

**LA CAÑADA HIGH SCHOOL  
ENSEMBLE THEATRE**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**I. COURSE INFORMATION**

Course: Ensemble Theatre  
Instructor: Mr. Eick  
Location: Room 100/Theatre  
Period: 4  
Office Hours: Monday, 2:45 pm – 3:15 pm  
Website: [www.lacanadaplayhouse.org](http://www.lacanadaplayhouse.org)  
Email: [jeick@lcsd.net](mailto:jeick@lcsd.net)

**II. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

At La Cañada High School, our mission is to offer “programs that will enable our students to become successful leaders in society” while providing for “personal growth and academic excellence.”

To that end, the Theatre Department is proud to offer the most comprehensive theatrical training program available to secondary students. In the tradition of Julliard and Carnegie Mellon, we provide a rigorous conservatory curriculum set in a rotational schedule that allows the students to fully explore the different genres of theatre. Moreover, the students produce a professional season of theatre as a way of bringing their conservatory studies to life.

Students in Ensemble Theatre will work on multiple scenes this year. Students not actively rehearsing their scene on any given day will be assigned to work on their Theatre Portfolio – a collection of artifacts documenting the individual student’s theatre work. These artifacts will include writings, journal entries, character biographies, methodology notation, handouts, monologues, scenes and scripts.

**A. COURSE CONTENT**

Ensemble Theatre will focus on training four interdisciplinary areas: acting, movement, voice/speech and theatre history/theory.

1. Acting:

This class is designed to give the beginning student the fundamental building blocks for creating a character using the text and their imagination. In teaching the essential elements of acting, a diverse set of theatre games are played to reinforce important ideas. As they move from basic text analysis to final rehearsals of their scenes, special emphasis is placed on spontaneity and creativity while maintaining focus and attention.

2. Movement:

Specifically designed to help students improve their physical coordination and spatial awareness, this unit utilizes the movement theory of Meyerhold through a select combination of biomechanics, yoga and beginning gymnastics. As students start to identify areas of tension within their own bodies, a wide variety of individual stretches and balances are introduced. Advanced movement work

consists of partner balances, basic tumbling and emotional characterization through position and movement.

3. Voice and Speech:

This unit involves creating the building blocks for vocal mastery of the following areas: breathing, phonation, resonance, pronunciation, articulation and phrasing. Instruction utilizes the methodology of Cecily Berry. Acquired technique is subsequently applied to both comedic and dramatic monologues.

4. History and Theory:

This unit entails a detailed examination of the historical origins of theatre, the development of genres within the discipline, significant artists who have contributed to the growth of theatre and current trends in contemporary theatre. Specific attention was paid to the following periods: Greek and Roman theatre, Medieval Theatre and the Mystery Cycles, Elizabethan theatre, Restoration theatre, Realism/Naturalism and Modernism.

**B. COURSE ALIGNMENT**

The curriculum for each year of theatre has been horizontally and vertically integrated to ensure proper educational development and is fully aligned with the Content Standards for Drama as put forth by the California State Board of Education and the Common Core State Standards. A downloadable PDF outlining full alignment is available on the department website - visit [www.lacanadaplayhouse.org](http://www.lacanadaplayhouse.org) for detailed information.

**III. CITIZENSHIP AND BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:**

**A. CITIZENSHIP EXPECTATIONS**

At La Cañada High School, we endorse and support the idea of Developmental Assets that when present, help young people grow up healthy, principled and caring. In Ensemble Theatre, we have integrated the Developmental Assets (available on the school website) into our curricular framework as a way of preparing students to thrive in life and learning.

Additionally, those who fail to study their craft seriously and with intention come to the field under-prepared and ill-informed. The student is expected to apply the same work ethic demanded in their core classes. This is your chance to learn, to grow.

- Come to every class prepared, having read the material and finished the work.
- Commit yourself to “being present” from the first moment you enter the room. Full concentration and commitment is expected at all times.
- Focus on your work and the work of others; always watch, observe, and pay close attention – this is how you learn. Please no side conversations.
- Work for yourself and your fellow students. Your mental and physical presence is necessary for this class to be successful.
- Students cannot “fail” but they can “fail to try”.
- Please raise your hand if you have a question.

- Don't despair. Work.

## B. BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Students in the Theatre Department are asked to adhere to the following behavior expectations.

1. Theatre Dress Code:
  - a. Students must be able to tuck in their shirts if needed.
  - b. Shorts should be worn under skirts during movement class and rehearsal skirts (ankle-length skirts) are highly recommended for acting class.
  - c. Close-toed shoes **MUST** be available to wear during acting and movement class – flipflops are not acceptable and can create a serious “tripping” hazard.
  - d. Please remove any jewelry prior to beginning class and have hair pulled back away from the face.
  - e. Boys are expected to have black shoes, black socks, a pair of black dress slacks and a white, button-down, collared dress shirt for performances.
  - f. Girls are expected to have one pair of black tights for performances (to be worn under period costumes).
  - g. Additionally, students are expected to adhere to the published Dress Code guidelines as set forth in the Student Handbook.
2. Academic Honesty:
  - a. You are expected to demonstrate honesty and integrity while in attendance at LCHS. There is no distinction between giving or receiving unauthorized help; one who helps another to cheat is as guilty as one who benefits from cheating. All work submitted by students should be a true reflection of their effort and ability. You are expected to do your own work.
  - b. Students who cheat will receive a zero on the assignment and a “U” citizenship grade for the quarter. Consequences of violations will be based on the Academic Honesty Policy.
3. Classroom Rules: Please see attached “Student and Parent Agreement”.

