

**COURSE TITLE: SOLO PERFORMANCE**

**Department: Visual and Performing Arts**

**Instructor: Heather Chesley**

**Grades: 10, 11, 12**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**DRAMA II & III:** This course is designed to strengthen each performer's skill as a storyteller. Beginning with the legends and originators of solo art continued through modern solo work students will discover the evolution of both the written word and physical performance as an individual. Units will include the study, analysis, and impact of solo art throughout history.

Students will complete the semester having performed an original piece with multiple characters. By utilizing the techniques learned, students will gain the physical and vocal ability to carry a performance on their own.

Length: One semester (5 units)

Prerequisite for enrollment: Introduction to Drama

Type of course: Elective

**I. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- A. To expose students to an individual's impact on theatrical performance by studying a variety of solo work in relationship to its time period (politics, religion and art) from the viewpoint of the time, the author, and the audience.
- B. To discover the modern relevance of one performer.
- C. To build vocal and physical self confidence, or self esteem, much needed in personal and professional relationships including body language and speaking voice.
- D. To provide a creative atmosphere for the performer as a writer and actress.
- E. To expose students to theater's relationship to all other art forms.
- F. To develop critical thinking as readers, directors, viewers and creators of theater.

**II. COURSE OUTLINE**

- A. Study the masters as a class
  - 1. Lenny Bruce's *Without Tears & The Performance Film*
  - 2. Anna Deavere Smith's *Fires in the Mirror*
  - 3. Eric Bogosian's *Wake Up and Smell the Coffee*
  - 4. Spaulding Gray's *Monster in a Box*
- B. Perform the masters
  - 1. Students will perform works of various 20<sup>th</sup> century solo artists
  - 2. Students will direct each other in 20<sup>th</sup> century master's pieces.
- C. Create & write a solo piece
  - 1. Each student will create their own solo piece by choosing a topic & characters. The piece must have relevance to the individual, meet a story arc and convey an objective to the audience.
  - 2. Students will work in duos and trios to stage and design their show for performance.
  - 3. Each student will direct another student's project.
- D. Perform original solo pieces.

### III. EXPECTATIONS

Class participation and attention are mandatory. Students will be quizzed on all material covered in class. Dates of quizzes will be announced at least three days in advance. All written work must be completed on time. Group assignments are graded on an individual basis. All students will participate in a performance final exam for an invited audience of family and friends. Two papers drafts will be assigned over the period of a semester. Students are expected to take care of all costumes and props provided them by the drama department, and to observe all safety precautions when using paints, ladders and tools.

### IV. TEXT USED

Michael Kern's *The Solo Performer's Journey*  
Jo Bonney's *Extreme Exposure; an Anthology of Solo Performance Texts From the Twentieth Century*

All copies of text will be provided by the Instructor

### V. GRADING POLICY

Participation = 40%  
Drafts = 30%  
Written class work & quizzes= 20%  
Homework = 10%

**The student's performance exam is worth 20% of the cumulative semester grade. Performance Finals are to be held on January 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>. Students will be required to attend both evenings as well as one after school rehearsal held on the date of their performance EITHER the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> from 3 p.m.-6 p.m. Failure to attend the above will result in a lower grade.**

\*\*\*\*Students are invited to audition for roles or volunteer for design and crew for both the fall play Macbeth or the spring musical Willy Wonka\*\*\*\*