

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN MUSICAL THEATER GRADES 9-12

THE EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2099 Pennington Road
Ewing, NJ 08618

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Revised by: EHS Music Department

In accordance with The Ewing Public Schools' Policy 2230, Course Guides, this curriculum has been reviewed and found to be in compliance with all policies and all affirmative action criteria.

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PREFACE

This curriculum guide is intended to provide a vertical and horizontal framework for the music program of the Ewing Township Public Schools. It is designed to identify the essential components needed by teachers when they prepare instruction in musical theater which will best meet the needs of their students. The teacher's knowledge of their students' level of development, learning styles, and general readiness to learn should be the guiding factors in selecting the most appropriate ways to reach the goals and objectives defined by the guide.

There is no textbook for Contemporary Issues in Musical Theater. The musicals themselves are the textbooks. A collection of DVDs has been purchased to facilitate learning and discussion in class. The documentary produced by PBS entitled Broadway: The American Musical and its accompanying book are intended to provide resources to teachers in their preparation of instructional activities and teachers should feel free to integrate other resources where appropriate as long as they are consistent with the goals and philosophy as outlined. Integration of concepts and skills developed in Contemporary Issues in Musical Theater into other content areas is encouraged to stimulate real-life experiences and meaning.

All students are not the same. They have different needs, learning styles, and levels of readiness. Therefore, teachers will need to make choices in planning instruction so that the needs of each student are addressed and the scope of the curriculum is accomplished.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

Contemporary Issues in Musical Theater are designed to provide students with a forum to discuss how creators of musical theater tackle major social issues on stage. Students will learn about the history of musical theater, as well as, the elements that comprise a Broadway show. Students will then discuss how musical theater explores social issues by watching films, listening to soundtracks and reading lyrics. Analysis of lyrics and musical styles will give students the opportunity to discover how composers and writers discuss social issues such as interracial relationships, war, disease, love, race and culture. Students will be expected to share their findings through class discussion, essays, posters, PowerPoint presentations and other projects. Throughout the course, students will be working on their own one act musical that explores an issue in contemporary society through music, lyrics, acting and basic dance. The culminating project for the class will be a performance of their musical. Contemporary Issues in Musical Theater is a full semester class that meets every day for 83-minute blocks. Students in Contemporary Issues in Musical Theater will gain abilities to identify art elements within musical theater to articulate an informed emotional response to the work, engage in cultural reflection and communicate through critical evaluation. Through the creation and performance of their musical, they will enhance their perceptual, physical and technical skills to gain a deeper understanding of the imaginative and creative processes of musical theater as they relate to the self and others. Students will arrive at informed judgments of the relative artistic and aesthetic merits of the works examined through observation, description, analysis, interpretation and evaluation. The combination of these skills will enable students to understand and analyze the role, development and continuing influence of musical theater in relation to world culture, history and society. It is the goal of this class to enable students to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills applicable to all areas of their lives.

Unit 1: Elements of Musical Theater (Duration: 5 Days)

Why Is This Unit Important?

This introductory unit will provide students with a working vocabulary and understanding of musical theater. Students will use the skills gained in this unit throughout the rest of the course to analyze and describe various shows, as well as construct their own one act musical.

Enduring Understandings

- Key elements of a musical include the *libretto (book)* and the *score*. The *libretto* is divided into acts and scenes.
- Specific roles are designated for individual responsibilities involving the creative process of making a musical, such as the *director, composer, choreographer, lyricist*.
- Specific roles are designated for individual responsibilities involving the process of producing a musical, such as the *stage manager, company manager, producer*.
- Different styles of songs, utilizing different musical components and forms, are used to portray character and plot development.

Essential Questions

- What is a book?
- Where do ideas for musicals come from?
- What is a show tune and how can it function within a musical?
- Who is needed to help create, develop and produce a musical?

Acquired Knowledge

- The book is the narrative structure of the show. Books can be original ideas or adapted from other sources.
- The book must keep the story line clear and easy to follow, create characters, bring the characters into song gracefully and make the audience care at all times.
- The ending of each scene must project the action forward and capture a moment of transition, realization or decision.
- Show tunes typically have an AABA structure and can often be characterized as a ballad, charm song, comedy number or a seamless blend of dialogue and song.
- The composer, lyricist, librettist, director and choreographer are the main members of the creative team.
- The producer, general manager, stage manager and press representative are the main members of the production team.

