



# ACT COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## ACTING/VOCAL PERFORMANCE

### **A Capella**

Students learn and perform a variety of vocal music of various genres. Students refine their vocal performance and perform in the community on several occasions throughout the year.

### **Acting I** *(Required for all 1<sup>st</sup> year acting/musical theater students)*

A continuation course, it is designed to equip the acting student with an array of tools with which to build confidence, comfort and presence on the stage. Drawing from a variety of sources and inspirations, we will deal with issues of breath, stance, relaxation, observation, movement, stillness, and, finally, the integration of text. Additional exploration will take us through creation of character and elements of improvisation. Should time permit, we will move into scene work.

### **Beginning Singing**

This is an entry level class designed to teach students how to read and decipher musical notation in a vocal capacity. Additionally, this class teaches students how to use their vocal instruments and their breath effectively in a performance setting.

### **Keyboarding 1**

Students will learn Major Scales C and G and basic root position chords. As part of the course requirements, students will compose a beginner solo piece for performance and explore simplified sight reading.

### **Keyboarding 2** *(Prerequisite: Completion of Keyboarding 1)*

Students will learn Major Scales C, G, D, A, E, B and F along with chords and inversions. Students will compose an intermediate solo piece for performance or audition and will explore duets and piano four-hands work.

### **Music Survey**

This class is a listening survey of the music written from Renaissance Era to the present. It is open to all students of all levels and abilities. The purpose of this class is to enlighten and educate students about composers, genres, styles and forms of music that they will encounter in their life and to give students a deeper appreciation for all music.

### **Music Theory**

This is a class designed to teach students the intricate “musical-mathematical” logic of how music works in a purely written form. It is advised that students understand how to read music, but it is not mandatory. By the end of the year, students should be able to understand and translate scores, write and transpose music. It is highly recommended that students complete sight-singing simultaneously or in a previous year.

### **Musical Theater Prep**

This is a survey course that introduces students to the famous and great composers, songs and shows of the musical theater repertoire. It is recommended that students complete sight-singing and beginning singing simultaneously or before beginning this course.

### **Performance Singing** (*Prerequisite: Completion of beginning singing or sight-singing*)

This is an advanced level singing class designed to promote students singing and learning standard vocal repertoire as soloists. Every class is formulated around a studio class format where students will be performing for each other at least once a week. Students will be expected to study and decipher music on their own and sing standard repertoire in three to four different languages.

### **Sight Singing**

Sight singing is a class to teach the invaluable skill of singing music at first sight. The class will cover singing simple to complex rhythms, scales, arpeggios, reading melodies, harmonies and counterpoint melodic lines. Additionally, students will learn a basic understanding of musical symbols and notations and conducting patterns. All students will be expected to sing new melodic lines, a capella, at every class.

### **Voice and Diction I** (*Required for all 1<sup>st</sup> year acting/musical theater students*)

Voice and Diction I for the Actor will introduce students to the basic structure of the vocal anatomy, the breathing mechanisms and vocal articulators. Students will work toward vocal musicality and flexibility, with emphasis on correct breath control and increasing breath capacity. Students will be introduced to and work toward an ongoing working knowledge of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and achieving a regional-free speech through vocal drills and worksheets. Dialect building will be introduced as students advance in their knowledge of IPA and achieve a regional-free speech. Students will work with poetry, classical dramatic literature, sonnets and song lyrics for projects. Articulation drills will be memorized and used on a per class basis as a part of the total vocal warm-up.

## **AUDIO/VIDEO PRODUCTION**

### **Garage Band**

Using MAC platform, students will learn the art of non-linear music editing. Working in teams, groups will create music by using filed instrument loops or by creating their own music and beats. Students will also be required to write lyrics and record voice over tracks to complement their music.

### **Historical Documentary**

Students will use research and AV skills to produce long format documentaries on a variety of historical subjects. Students will work in groups and have access to offsite research (Willimantic and ECSU libraries). The text *Introduction to Documentary, Second Edition* (Paperback) by Bill Nichols will be used.

### **Introduction to Audio/ Video Production**

In this course, students will study audio and recording theory and techniques. Students will also study production techniques. Course Objectives include: understanding basic audio terminology; understanding the basic physics of sound and acoustics; applying the principals of digital audio processing using digital audio workstations; mixing and editing digital audio; using several microphones, production, editing techniques; and using dialogue, sound effects, and music effectively in an audio production.

