

Musical Theater

Grades: 9,10,11, 12

Length: Full Year

Environment: Classroom-based

Subject: VAPA

Discipline: Theater

Institution: Alhambra High School

Course Overview

Musical Theater class provides a rigorous education in the disciplines of music, dance and drama. Students will study various vocal styles, acting style, theater history, audition skills, stagecraft, specialty skills from guest artists, critique skills, choreography, music theory, rehearsal techniques, and performance techniques. These artistic mediums also include life skills, time management, and social skills.

Unit 1: Getting To Know You (August)

This unit introduces the philosophy of Drama Class to the students: Say Yes! Students will get to know each other through a series of drama games and exercises which will build confidence and trust among the student actors, creating an atmosphere of positive and supportive energy in class. Learn and practice the class philosophy of “Say Yes!”

Learning Intentions: Self-Awareness- Recognizing Strengths; Self-Management- Goal Setting; Social Awareness- Respect for Others; Relationship Skills-Communication, Relationship Building; Responsible Decision-making- Identifying and Solving Problems Vocabulary & Concepts:

- Classroom Management, Getting to Know Your Students, Developing Procedural Processes for Daily Routines
- Rules, Expectations, and Procedures
- Get to know you: Theatre Introduction
- Develop Social Contract
- Identify and use appropriate Audience Etiquette
- Understand and execute theatre safety protocols
- Develop and practice theatre preparation and warm-up techniques
- Develop self-awareness, self-image; self-esteem, and self-confidence

Successive Units: different and unique each year.

Some students in Musical Theater are taking the class for the first time, others for a second, third, or fourth year. For this reason, the curriculum must be different each year. The students and instructor often create and plan dramatic projects together in which students work in pairs or small groups to explore dramatic concepts and to share their work with their peers. These units can include:

6 weeks somewhere in the school year: Watch a video or live performance of a musical theater show, analyze all aspects of the performance from acting, singing, dancing, character development, directing, choreography, costuming, etc. Because we've studied the whole show, students understand characters' motivations, intentions and objectives. They then select songs and scenes to stage, rehearse, and perform for class.

6-8 weeks in November-December for first semester final performance: Groups of actors select a Broadway Musical to study, from which they create a performance piece. Students watch a musical, discuss how to capture the essence of the musical for a 10-15 minute performance piece which communicates the mood and important ideas of the musical, including the performance of several small and large group songs. They collaboratively write a script which connects and introduces the songs set in a dramatic piece. Students costume their characters and create simple sets to tell their story.
Vocabulary & Concepts: Role of the Director; Play/Musical Selection Process; Concept Development; Rehearsal Plan Development; Auditions; Casting; Rehearsal Process; Technical Theatre; Production Process; Production Run Process; Origins of Musical Plays; Special Staging and Techniques Used for Musicals; Choreography; Ensemble; Libretto; Score

January - April, 12-14 weeks: If possible, Alhambra's spring musical includes the entire musical theater class, and rehearsals take place during class time as well as after school. This is the most thorough way to introduce all aspects of musical theater production. Students prepare in class for auditions, select and learn an audition song, rehearse and prepare for the actual audition, and experience the process of auditioning. Next, they experience the process of staging and choreographing an entire Broadway show. They learn to build characters and relationships, and how to stage solo, duet, and large group songs. They learn about costuming, set building and painting, as well as how to wear and use a body microphone. Ultimately, they experience the thrill and excitement of an actual run of a show for a weekend of performances.