

**TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Larkspur, California**  
**Course of Study**  
*Communications Academy Multi-Media Stage Production*

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Communications Academy Multi-Media Stage Production is an 11-12 grade course in video and stage production, merging technology and classic stage production for multi-media events. It is a two-year, four-semester course in Performing Arts taught in conjunction with the other courses within the Communications Academy at Sir Francis Drake High School.

This course includes all-skill-level training in the following areas:

- Intermediate/Advanced acting for the camera and the stage
- Scriptwriting and adaptation
- Directing for both stage and camera
- Lighting design for video and stage
- Set design and green screen techniques
- Audio design
- Production management
- Stage management
- Prop and Costume design and construction
- Video projection design and incorporation into staged production
- Live video feed design and implementation

Multi-Media Stage Production is a project-based learning environment housed in the professional model of a production team. Each quarter, a new project is described, incorporating subject material from the English and Social Studies classes within the Communications Academy. Skills are then developed in workshop, lecture, and intensive training formats through the Video Production and Multi-Media Stage Production courses. The production team relies on leadership, communication, teamwork and delegation, peer tutoring and mentoring (12<sup>th</sup> grade students training the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students), as well as every aspect of the design and construction process: dreaming, analysis, design, planning, model-building, adaptation, building and construction, finishing and detailing, presentation, assessment, and conservation.

This course addresses the following Tam 21<sup>st</sup> Century goals:

- Student Success – The group dynamics and skills taught in delegation and collaboration provides endless opportunities for students to demonstrate responsibility, creativity, productivity and initiative throughout each project.
- Student Success – Workshops are often led by professionals in the field brought in as guest artists. This adult connection not only inspires the learning process but boosts the relevance of each piece of the project. Each project also incorporates a public presentation, including question and answer sessions with an adult audience. Here the students have the opportunity to expand on the development process rather than simply the outcome of the project.

- Student Success – The workshop format expands the horizon of technological training beyond the skills attained in an advanced drama, stagecraft, or video production course. Here, specific skills can be researched and experienced with the guidance and training of an expert. These adult connections also open doors for internships and school-to-career opportunities.
- Instruction – Solving complex problems and conceptual thinking are at the root of Multi-Media Stage Production. Script development and/or adaptation begins the problem-solving journey, followed quickly by concept designs in all areas of the productions. Each part of the production team has a leader, helping to organize, guide, and support the group. These leaders continue to communicate to the other team leaders, to share responsibility, and to solve the larger issues as the project teams merge into the final production phase.
- Instruction – Each project with this course reaches into the community for research, resources, expertise, venues, opinion, press, and audience. From collecting surveys of public opinion to scouting locations for video shoots, from working directly with the Marin Independent Journal to loading in a production at the Hoytt Theater at the Osher Marin Jewish Community Center, this course reaches far beyond the limits of the high school campus.

This course addresses the following Student Learning Outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Communicate articulately, effectively, and persuasively. Acting for stage and camera requires public speaking skills, as well as writing persuasive dialogue in scripts, voiceovers, and screenplays. The question and answer sessions after each performance engage the public audience in a direct dialogue with students about their work. Developing press releases and preparing for public interviews for local Bay Area press agencies trains students in both writing and speaking formats specific to the press and community announcements.
- Outcome 2: Read and analyze material. In creating original work for stage and screen, research is done in multiple disciplines for plot and character development. Set and costume design requires research in historical fashions and architectural trends. All aspects of production require research in cultures around the world for plot and character integrity, costume and make-up accuracy, and architectural points of reference.
- Outcome 3: Use technology as a tool. The technology focus in the Communications Academy encompasses video technology, set design and construction, light design for stage and camera, audio design and recording, prop design and construction, costume design and construction, and make-up design and application for stage and camera. The range of technology for these areas expands from classic technology of pencil and ruler to non-linear editing computer stations.
- Outcome 5: Apply mathematical knowledge and skills. Set design requires mathematical computations for creating scale models as well as in measurement and construction of set pieces. Designs move from the floor plan to the set model to drafting of build plans to computation of purchase lists for the economical and efficient use and re-use of building materials. Light design requires an understanding of electricity principles, calculations of watts per channel and the effect of light color and intensity on sets, costumes and make-up.
- Outcome 11: Interpret, experience, create, perform artistic work. At the core of Multi-