### **Photoshop**

In this course, students will learn to use several tools for selecting, moving, duplicating and resizing images. Students will learn to use layers and to apply many specific layer effects and filters. Also, students will use painting/blending techniques and perform adjustments for contrast and color balance. Students will learn to save their work in several different formats.

### **Stop Animation**

This is an entry-level course focused on exploring the possibilities within the field of stop-motion animation. The process revolves around taking a series of pictures of a subject in sequenced positions which, when strung together, create the impression of movement. Working individually and in teams, the students will learn how to develop an idea, create a storyboard, and then realize the project through the use of one or more simple techniques. A variety of media may be utilized, including, but not limited to, drawings, paper cutouts, found objects, shadow figures, sculpting and clay.

## CREATIVE WRITING

### **Inspired Creative Writing**

This class will draw on other art forms and use them as inspiration for creative writing. Students will write poetry, prose and memoir in response to what they are learning about visual art, music and movement. This is a portfolio class.

### **Introduction to Creative Writing**

This class teaches students the basics of good creative writing including: arc of action, point of view, poetic craft, etc. We will also experiment with flash fiction or micro fiction, prose poetry and creative non-fiction. This class is a prerequisite for students who would like to get into the more advanced fiction and poetry classes offered next semester. A creative writing coffeehouse is a part of this class.

### **Introduction to Poetry**

In this class students will read, study and write poetry in a variety of forms. Students will read a broad range of traditional and contemporary poetry, analyze how poets use language to create meaning and have an opportunity to study a variety of poetic devices including: concrete language, image, form, free verse, meter, rhyme, metaphor and simile. Students will actively engage in the practice of writing poetry, workshopping their poems collaboratively and revising their pieces accordingly.

### **Memoirs**

This class will focus on writing creative non-fiction. Students will explore the art of writing memoirs by reading professional examples and writing their own. Portfolios are required.

### **Mythology**

For thousands of years, humans have created stories to explain the world. These come to us from many sources – Greek, Roman, Norse, Germanic, Celtic, Native American, African, Asian, and so on – each culture having its own folklore. In this class we will explore a mythological sampling of stories from a variety of cultures. We will read them, talk about them and use them as a source of inspiration to ignite the imagination. We will then use them as a stepping stone to write. Whether we create our own pantheon or give voice to existing characters, each student will have an opportunity to incorporate these stories in some kind of creative writing. We will rely also upon Joseph Campbell in forming connections between cultures, stories and human existence and our modern day mythologies. Batman, anyone? This class is for students interested in learning more about culture, stories, and character in writing.

## DANCE

### **Ballet I** *(Required for all 1<sup>st</sup> year dance students, unless exempt by department head)*

This is a full year course that meets two to three times a week and is open to all full time students, regardless of previous dance experience. Ballet I focuses on the foundation of Ballet technique, terminology, etiquette and body conditioning with a heavy emphasis on the Cecchetti Method (Italian School). Students will be introduced to the five positions of the feet, arms and basic body positions. Students will learn the core barre and exercises including plie, tendu, degage, rond de jambe, frappe, fondu and grande battement as well as pirouettes and petit allegro during centre practice. Students will study the terminology of Ballet through homework assignments, class discussion and written quizzes. All students will be required to keep a daily journal to monitor his or her progress, make connections and set goals.

### **Ballet II** *(Prerequisite: Ballet I or advanced placement approved by department head)*

This is a full year course open to students who have completed Ballet I or have taken Intermediate/Advanced Ballet. This course expands on the principles laid out in Ballet I by intensifying the core exercises by means of tempo, repetition, and difficulty and by introducing more complicated barre exercises such as rond de jambe en l'air and developpe. In the centre, students will learn control and balance through adagio practice and articulation and dynamics during petit allegro. Students will learn musicality how to utilize space by executing traveling steps and large jumps present in grande allegro. Students will continue to expand their vocabulary with regular assignments, discussion and quizzes and maintain daily journals to chart their progress. In addition, students will be required to complete a research project centered on Classical Ballet productions.