Acquired Skills

- Plotting of story lines
- Analysis of show tune structures
- Identification of show tune genre

Assessments

Formative

- Peer assessment
- Personal critique
- Analysis of a musical, including identifying overarching structure, types of songs, and their placement within a show.

Summative

- Performance assessment of picking songs for a musical

Benchmark

- Written assessment of vocabulary and analysis

Alternative

- Oral/virtual quizzes and assessments

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

- Anticipatory Sets: listening to various types of show tunes
- In-Class Activities: direct instruction, class discussion, watching My Fair Lady
- Cross-Content Writing Activities: description of personal experience with musicals
- Home-Link Activities: writing and reflection
- Possible Dilemmas: N/A
- Accommodations: reading guide, study guide, oral assessment instead of written assessment
- Extensions: The creation of a one-act musical is the on-going extension of this unit. Please see the one-act musical unit for further details.
- Technology: use of MP3 player, DVDs, internet research.

2020 NJSLs

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| • 1.4.12prof.Cr1a | 1.4.12prof.Re7a |
| • 1.4.12prof.Cr1b | 1.4.12prof.Re7b |
| • 1.4.12prof.Cr1c | 1.4.12prof.Cr2b |
| • 1.4.12prof.Re8a | 1.4.12prof.Re8b |
| • 1.4.12prof.Re8c | |

Unit 2: History of Musical Theater (Duration: 8 Days)

Why Is This Unit Important?

This unit will provide students with a working knowledge of the development of musical theater. Students will explore the development of various types of early American theater and how they contributed to the creation of the integrated musical. Through this knowledge, students will develop an historical, cultural and political understanding of the development of the integrated musical.

Enduring Understandings

- The minstrel show contains a three-part structure.
- Minstrel shows are noted for their stereotypical portrayals.
- A specific musical style can be attributed to minstrel shows.
- Vaudeville shows contained several different kinds of unrelated acts.
- Gilbert and Sullivan are responsible for some of the earliest musicals, which can be identified by their operetta-style scores and their brand of humor.
- The structure of the operetta was used to inspire the composition of modern musicals.
- Florenz Ziegfeld's *Follies* is the most widely-known brand of "revue" musicals.

Essential Questions

- What is the structure of the minstrel show and how did that affect other musical theater?
- How were African Americans depicted in musical theater through character and song?
- What types of acts were found in a vaudeville show?
- What was the plot of the typical Gilbert and Sullivan operetta?
- How did Gilbert and Sullivan influence the development of the American musical?
- How did Florenz Ziegfeld create spectacular shows?

Acquired Knowledge

- The minstrel program consisted of the minstrel line, the olio and the afterpiece.
- Stereotypical minstrel characters included Jim Crow, Mr. Tambo and Zip Coon.
- Stephen Foster was the most famous composer of minstrel music. His music continues to be performed and recorded today.
- Vaudeville was typical and respectable family entertainment that included singing, dancing and specialty acts.
- Burlesque shows incorporated the three-part format of the minstrel show.
- Gilbert and Sullivan had a typical boy-meets-girl, boy-loses-girl, boy-gets-girl plot with satire on class differences.
- Early American musicals had little plot and were mostly based on spectacle.
- The revue brought elements of vaudeville to musical theater and combined it with a small, simple plot.

