new outcome or point of view. Ultimately these created scenarios could be built into scenes later in the semester. Improvisations will be video recorded for future analysis. (TH:Pe5 - Prepare)

Unit 3: Looking at Other Voices

In this unit, students will work in groups to analyze selected scenes by BIPOC and marginalized playwrights (including students' own work from the first two units) to deepen their understanding and their appreciation of the various historically underrepresented voices in the context of theater arts. Students will also use basic theater research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of drama/theater works written from perspectives of historically marginalized and underrepresented artists.

Essential Questions:

1. How has drama (theater, tv, film) provided an historical vehicle to push back against the dominant narrative?
2. What liberties can directors, producers, and actors take in their interpretations? What remains a playwright's prerogative?
3. How do audience members' identities and histories contribute to their experiences as viewers?

Suggested Core Assignments:

1. Students will choose scripts to practice scene/ script analysis (TH:Pe4 - Select)
 - a. Students understand the structure and function of each element of a script
 - b. Students understand concepts such as exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, character development.
2. Students will complete script comparison of two student selected works that focus on a common topic or theme: one mainstream, one from an underrepresented voice, to gain an understanding of social and cultural backgrounds and how they are portrayed in theater. Possible topics include: family; found family; The American Dream; identity issue. (TH:Pe4 - Select)
3. Students will consider the practice of adaptation. What liberties can they take while remaining true to the original? What takes an adaptation too far? (TH:Pe4 - Select, TH:Pe5 - Prepare)

Unit 4: Finding Our Own Voices

Building on ideas discussed in Unit One and scripts analyzed in the prior unit, students will work on exploring their own cultural identity and theater as a place that promotes social change and/or challenges systems of oppression. Students will discuss script interpretation and intention as they create and edit their own work.

Essential Questions:

1. What are the core elements of a script? How does a playwright communicate their vision on paper?
2. How can the medium of storytelling reflect cultural differences, challenge systems of oppression, and advocate for social change?

Suggested Core Assignments:

1. Students will revisit their monologue from the first unit and revise it to better reflect their culture/individuality. Students may elect to start from scratch and create a new monologue if they wish. (TH:Cr2 - Develop, TH:Cr3 - Rehearse, TH:Cn10 - Empathize)
2. Students will develop a rubric for critique of their monologues, then present newly revised monologues for audience critique that focuses on the vision and identity of the performer/ writer. (TH:Pe6 - Share/Present, TH:Re9 - Evaluate)
3. Students will critique a performance of each others' monologues and work as a community to help others find their voice. (TH:Re9 - Evaluate)

Unit 5: Writing the Script

Students will use knowledge from prior units to start creating the script for a character profile and script of their own. Through the process of playwriting, directing and performing original works, students will deepen their own understanding of their own voices, their own cultural backgrounds and their own individuality while also gaining an understanding and appreciation for the identities of their classmates through their theatrical works.

Essential Questions:

1. What makes for a good story and interesting production?
2. How do we create characters in imaginary stories that, however creative, remain truthful to our culture?
3. How do we collaborate to create a cohesive original work that honors the individual?
4. How do we create stories that resonate with our culture(s) without contributing to stereotypes?

Suggested Core Assignments:

1. Character Profile: students will create a character profile by answering a list of questions on a character conflict and/or character analysis worksheet, using pictures of individuals in conflict and considering their backgrounds, needs, wishes, obstacles and objectives. (TH:Cr1 - Envision/Conceptualize)
2. Students will create a script in a collaborative group using the characters created from the Character Profile assignment. (TH:Cr2 - Develop)
3. Students will select a short story by a marginalized writer (see suggestions) and adapt the story into a script, including stage directions and character descriptions. Students will remain true to the voice and purpose of the original story. (TH:Cr1 - Envision/Conceptualize, TH:Cr2 - Develop, TH: Re8 - Interpret)

Unit 6: Performance: Engaging the Community

Students will create works that are student and community-focused, ensure civic engagement and elevate the dialogue between audience members of different backgrounds and ethnicities. Students will, as a capstone project, create a collaborative work that conceptualizes, imagines, and creates a performance piece that addresses systemic racism and/or promotes transformative resistance, critical hope, and radical healing. Students will present their piece to the community in whatever format is best suited for the work that is developed by the class. Such projects can be revised original works that address the themes and topics within our communities, or original monologues and short plays that are based on actual stories from our own family histories and interests.

Essential Questions:

1. How do we combine our work to create a comprehensive production?
2. How do we use technology (lights, sound, video, etc.) to enhance our production?
3. How do we create costumes, makeup, props and furnishings for our production?
4. How do we finance our production?
5. How do we market our production in a way that can engage the community?
6. Which areas of cultural wealth do the characters in your production

demonstrate?