## C. CITIZENSHIP GRADE

Students will receive their Citizenship grade based on the following criteria:

<u>Violations of Behavior Expectations</u>	<u>Citizenship Grade</u>
1	Outstanding (O)
2	Satisfactory (S)
3	Improvement (N)
4	Unsatisfactory (U)

**D. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE:**

The following steps will be followed in instances when a student's behavior violates the guidelines outlined in the Student Handbook:

1. Teacher Conference with the Student
2. Teacher Contact with the Parent
3. Teacher Contact with the Counselor
4. Referral of the Student to the Assistant Principal

**IV. GRADING POLICY:**

Letter grades are determined on a total point accumulation. Rehearsals, participation, class work, stage work and performances are graded using rubrics. All of the rubrics are available for download on the department website at [www.lacanadaplayhouse.org](http://www.lacanadaplayhouse.org).

<b>A. Performance</b>	40% of total grade
<b>B. Rehearsal</b>	20% of total grade
<b>C. Exams</b>	20% of total grade
<b>D. Production</b>	20% of total grade
<b>E. Grading Scale</b>	100 - 90 = A 89 - 80 = B 79 - 70 = C 69 - 60 = D 59 - 0 = F

**V. SAMPLE TEST QUESTIONS:**

1. Near the end of his life, Stanislavski distanced himself and his system of acting from which of the following acting techniques?
  - a. Affective Memory
  - b. The "Magic" If
  - c. The Super Objective
  - d. Tempo-Rhythm
2. All of the following are acting exercises used by Strasberg except \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. the Psychological Gesture exercise
  - b. the Private-Moment exercise
  - c. the Animal exercise
  - d. the Song and Dance exercise
3. Adler's approach to acting focused strongly on all of the following except \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Emotional Recall
  - b. Actions
  - c. Justification
  - d. Imagination

**VI. SAMPLE RUBRICS:**

Please go to <http://www.lacanadaplayhouse.org/rubrics.pdf> to access the department rubrics.

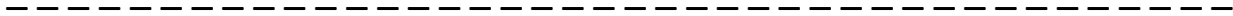
**LCHS THEATRE DEPARTMENT – ENSEMBLE THEATRE  
STUDENT AND PARENT AGREEMENT**

Welcome! At La Cañada High School, our mission is to "provide programs that will enable our students to become successful leaders in society." To that end, the Theatre Department is proud to offer a comprehensive theatrical training program using a rigorous conservatory curriculum set in a rotational schedule that allows the students to fully explore the different genres of theatre. Every year, over 150 students enroll in the Theatre Department and produce a professional season of theatre consisting of 8 full productions as a way of bringing their conservatory studies to life.

The LCHS Theatre Department has adopted a number of policies to ensure that every student succeeds both artistically and academically. Please review the rules and guidelines carefully with your child.

1. Students may not take any pictures or videos during class. No posting or commenting online.
2. During class discussions or lectures, students agree to allow the speaker to finish talking before speaking.
3. Students must remain seated both in room 100 and in theatre unless rehearsing. Students may not sit or stand on any tables or countertops.
4. Students may not use the audio system in room 100 at any time.
5. Students may not raise or lower the projector screen in room 100 without permission from the teacher.
6. Students will not write on the board or erase what's written on the board.
7. Students may NOT exit the theatre through any lobby door ever except in the case of an emergency. Any student caught entering or exiting through the lobby doors will be automatically removed from all performances that year. Students may ONLY enter and exit the theatre through the side door located next to the entrance to room 100.
8. There is no food or drink (including water) allowed on the stage, in the theatre or in the lobby. Water may be obtained from the drinking fountains in the lobby at any time. If you have a health issue (such as diabetes) that might require you to eat food during class, please see Mr. Eick privately.
9. Students may not enter or exit room 100 via the stage door without permission from Mr. Eick.
10. When in the theatre, students may not put their feet on the seats in front of them – they must sit in the seats correctly.
11. Students will NOT be allowed to borrow any period costumes ever for any reason including assignments for other classes (i.e. wearing a costume for an English assignment.) This includes ancient Greek, medieval, Elizabethan (Shakespearean), Restoration, Victorian (Dickens) or Edwardian (Chekhov). Period costumes are only to be used for official theatre productions. If a student wishes to borrow a modern costume, they must agree to work for four (4) hours in the costume room with Mr. Eick within seven (7) days of borrowing the costume.
12. Students will NOT be allowed to borrow any props, swords, lighting instruments, sound equipment, set pieces or other theatre materials. Students who wish to borrow a book or script from the theatre library must return the text within seven (7) days.
13. Students are not allowed under the orchestra pit without permission from Mr. Eick.

14. Students are never allowed on the loading dock (located on stage right) or on the catwalk (located on the third floor) without permission from Mr. Eick.
15. Students may not leave the instructional area to rehearse or complete class work – students must be able to be seen at all times by the instructor. For example, if class is conducted in the lobby, then all students must stay in the lobby.
16. Students who need to use the bathroom or get a drink of water will be allowed to use the facilities in the lobby. Any student who wants to use the bathroom or get a drink must leave their cell phone on the teacher’s desk.
17. Gum is not allowed in room 100, the theatre or the lobby. Please use mints instead.
18. Any students performing in a student matinee are required to obtain IN ADVANCE a “Release From Class” form which must be signed by their other teachers.
19. Students may not touch any props, costumes, sets and/or materials from another show.



**PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN THE FOLLOWING**

I HAVE READ AND AGREE TO THE LCHS THEATRE DEPARTMENT STUDENT AND PARENT AGREEMENT.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT PARENT NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARENT SIGNATURE

DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT STUDENT NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE