



SCHOLÉ ACADEMY
CLASSICAL ACADEMIC PRESS

Christian Theatrical Arts: Writing and Acting

Yearlong 2022/2023

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS: 7-12TH GRADE

Grades (should correspond to the website): *a short description of skills required for your class (typing, specific writing or reading skills, independent work, etc.*

Please note: Include here any information that parents need to know up-front. The student completing this course earns X high school course credit. – exclude for Lower School courses.

Class Dates: example - Begin Wednesday, September 6, 2017; running through Wednesday, May 16, 2018.

Class Times: Fridays 12:30-1:45, or 3:30-4:45 (EST)

Instructor: Elias Diamond

E-mail: ediamondhcpgh@gmail.com

SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTIAN THEATRICAL ARTS

CLASS SESSIONS DATES:

Classes will take place on Fridays 12:30-1:45, or 3:30-4:45 (EST) for 32 weeks and 32 classes on the following dates* --

September 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th

October 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th

November 4th, 11th, 18th

December 2nd, 9th, 16th

January 13th, 20th, 27th,

February 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th

March 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st

April 7th, 21st, 28th

May 5th, 12th, 19th

**Please note the above dates and times are the anticipated class sessions for this course. However, all dates are subject to change as the instructor's circumstances might dictate (e.g. illness, family emergency). Any classes canceled by the instructor will be made up at an alternate time designated by the instructor.*

COURSE MAP:

QUARTER 1

1. What is a play?
(Structure and Content/*Poetics*)
2. Acting and Writing Comedy
(*Twelfth Night*)
3. Acting and Writing Tragedy
(*Hamlet*)
4. Acting Exercises
(Scenes and Monologues)
5. The World of the Play
(Writing and Design)

QUARTER 2

1. Christian Theater
(*Everyman*)
2. Understanding Dramatic Action
(*Backwards and Forwards*)
3. Setting the Stage for Semester 2
(Brainstorming a play)
4. Final Projects of Play Analysis

QUARTER 3

1. Modern Play Analysis
(*Our Town*)
2. Writing Monologues
(Preliminary writing for final performance)
3. Modern Play Analysis
(*A Raisin in the Sun*)
4. Writing Scenes
(Preliminary writing for final performance)
5. Outlining Our Final Project

QUARTER 4 -

1. Group Writing for the Final Play
2. Acting Practice
3. Making Design Choices for the play
4. Rehearsals
5. Final Performance for other Students/Teachers

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS:

Many of the following texts are available in the public domain, and, as such, links will be provided. For other texts, only select portions will be used, and these will be provided in PDF format.

Plays:

- William Shakespeare – *Twelfth Night*
- William Shakespeare – *Hamlet*
- Anonymous – *The Summoning of Everyman*
- Lorraine Hansberry – *A Raisin in the Sun*
- Thornton Wilder – *Our Town*

Other Texts:

- Aristotle – *Poetics*
- David Ball – *Backwards and Forwards*
- *The Orthodox Study Bible*
- *The Prologue of Ohrid*

CHRISTIAN THEATRICAL ARTS

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will be survey of the theatrical arts as they have been practiced in the Western tradition, with the end goal in mind of using the medium of Zoom to stage a theatrical performance of the students own creation. We will be exploring fundamentals of theatre history, play structure, and acting and design technique. To this end, we will be reading several plays throughout the course of the year, while also engaging in exercises to practice skills in acting, design, and playwriting. All our work in the class will be looked at through the lens of our Christian faith, to understand how we can use the theatre in service of the gospel.

Students will be required to read approximately six plays throughout the course of the year, and write two-three page, double-spaced responses to them. In addition to exercises which focus on building our skills in the different areas of theater arts, the first semester's culminating project will be to focus on an in-depth analysis of a play of the student's choosing, using techniques of story analysis which we will approach through select readings from Aristotle's *Poetics* and David Ball's *Backwards and Forwards*.

The second semester will continue with play analysis and exercises in the vein of the first semester – however, the thrust of this will turn heavily towards applying these exercises towards the students' own creation of a culminating performance of a Christian drama of their own making. We will turn to source material on the lives of the saints, using in particular the *Prologue of Ohrid* and the *Orthodox Study Bible*, and we will craft this source material into a dramatic production that reflects the traditions of our Church.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

The process of working on a play is akin to the setting of a laboratory – in other words, it is a place to experiment, to take risks, and to discover. While all our students will come to the work with different skill sets and gifts, the primary expectation is a willingness to be bold, to experiment with their creative skills, and to accept constructive feedback with a good attitude.

It is so important that the students understand it is our job to provide a supportive environment for the creative process. While some may disagree, I strongly believe that highlighting strengths and recognizing what our peers are doing well is the best way to build a healthy and poignant performance. This is not to say there is no place for feedback – there certainly is. However, constructive criticism must always be balanced by positivity and love, especially in a Christian environment. Students are expected to be an active part of supporting such an environment.

We will be engaging with several texts of plays throughout the year. Some of these texts are challenging, such as the work of Shakespeare. We do not expect perfection, nor will students be penalized for having difficulties with the text. The only expectation is an honest attempt to engage with the work of other authors and to see what we can learn from them

and apply to our own work. With the Creative Exercises, there will be a similar philosophy – we do not expect creative masterpieces, only evidence that there was an honest effort to complete the activities. Above all, while the learning component of this class is very real, we hope it is FUN for the students.