7. How is your production an example of a counter-narrative?

Suggested Core Assignments:

1. Students will work in groups to select and produce a piece (from Unit 4, Unit 5 or even a new creation) that showcases what they have learned throughout the course. Students will select a piece from one of their portfolios and work together to perform, direct, costume and stage the production. (TH: Cr3 - Rehearse, TH:Pe4 - Select, TH:Pe5 - Prepare, TH:Pe6 - Share/Present)
2. Students will create an explanation of how their production shines light on the tenets of ethnic studies and will reflect on their learning through the medium of their choice (essay, recording, live performance). (TH:Re9 - Evaluate, TH:Cn11.2 - Research)

Suggested Texts and Authors (to be used throughout the course):

Native:

- *Not Your Princess: Voices of Native American Women*
- *What the Eagle Sees: Indigenous Stories of Rebellion and Renewal* by Eldon Yellowhorn
- Joseph Bruhac
- *American Gypsy: Six Native American Plays* by Diane Glancy

Black:

- *Fences* August Wilson
- Justin Reynolds
- Maya Angelou
- Alice Walker
- James Baldwin (speeches)
- *Midnight and Indigo: Celebrating Black female writers* edited by Ianna A. Small
- Amanda Gorman
- Langston Hughes
- *Mules and Men* by Zora Neale Hurston
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- *Black Drama in America: An Anthology* Paperback – January 1, 1994 by Darwin T. Turner (Editor)

Latinx:

- Luis Valdez

- Luis Rodriguez
- Elizabeth Acevedo (spoken word poems)
- Sandra Cisneros
- *Monologues for Latino/a Actors* by Micha Espinoza 2014 Plays/Scripts
- *Scenes for Latino/a Actors* Micha Espinoza 2019 Plays/Scripts
- [Latina/o Plays for Young People](#)

Asian:

- [31 Asian American Plays](#)
- *The Methuen Drama Anthology of Modern Asian Plays* by Kevin J. Wetmore Jr. (Author, Editor), Siyuan Liu (Author, Editor), Claire Conceison (Translator)
- [George Takei's Allegiance](#)
- Amy Tan
- Mindy Kaling (short stories/ essays)

Intersectionality

- *Flying Lessons & Other Stories* edited by Ellen Oh
- *The Best Short Stories 2021: The O. Henry Prize Winners* edited by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- *America Street: A Multicultural Anthology of Stories* edited by Anne Mazer
- *Take the Mic: Fictional Stories of Everyday Resistance*
- *Fresh Ink: An Anthology* edited by Lamar Giles
- *Lost And Found* By [Marsha Lee Sheiness](#) (LGBTQ)

Budget- budget figures must be included even if they are an estimate.

Projected Costs	Start-up	Ongoing
Personnel (Not to include classroom instructor unless a new section is needed)	No cost--convert current sections	
Instructional Material Supplies per student (textbooks, software, etc.)	Bi&POC Plays for study--\$1,200 Century Cycle--\$60 \$1,200 Lit Circle Identity texts Latina/o Plays for Young Performers-- \$400 for scripts (\$10 per script)	

Services (training, equipment maintenance, contracts, etc.)		
Capital Outlay (remodeling, technology, etc.)		
Total Projected Costs	\$2,860	

Instructional Materials- must include an estimate for new materials even if none have been selected. Place in the chart above.

Type	Publisher	Title	ISBN	Author	Copyright	# Have/Need
Play	Varies-TBD	Varies--TBD				30 scripts TBD
Novel						
Textbook						

Funding Source(s) for Costs and Instructional Materials

Grants (indicate specific grant and grant timeline)	
Categorical Funds (include related programs)	
Career Technical Education (must be for an approved CTE course)	
Department Funds	
Other (be specific)	



Appendix of Additional Documents

<i>* Required additional documents include meeting minutes where the course was discussed and approved</i>

District Principal Review and Approvals:

Principals' Signatures	Site	Approved / Not Approved
	Elsie Allen High School	Approved
	Maria Carrillo High School	Approved
	Montgomery High School	Approved
	Piner High School	Approved
	Ridgway High School	Approved
	Santa Rosa High School	Approved

District Department Chair Review and Approvals:

Department Chair Signatures	Site	Approved / Not Approved
	Elsie Allen High School	Approved
Gail Bowers	Maria Carrillo High School	approved
Lina Mel	Montgomery High School	approved
	Piner High School	approved
Hagle	Ridgway High School	approved
	Santa Rosa High School	APPROVED
Heather Garcia-Ross	Educational Services	Approved