Media Stage Production are the artistic disciplines of narrative, design, composition, color theory, point-of-view, and perspective. Students view and critique throughout the process, both off-campus work as well as the work of their peers.

- **Outcome 12: Demonstrate school-to-work skills.** The training received in the Multi-Media Stage Production course prepares students for direct school to career opportunities, either in professional theater houses, operating sound and light control equipment, technical work for stage, video and film production, or even to start their own small production company, given the financial backing for equipment. Students receive training in the entire process of production and management used throughout the entertainment industry.

## II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

*Within this course students will:*

1. Communicate effectively with peers and adult mentors in the classroom and rehearsal settings **regarding the creation and performance of artistic works**. See Standards I and II below.
2. Provide leadership in both short and long-term projects **in theatre, film/video and electronic media applied to English and Social Studies**. See Standard V below.
3. Create and analyze scripts, for both stage and camera, for conceptual elements including set design and technical execution, video montage and projection, environmental and incidental audio, costume, props and make-up design. See Standards II and IV below.
4. Demonstrate rehearsal and workshop techniques (within a large group dynamic) such as teamwork, ensemble and collaboration skills, staying on task, concentration, adaptation, patience, listening, precision, accountability, and maintaining a clean and orderly work environment. See Standard V below.
5. Apply knowledge of behavior to the analysis and creation of characters (character theory) for both stage and camera. See Standard III below.
6. Develop an understanding of theatrical expression through constructed, visual and auditory elements. See Standards I and II below.
7. Create models, sketches, lists, and strategies for execution of stage projects including lighting plot, floorplan and/or model of set, prop and costume plot production, and prompt book. See Standards I and V below.
8. Explore and demonstrate production team dynamics, working with small groups of Communications Academy students in a classroom or workshop setting under the guidance of the teacher or guest artist, and/or in independent practice during production. See Standards IV and V below.
9. Demonstrate proper front of house management skills including customer service, handling money, ticketing, timeliness, cleanliness, and preparation. See Standard V below.

*This course fulfills California Visual and Performing Arts Standards: Theatre, advanced.*

Standard I - Artistic Perception:

Processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to the arts. Benchmarks 1:1 through 1:3

Standard II - Creative Expression:

Creating, performing and participating in the arts. Benchmarks 2:1 and 2:3

Standard III - Historical and Cultural Context:

Understanding historical contributions and cultural dimensions of the arts. Benchmarks 3:2 through 3:4

Standard IV - Aesthetic Valuing:

Responding to, analyzing and making judgments about artworks. Benchmarks 4:1 and 4:2

Standard V - Connections, Relationships, Applications:

Connecting and Applying what is learned in theatre, film/video, and electronic media to other art forms and subject areas and to careers. Benchmarks 5:1 through 5:4

### **III. ASSESSMENT**

#### **A. Student Assessment**

Students will be assessed through the following:

- a written final,
- benchmark evaluations of sketches, drawings, models and test samples/screenings
- public performance each quarter,
- written and interviewed self- and peer-evaluations based on the attached rubrics (see ComAcad Groups Skills Scoring Rubric and ComAcad Individual Skills Scoring Rubric, attached), and
- rehearsals will be observed and evaluated by faculty and guest artist mentors.

Students will be given the grading criteria and course expectations, preferably in writing, at the beginning of the course.

#### **B. Course Assessment**

The course will be evaluated by using student exit surveys, audience surveys, video archives, and evaluations (individual and group) by junior and senior students in the program. Guest artists and instructors will also submit evaluations of the course structure, their experience with students and faculty, and suggested changes.