### **Choreography 1**

This class is for the student dancer who is interested in professional fields involving dance choreography. It will include lecture involving the elements of choreography, improvisation and group choreography projects, as well as opportunities for individuals to create, teach and share their creations.

### **Choreography 2** *(Prerequisite: Completion of Choreography I)*

Building on the elements of choreography learned in Choreography I, students will explore choreographic principles allowing them to create their own dance projects incorporating all elements of dance.

### **Dance and Anatomy** *(Prerequisite: Completion of Biology I)*

This curriculum focuses on the essential question; “How is the body a system?” and includes a study of organization and function of the systems of the human body, including how they respond to the external environment and work together to maintain internal equilibrium. Students will learn the anatomical components of each system and engage in learning experiences both relevant and applicable to their lives in the performing arts, specifically in terms of Dance and Movement.

### **Hip Hop 1**

This intro course provides students with basic hip-hop skills such as popping, locking, contractions, isolations and step techniques. Students will develop a better understanding of hip-hop culture by exploring the history of hip-hop and how it developed over time. Analysis of choreography and the choreographic process will be covered.

**Hip Hop 2** (*Prerequisite: Hip Hop I or advanced placement approved by department head*)

Hip Hop II is designed for students that have already taken Hip Hop I. Students will explore different styles of Hip Hop such as lyrical Hip Hop, Break Dance, Krump and Pop. An emphasis will be placed on the students own personal style of hip hop through in class choreography assignments and review of peer choreography. This class is project based and much of your grade is based on class projects.

**Jazz I**

Jazz Dance will focus on developing Broadway, contemporary, and lyrical jazz styles. Jazz technique will be developed through a variety of daily warm ups, exercises and combinations. Students will explore the history of jazz in musical theatre, the entertainment industry, and the roots of jazz in African-American traditions by completing a short research project as well as in-class discussion and reading assignments. To better understand Jazz Dance, students will complete vocabulary quizzes as well as written reflections. To end the semester, students will develop their own jazz choreography in a jazz style of choice.

**Jazz II** (*Prerequisite: Jazz I or advanced placement approved by department head*)

Jazz II is for students that have completed Jazz I and are interested in a more advanced Jazz technique class. Students will develop their basic skills into more complex combinations and a larger jazz movement vocabulary. A more in-depth exploration of the various styles of Jazz Dance will take place through individual and group student choreography.

**Modern Dance 1**

This class will be taught in the movement style of modern dance masters Jose Limon & Martha Graham, adding a few other cultural styles into the mix. Fundamentals of technique, use of breath to facilitate movement, principles of alignment, rhythmic phrasing and fall & recovery techniques will be introduced in this class.

**Modern Dance 2** (*Prerequisite: Modern I or adv. placement approved by department head*)

Dancers will continue to build strength, coordination and expressive skills through dance. The class will study Masters Martha Graham and José Limon and will provide some opportunities for creative improvisation. Some dance history and class presentation will be included. Dance clothes must be tight fitting and easy to move in. Warm up clothes must not be too long, too baggy, or impede movement. Hair must be tied back.

★ RESPECT YOURSELF ★ RESPECT THE WORK ★ RESPECT THE COMMUNITY

**Tap**

Students will learn the basic skills associated with tap dancing. Lessons cover: the use of the tap shoe and its multiple parts; conditioning the feet, ankles and knees for mobility of the joints and articulation of sounds; building a repertoire of traditional tap steps; and the importance of rhythm and how it can be manipulated. Class includes portions of technique, vocabulary lessons and learning tap choreography.

THEATER PRODUCTION

**Costume Construction 1**

Learn the basics of costume construction. Students will learn how to properly use the equipment and tools of the trade. They will learn useful hand stitches as well as machine stitches, how to take accurate measurements, how to read and adapt a pattern and some techniques used to assemble costumes for the stage. Projects can be adapted to the skill level of the student.

### **Costume Design 1**

Students will study shapes of different garments and their historical evolution throughout centuries of costume design. Students will be given the opportunity to design and make a garment.

### **Drawing for the Stage**

This class will introduce students to the materials and processes designer's use in drawing for theatre. Basic drafting and rendering will be covered.

### **History of Costume**

In this class, students will explore the relationship between fashion and social, economic and political issues, as well as geography and technological developments. Students will also learn to identify, analyze and interpret major eras of Western fashion.