Acquired Skills

- Identification of historical elements within a musical
- Identification of key figures surrounding the production of musicals
- Use of internet resources to conduct in-depth research

Assessments

Formative

- Peer assessment
- Personal critique

Summative

- Research project and presentation of an early musical

Benchmark

- Written assessment

Alternative

- Oral/virtual quizzes and assessments

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

- Anticipatory Sets: Play minstrel songs for students and see if they recognize them
- In-Class Activities: Viewing of video clips of minstrel shows, vaudeville and Pirates of Penzance, PBS Broadway: The American Musical
- Cross-Content Writing Activities: Research project on early musical theater
- Home-Link Activities: Poster presentation
- Possible Dilemmas: ethical concerns about the discrimination of African Americans in musical theater, particularly concerning the minstrel show
- Accommodations: reading guides, study guides, PowerPoint presentation instead of poster
- Extensions: research into further historical musicals and reviews
- Technology: researching on the internet and databases

2020 NJSL

Theatre

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| • 1.4.12adv.Re7a | 1.4.12acc.Re8a |
| • 1.4.12acc.Cn11a | 1.4.12adv.Re7b |
| • 1.4.12acc.Re8b | 1.4.12acc.Re8c |
| • 1.4.12adv.Re9c | |

Unit 3: Integrated Musicals (Duration: 4 Days)

Why Is This Unit Important?

This unit will explore one of the first musicals to integrate plot with music, *Show Boat*, as well as one of the first musicals to have a racially-integrated cast. Students will explore how the music helps to develop characters and advance plot. They will also discuss miscegenation, feminism, gambling and family abandonment. Students will look at the factors preventing the embrace of the integrated musical as well as the next integrated musical, *Oklahoma!*

Enduring Understandings

- Plot and music were not as deeply integrated in early musical theatre as they are today.
- Musical structure and lyrics can aid in plot and character development.
- Students will learn how miscegenation laws functioned in the south.
- A person's development can be greatly impacted by societal issues and their personal environment and life choices. Historically, these have involved gambling, addiction, and spousal abandonment.

Essential Questions

- How did *Show Boat* influence the development of the integrated musical?
- How are African Americans presented in the show?
- How does the music integrate with the plot?
- Why does Nola survive spousal abandonment while Julie does not?
- How is gambling portrayed in the show?
- Why did it take until *Oklahoma!* for integrated musicals to become the norm?

Acquired Knowledge

- *Show Boat* was the one of the first musicals to integrate plot and music and the first to have a racially-integrated cast.
- Miscegenation was a crime in many states.
- *Oklahoma!* was the next show to integrate music, plot, and dance.

Acquired Skills

- Analyze how music advances plot
- Analyze character development through lyrics and song style
- Analyze various types of musical styles

Assessments

Formative

- Peer assessment
- Personal critique

Summative

- Essay on the integration of musicals

Benchmark

- Research project into gambling and miscegenation

Alternative

- Oral/virtual quizzes and assessments

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

- Anticipatory Sets: true/false statements on miscegenation
- In-Class Activities: watching Show Boat, discussion, viewing of Broadway: The American Musical
- Cross-Content Writing Activities: research into Jim Crow laws, essay
- Home-Link Activities: reflection and writing
- Possible Dilemmas: African American stereotypes in music and characters; spousal abandonment; use of the n-word in the original script
- Accommodations: reading guide, oral assessment instead of essay writing
- Extensions: research into shows created between Show Boat and Oklahoma!
- Technology: YouTube videos, iPods, podcast

2020 NJSL

Theatre

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| • 1.4.12prof.Cn11a | 1.4.12prof.Re7a |
| • 1.4.12adv.Re8a | 1.4.12adv.Re8c |
| • 1.4.12prof.Cn11a | 1.4.12prof.Cn11b |

Unit 4: Rodgers and Hammerstein (Duration: 19 Days)

Why Is This Unit Important?

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II comprised one of the most famous musical theater teams in American history. Through specific study of *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, *South Pacific* and *The King and I*, students will explore the ways in which Rodgers and Hammerstein influenced the American musical. The study of *Oklahoma!* will allow students to explore how the American Frontier is portrayed in musicals, in addition to a continued exploration of musical integration from the previous unit. Comparisons between *Oklahoma!* and *Carousel* will enable students to further explore the integration of music, plot and dance. Comparisons of *South Pacific* and *The King and I* will offer students an opportunity to explore prejudice, interracial marriage and the portrayal of “the other” in the 1940s and 1950s. Students will use this information to discuss these ongoing issues in American society and brainstorm ways in which they can positively affect change.

Enduring Understandings

- *Laurey's Dream Ballet* from *Oklahoma!* provides a multi-faceted platform to showcase character development.
- R&H musical constrain many hallmarks with which to identify them.
- The representation of American frontier in some art is believed to contain myths.
- The American frontier is represented in different ways than Coastal US.
- Prejudice can be formed in many different ways.
- Interracial relationships have been known to trigger human biases.
- Some real and historical events have been altered to fit an artistic narrative.
- Western media tends to adopt an inaccurate portrayal of the “other”.

Essential Questions

- How do music, plot and dance work together to share concepts with the audience?
- How is America portrayed in musicals?
- How are prejudices formed?
- Can an interracial relationship be successful?
- What are ways in which Americans represent other cultures?
- How are females portrayed in Rodgers and Hammerstein’s musicals?
- When is domestic violence dangerous?

Acquired Knowledge

- *Oklahoma!* was the first show to integrate plot, music and dance.
- *Carousel* continues the tradition begun in *Oklahoma!* of integrating plot, music and dance.
- American soldiers in the Pacific engaged in interracial relationships.
- *The King and I* is based on real events.
- Musicals can sample music directly from other cultures or take elements and modify them to American styles.
- People can form prejudices in many ways.
- Domestic violence comes in many forms.

Acquired Skills

- Analyze of how music and dance work together to advance plot
- Reflection of the use of multicultural elements in musicals
- Compare and contrast real events to theatrical ones

Assessments

Formative

- Peer assessment
- Personal critique

Summative

- Essay

Benchmark

- In -class worksheets

Alternative

- Oral/virtual quizzes and assessments

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

- Anticipatory Sets: viewing of WWII propaganda videos
- In-Class Activities: watching *Oklahoma! South Pacific, The King and I* and *Carousel*, discussion of WWII, internet research
- Cross-Content Writing Activities: study of Pacific Theater during WWII, study of Thailand, study of American frontier
- Home-Link Activities: reflection, writing, discussions with community members about WWII
- Possible Dilemmas: interracial relationships, stereotypes of Asians, exploration of prejudices
- Accommodations: reading guide, presentation of essay information in other formats
- Extensions: research into the lives of Rodgers and Hammerstein or other shows they created
- Technology: researching databases, YouTube videos, podcast, wiki

2020 NJSL

Theatre

1.4.12prof.Cn11a	1.4.12acc.Re8a
1.4.12prof.Cn11b	1.4.12acc.Re8b
1.4.12acc.Cn11b	1.4.12acc.Re8c
1.4.12adv.Cn11a	1.4.12adv.Re8c

Unit 5: Fragmented Musicals (Duration: 7 Days)

Why Is This Unit Important?

The fragmented or concept musical was developed in the 1960s as a new form of show structure organization. Students will examine the development of the fragmented musical and evaluate its effectiveness and place in musical theater. The study of Hair will allow students to also explore the rock musical, as well as war, sex and body image. Company allows students to explore various issues of marriage to develop a theory of relationships.

Enduring Understandings

- Fragmented musicals have specific traits and components.
- Musical genres such as rock and pop uniquely impact the effect of a musical.
- Issues surrounding the Vietnam War inspired musicals.
- The 1960's was a period of sexual revolution that challenged traditional views on marriage and partnership.

Essential Questions

- Why were fragmented musicals developed?
- What purpose do fragmented musicals serve?
- How did Hair respond to the cultural revolution of the 1960s?
- How is the Vietnam War portrayed in musicals?
- What are various views on marriage?

Acquired Knowledge

- Fragmented musicals developed as a result of the cultural revolution.
- Fragmented musicals focus on a concept rather than a linear plot.
- Hair and Company were among the first fragmented musicals.
- Hair was the first rock musical as well as the first show with full frontal nudity.
- Age, gender, ethnic and religious background can all influence one's opinion on marriage.