### **IV. METHODS AND MATERIALS**

#### **A. Methods**

As stated earlier, Multi-Media Stage Production is a project-based learning curriculum, integrating course subject material from the English and Social Studies classes into quarter-long projects resulting in public performances presenting the students' works. These projects range from one-minute campaign advertisements for candidates and propositions up for

election on the state and national level to original multi-media stage productions complete with original script, musical score, video projections, set design, light design, costumes, props, and make-up.

Each project begins with the full Communications Academy contingent meeting to discover, analyze, and begin to dissect the project's description. The full team analyzes how the project is to be broken down for production, the timeline for completion of each phase of the project, and the teams and team leaders necessary to the project.

Workshops are then designed with guest artists and faculty leading in direct instruction, hands-on technical training, lecture and seminar formats, and rehearsals.

Students also participate in the following activities throughout the two-year sequence:

1. Create the ensemble - study in group dynamics and ensemble activities
2. Practice and refine advanced actor training which may include: Stanislavski and movement, relaxation , flexibility awareness of body and brain connection, voice and diction, stage combat, dance, mask, improvisation, scene study, Shakespeare, audition, listening, observation
3. Evaluation of projects and process along the way - How did it go? Like you planned? How did you feel? How well is your team functioning? What roles is your team falling into? How is leadership handled/followed? How well is the delegation of work following through? How well is the timeline being followed? What technical/aesthetic challenges came up?
4. Students use a journal - record observations, reflect on process and learning, respond and critically self-reflect.

## **B. Materials**

There is no single text, but many references and sources will be used, including:

*Improvisation for the Theatre* - - - Viola Spolin  
*Games for Actors and Non-Actors* - - Augusto Boal  
*On Directing* - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Harold Clurman  
*Stage Manager's Handbook* - - - - - Bert Gruver  
*Backstage Handbook* - - - - - - - - - Paul Carter  
*Stage Rigging Handbook* - - - - - Jay O. Glerum  
*Drafting for the Theatre* - - - - - Dennis Dorn, Mark Shanda  
*Theatre: Art in Action* - - - - - - - - - N.T.C., publishers  
*Scene Design and Stage Lighting* - - Parker and Smith  
*Digital Filmmaking Handbook* - - - - - Ben Long & Sonja Schenk  
Handouts and dramatic texts

## **C. Technology**

Students will be expected to use computers with appropriate software, video equipment, and lighting instrument technology.

Within set design and construction, students will learn all safety procedures in operating power tools ONLY under appropriate adult supervision.

Within costume design and construction, students will use sewing machines, hot glue guns, and other hand tools for adapting and creating costume pieces, head pieces, props, jewelry, and masks.

In light design, students will learn principles of electricity and light color theory, operating a professional standard light control board, dimmers, cabling, and light instruments of the stage and screen.

In video design and production, students will operate professional quality video cameras, tripods, lights, microphones, and non-linear editing computer stations. Also, these students will design and operate video projection technology, from the projectors to screens and projection surfaces specific to each production, including mirrors, projection control tracking, and shutter technology for incorporation of video technology into a multi-media staged production.

## **V. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Communications Academy Multi-Media Stage Production is a 20 credit (5 credits per semester for four consecutive semesters) course open to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade Communications Academy students at Sir Francis Drake High School.

### **A. Prerequisites**

As this is an upper-division course, this course requires completion of **any** of the following:

Drama 1-2    **-or-**    Art Explorations    **-or-**    Beginning Music

**AND** concurrent enrollment in the conjoined Communications Academy courses.

### **B. Requirements Met**

This course may be used to fulfill the district's Fine Arts graduation requirement.

This course has been submitted for approval towards meeting the visual and performing arts requirement for UC/CSU admissions.

Adopted: 1/11/05

Revised: 2/09/05