### **Introduction to Theater Production**

Technical theater at ACT exists to help students gain teamwork, problem solving, and practical skills that they can use throughout their lives, even beyond the theater world. Throughout the year, students will gain carpentry, lighting and tool skills that will teach them how to build by hand as well as how to look at difficult problems with a creative eye.

### **Light Design**

This class will focus on the generation of lighting concepts from art, music and drama. Students will explore the aesthetic aspects of light design with hands-on practical design projects. Students will also assist the instructor with the design for productions at ACT.

### **Lighting I**

This class is an introduction to basic lighting mechanics and will focus on hanging, focusing and running ACT shows and productions. Students will gain a basic understanding of the technical background to include computer technology and instrument usage.

### **Lighting 2** (*Prerequisite: Lighting I or advanced placement approved by department head*)

This class allows students to further develop their skills as a theatrical electrician. Students will hang, focus and run shows for ACT. Topics include programming, instrumentation and electricity.

### **Scenic Design**

This class will introduce students to advanced skills of scenic design with a focus in the art and practice of designing scenery for the theatre. Areas of exploration include: design concepts, script analysis, design conceptualization, solving mechanical challenges of designs, theatre architecture, modeling and basic drafting.

### **Scenic Painting**

Through hands-on projects and practical application to ACT productions, students will learn methods of scenic painting for theatre.

### **Set Construction 1**

What is required, in the way of technical support, in order to create a full scale theatrical event? This will be the overview of this course, with the goal of accumulating hands-on practical experience in many aspects of production. Students will assist the instructor with design and construction of scenic and prop elements for ACT productions. This course may include: design process, scenic construction, painting, material techniques, acquisition and construction of props.

### **Set Construction 2** *(Prerequisite: Set Construction I or adv. placement approved by department head)*

This class explores the basic techniques of constructing two-dimensional and three-dimensional scenery. Students will assist the instructor with design and construction of scenic and prop elements for ACT productions.

### **Stage Management**

This class will explore the fundamental duties and responsibilities of the theatrical stage manager. Topics covered include organization/documentation, interpersonal relations and the production process.

EXPLORING THE ARTS

### **Band Ensemble**

Must have experience playing a woodwind or brass instrument and be able to read music.

### **Culture of Film**

This course will provide students with an overview of the history and cultural significance of outstanding films. Students will watch and analyze films based upon industry standards and film techniques; learn techniques filmmakers use to enhance and develop story and character; and find connections to other art forms.

### **Debate**

In this class, students learn to express themselves with greater confidence and clarity by using the art of debate. Through the analysis of current events, the course is designed to help students develop critical-thinking skills, such as creating logical arguments; presentation skills, such as enunciating and maintaining eye contact; and listening skills, so they may provide constructive feedback to their peers. Other key skills include effective reasoning; gathering, reviewing and using evidence; refutation; researching and note-taking; rhetoric; and teamwork. Students also become familiar with the basics of good public speaking and debating by viewing and critiquing famous speeches.

### **Guitar**

Students will explore the basics of playing guitar including reading music, playing cords and performing basic songs.

### **Newspaper**

Student newspaper exposes students to the fundamentals of being a reporter in a fast paced newsroom. Students will learn basic techniques for writing articles, interviewing subjects, AP format, finding stories and arranging a newspaper. Once the basics have been taught, students actively participate in a newsroom atmosphere and publish articles in the school newspaper.

### **Nutrition and Conditioning for Performers**

This class will educate students of the importance of proper nutrition and conditioning as well as other wellness components as they relate to the performing arts. Students will have the opportunity to research and present their findings to the class.

### **Revolutionary Sounds: Rock & Roll**

This course is designed to better understand how rock music developed, how it has changed over time, and how it reflects culture, history, and national identity. We will explore various streams of rock as we seek to understand how music reflects and responds to the social and cultural history of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

### **Spanish Performance:**

This class promotes the use of the Spanish language through performance and would benefit students at every level. Students will learn and perform short Spanish plays and music. Students will learn and perform dances choreographed to Spanish lyrics as well as write and perform monologues.

### **Stress Management**

By the end of the semester, students will have a greater understanding of stress, the impact that it can have on the human body, and ways that they can manage and reduce its effects. Students will have an opportunity to research and share different strategies with their classmates.