Acquired Skills

- Analyze fragmented musicals and identify concepts
- Ability to relate historical events to changes in theater
- Formulate new lyrics to preexisting music

Assessments

Formative

- Peer assessment
- Personal critique

Summative

- Oral presentation on *Hair*

Benchmark

- Planning for a concept musical
- Writing new lyrics for *Hair*

Alternative

- Oral/virtual quizzes and assessments

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

- **Anticipatory Sets:** generation of facts about Vietnam War
- **In-Class Activities:** watching *Hair and Company*, discussion, direct instruction
- **Cross-Content Writing Activities:** study of Vietnam War and the Cultural Revolution
- **Home-Link Activities:** discussion of whether and how family members engaged in the counterculture of the 1960s, reflection, writing, research
- **Possible Dilemmas:** Conflicting views on American participation in the Vietnam War, marital affairs and divorce in family
- **Accommodations:** oral responses to OEQs, additional resources on Vietnam history
- **Extensions:** writing a melody to accompany new lyrics for *Hair*, research into other concept musicals
- **Technology:** iPod, YouTube video

2020 NJSLs

Theatre

1.4.12prof.Cn11a
1.4.12acc.Cr2a
1.4.12acc.Re8b
1.4.12acc.Cn11b
1.4.12adv.Cn11a

1.4.12acc.Re8a
1.4.12prof.Cn11b
1.4.12adv.Re8c
1.4.12acc.Re8c
1.4.12prof.Cr1b

Unit 6: Leonard Bernstein (Duration: 4-7 Days)

Why Is This Unit Important?

Leonard Bernstein has left an enduring legacy as a composer, conductor and educator. The study of his musicals *West Side Story* and *Candide* explore his compositional style, his ability to engage with deep social issues and the continued review of musical adaptations of other stories. This unit allows students to research the importance of this great American composer, as well as engage in issues of race, gang violence and philosophy.

Enduring Understandings

- Leonard Bernstein is an important and prolific figure in musical theatre composition.
- Bernstein's works include many specific identifying hallmarks.
- Musical theatre has adapted from many other artistic sources.
- One's personal experiences with racial issues can help enhance understanding of artistic works relating to race.
- America's history of street gangs was used to create the unique environment in *West Side Story*.
- Voltaire was a philosopher during the French Enlightenment who is widely known for his sentiments regarding bias and bigotry.

Essential Questions

- Why is Bernstein considered a great composer?
- What are ways in which musicals are adapted from other sources?
- Why do people join gangs?
- What makes life meaningful?
- Is this the best of all possible worlds?

Acquired Knowledge

- Musicals can be adapted from many sources.
- Bernstein was a composer, conductor of the New York Philharmonic and educator.
- Voltaire was a French philosopher.
- People join gangs for a variety of reasons including for safety and a sense of belonging.
- There are many philosophies for the meaning of life.

Acquired Skills

- Appropriate research using the internet
- Organizing an oral presentation
- Adapting a drama to a musical

Assessments

Formative

- Peer assessment
- Personal critique

Summative

- Creating a new score for *West Side Story*, using existing popular music
- Oral presentation on *West Side Story*

Benchmark

- Report on Bernstein's other famous works

Alternative

- oral/virtual quizzes and assessments

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

- Anticipatory Sets: listening to Bernstein's music
- In-Class Activities: watching *West Side Story* and *Candide*, direct instruction, discussion, computer lab research
- Cross-Content Writing Activities: research into the history of gangs, philosophy
- Home-Link Activities: Discussion with family members about inter-racial relationships
- Possible Dilemmas: Portrayal of Puerto Ricans, offense at sexual references
- Accommodations: reading guide, written or oral assessment instead of public speaking
- Extensions: further research into Bernstein's music and career, reading *Candide*
- Technology: internet research, use of databases, YouTube videos, iPod

2020 NJSLs

Theatre

1.4.12acc.Cr1a
1.4.12prof.Cr2a
1.4.12prof.Re7a
1.4.12adv.Re7a
1.4.12adv.Re7b

1.4.12acc.Re8a
1.4.12adv.Re8a
1.4.12prof.Cn10a
1.4.12adv.CN11a
1.4.12adv.Re8c

Unit 7: Dance in Musical Theater (Duration: 10 Days)

Why Is This Unit Important?

Dance is an integral component of many musicals, adding to understanding of plot, characters and themes. A basic understanding of the purpose and execution of dance in musicals will allow students to better understand certain themes in musicals, as well as appreciate the artistic and creative expressions of dance.

Enduring Understandings

- The art of dance has lent an enormous artistic contribution to musical theatre.
- Famous choreographers include Agnes DeMille, Bob Fosse, Jerome Kern, Michael Kidd, Harold Prince, Florenz Ziegfeld and others.
- Dance can be used to effectively add to plot and character development in a musical.
- The art of dance includes many choreographic principles and structures.
- Rhythm is a theatrically effective device in choreography.

Essential Questions

- How does dance add to the drama of a musical?
- How does dance interact with music?
- How can characters' changes and emotions be expressed through dance?
- How has dance evolved within the musical?
- Who are important Broadway choreographers?

Acquired Knowledge

- Dancing has always been featured in musicals.
- Dance first became integral to plot and character development in *Oklahoma!*
- *Hairspray* uses dance to address social issues.
- *Chicago* uses dance to advance the plot and develop characters.
- Agnes DeMille, Bob Fosse and Jerome Kern were important choreographers in the Broadway tradition.

Acquired Skills

- Identification of basic dance elements
- Analysis of the effectiveness of dance to tell a story or express emotions
- Appropriate research skills on the internet
- Organization of oral presentation

Assessments

Formative

- Peer assessment
- Personal critique

Summative

- Creation and presentation of a dance sequence in a musical

Benchmark

- Research on major Broadway choreographers
- Research and presentation on the history of dance television shows

Alternative

- Oral/virtual assessments and quizzes

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

- Anticipatory Sets: Brainstorm movies or musicals that incorporate dance, describe how dance is used in music videos
- In-Class Activities: Broadway: The American Musical, viewings of Chicago and Hairspray, discussion, research, Every Little Step documentary of A Chorus Line
- Cross-Content Writing Activities: research about historical events
- Home-Link Activities: preparing oral presentation
- Possible Dilemmas: uncomfortable with moving body and dance, discussion of weight issues in Hairspray, costumes in Chicago
- Accommodations: written assignment instead of creating choreography
- Extensions: research into TV dance shows, racial issues; presentation on healthy eating, body weight, and body image
- Technology: iPod, YouTube videos, internet research, wikis

2020 NJSLS

Dance

1.1.12prof.Cr1a
1.1.12prof.Cr1b
1.1.12prof.Cr2b
1.1.12prof.Pr4b
1.1.12prof.Pr4c

Theatre

1.4.12prof.Cr1a
1.4.12acc.Cr1a
1.4.12adv.Re8c

Unit 8: Musical Theater and Opera (Duration: 12 Days)

Why Is This Unit Important?

Musical theater takes most of its main elements from opera: drama, music, dance, costumes, staging and spectacular effects. Students will explore the similarities and differences between opera and musical theater by studying how the same story is presented in both genres. In addition to comparing and contrasting the presentation of the story, students will learn about the genre of opera and its place in musical history.

Enduring Understandings

- There are several main elements of opera
- Understanding the history of opera helps us to understand the evolution of the modern musical.
- *Rent* is a musical derived from the opera *La Boheme*
- Sung-through musicals include *Cats*, *Evita*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Les Miserables*.
- Society's reactions to illnesses such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS have inspired musical stories.
- The societal and political implications of homosexuality has inspired musical stories.
- Bohemian lifestyles are often represented in theatrical art.

Essential Questions

- What attracts people to opera?
- How is an opera adapted into a musical?
- How did opera develop?
- Why has society reacted so strongly to the AIDS epidemic?
- What are current events surrounding issues of homosexuality?
- What is the bohemian lifestyle? How has it been portrayed?

Acquired Knowledge

- Opera was created in the 16th century and is an art form that combines drama and singing.
- Opera has evolved through many traditions including opera seria, comic operas, grand opera, atonality, minimalism and neoclassicism.
- *Rent* is based on Puccini's *La Boheme*.
- *Rent* is among several other musicals that are sung-through.
- *Rent* was among the first musicals to address the AIDS epidemic.
- Other operas adapted in musicals include *Carmen*.