In this class, students will be expected to listen attentively, participate actively in class discussions and practices. Students are expected to arrive to class on time and with all assigned material completed. The instructor will facilitate learning for the student, but the responsibility for staying up-to-date with classwork and assignments ultimately falls to the student.

All assignments will be due into the appropriate Schoology Assignment folder prior to the start of class each day. Students turning in late work will earn a 10% penalty for each day the assignment is late. Students will submit their work by scanning their homework pages and uploading it into the Schoology assignment window. Photographs of completed assignments will not be accepted as they are incredibly difficult to read.

STUDENT EVALUATION: GRADING

While pursuing the course of Christian Theatrical Arts through Scholé Academy will be “restful”, we also recognize the need to provide grades for students who will be using this course as part of their prepared college transcript. It’s a delicate balance to achieve both restful learning and excellent academic performance. Earning a specific grade should not overshadow achievement goals for mastery of this discipline. The study and practice of drama can often appear subjective – what is beautiful to one eye or ear may be jarring to another. However, based on evidence of effort and participation, I can assign the following grades to your student’s level of achievement: *magna cum laude* (with great praise); *cum laude* (with praise); *satis* (sufficient, satisfactory) and *non satis* (not sufficient).

Ideally, every average student working diligently should do praiseworthy work (*cum laude*). Those who excel beyond this expectation will be the *magna cum laude* students. Students who do adequate but not praiseworthy work be designated *satis*. *Non satis* means lacking sufficiency or adequacy.

Inasmuch as you might be fully on board with this grading method in theory, there will undoubtedly be the need to complete a college transcript with either a numeric or traditional letter grade. Traditional percentage grades will be provided and will be readily accessed on the Christian Theater Arts Schoology page. Additionally, Mr. Diamond will provide a transcript of that grade to the requesting parent at the end of the year.

STUDENT EVALUATION: THREE GOALS

Ultimately, the learning objectives of this course can be summarized in three primary goals, as follows:

- Students should leave this course with the skills necessary to do a detailed analysis of dramatic works and an understanding of dramatic principles based on Aristotle's poetics. These tools for understanding character motivation, dramatic action, and literary theme will help not only in the understanding of other dramatic texts, but also in the creation and performance of their own works.
- Additionally, students will develop practical skills in acting, directing, playwrighting, and design, with particular emphasis on acting and playwriting. These skills will be developed through the use of in-class exercises and the final performance project based on the lives of saints.
- The development of the prior two goals will be framed within the context of our Christian faith. The final course goal is to understand how we can approach the arts with a mind grounded in the gospel, and how we can create work which glorifies God.

STUDENT EVALUATION: ASSIGNMENTS, TYPES & WEIGHTS

Mr. Diamond will communicate with students regarding assignment feedback and grading through the free online grading system, Schoology. The teacher will provide students with more detailed information and access to the Christian Theatrical Arts course page.

Student's grades will be comprised of:

1. Participation: 20 % of the grade
2. Creative Exercises: 20% of grade
3. Play Response Papers: 25% of the grade.
4. Play Analysis Project: 15% of the grade
5. Final Performance project: 20% of the grade

STUDENT EVALUATION: ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students will often take assessment tests and/or quizzes privately at home. Students are on their honor to abide by [Scholé Academy's Learning Philosophy](#) which assumes the personal cultivation of Student-Virtues described in the Student-Parent Handbook.

Additionally, plagiarism is a serious and punishable offense. Proper citation of all sources is essential to the academic endeavor. Remember to cite any source if the information is not common knowledge or is an opinion obtained through any source. A plagiarized assignment will result in a failing grade. Students should consult their chosen style manual (see Student Expectations above) for specific direction on obtaining, quoting and paraphrasing sources.

THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM:

We will be using the free online “virtual classroom” software provided by Zoom, one of the leading companies that provides such software. The virtual classroom will provide students with interactive audio, text chat and an interactive whiteboard in which texts, diagrams, video and other media can be displayed and analyzed. We will provide students with a link (via email) that will enable students to join the virtual classroom.

Specific information regarding the technology used by Scholé Academy (including required technology) can be found by visiting the [Technology in the Classroom](#) section of the Student Parent Handbook.

Students will submit documents by scanning and uploading them to their personal computer, then attaching those files as .pdfs to an email. They will submit their work to the Christian Theatrical Arts Schoology assignment page (access granted after enrollment is secured).

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR:

Elias Diamond received his B.F.A. in drama from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh in 2013, where he received training in playwriting, acting, design, and theatre history and criticism. He has written several plays which have received production in Pennsylvania and New York, including *Sense and Senselessness* (produced by Pittsburgh City Theater) and *The Park Bench Hero* (Manhattan Repertory Theater and Tangent Theater). His plays and poetry have received several awards, including Carnegie Mellon’s Adamson Award and recognition from the American Academy of Poets.

In addition, Elias holds a Master of Divinity from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, from which he graduated with highest honors. He has been blessed to be able to teach in the Crossroad program for two years in the past, and he currently works as a Pastoral Assistant at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.