Acquired Skills

- Identification of recitative and aria
- Adaption of an opera into a musical
- Appropriate research using the internet
- Organizing an oral presentation

Assessments

Formative

- Peer assessment
- Personal critique

Summative

- Research project on sung-through musicals/operetta

Benchmark

- Written assessment on opera

Alternative

- Oral or virtual assessments/quizzes

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

- Anticipatory Sets: Play recordings of "Seasons of Love" and "Musetta's Waltz."
- In-Class Activities: viewing of *LaBoheme* and *Rent*, discussion, direct instruction on opera, research
- Cross-Content Writing Activities: research into AIDS and tuberculosis
- Home-Link Activities: discussion with community members about reactions to the AIDS epidemic.
- Possible Dilemmas: discussion of homosexuality and ethics, AIDS
- Accommodations: given libretto for students to read before viewing opera
- Extensions: study of other operas
- Technology: internet research, iPod

2020 NJSLs

Theatre

1.4.12adv.Pr5a
1.4.12acc.Re7a
1.4.12acc.Re8a

1.4.12prof.Re7a
1.4.12adv.Re7a
1.4.12adv.Re.8c

Unit 9: Tradition (Duration: 4 Days)

Why Is This Unit Important?

Fiddler on the Roof provides an opportunity for students to discuss change and tradition. During a time of great changes in their lives (body changes, driving, friends, difficult classes, decisions about jobs and college), *Fiddler on the Roof* allows students to explore traditions in their lives worth preserving and offers constructive ways to embrace change. In addition, with cross-curriculum study on the Russian Revolution, students will investigate Jewish culture and make connections to current events in the Middle East.

Enduring Understandings

- Jewish culture was evolving at the turn of the last century, due to geographical displacement and war.
- The Russian Revolution was a period of social and political unrest during the first World War.
- Each culture and family has their own traditions.
- "Generation gaps" can impact the parent/child relationship
- Cultures can be represented in a myriad of different ways in musical theatre.

Essential Questions

- How were Jews treated in Russia?
- Why did the Russian Revolution occur? How did that affect the Jewish population?
- What traditions are important in your family?
- What is a generation gap? Do you experience one with your parents/guardians?
- How is Jewish Culture presented in musical theater?
- How can music be used to respectfully describe a religion?

Acquired Knowledge

- Jews in Russia have often been ostracized from society.
- Traditions can occur in religions, societies, families and cultures.
- Religious themes can be addressed in musicals without proselytizing.

Acquired Skills

- Analysis of the intersection of history and religion.
- Knowledge of Russian treatment of the Jewish population

Assessments

Formative

- Peer assessment
- Personal critique

Summative

- Written essay

Benchmark

- Frequent checks for understanding and peer discussion

Alternative

- Oral or virtual assessments and quizzes

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

- Anticipatory Sets: Brainstorm list of important traditions in your family or community.
- In-Class Activities: discussion, viewing guide worksheet, watching Fiddler on the Roof, journaling
- Cross-Content Writing Activities: Journal entries
- Home-Link Activities: discussion of traditions with family and community members
- Possible Dilemmas: uncomfortable talking about other religions, uncomfortable discussing pogroms
- Accommodations: reading guide, oral completion of viewing guide worksheet and journaling
- Extensions: reading of the original short stories upon which the musical is based
- Technology: iPod, YouTube video

2020 NJSLS

Theatre

1.4.12prof.Re7a

1.4.12prof.Re8a

1.4.12acc.Re8a

1.4.12adv.Re9b

1.4.12prof.Cn11b

1.4.12adv.Cn11a

1.4.12adv.Re7b

1.4.12prof.Re8c

1.4.12adv.Re8c

1.4.12prof.Cn11a

1.4.12acc.Cn11b

Unit 10: Stephen Sondheim (Duration: 4 Days)

Why Is This Unit Important?

As the descendant of Oscar Hammerstein, Stephen Sondheim epitomizes the modern creator of musical theater. Sondheim was a pioneer in fragmented musicals and he has addressed many darker issues in society. His music is complex and of a variety of styles, the study of which allows students to learn and explore difficult music.

Enduring Understandings

- Students will explore who influences Sondheim.
- Students will listen to a variety of his music and analyze his style.
- Students will explore how repetition in music creates unity among a large cast of characters.
- Students will explore motivation.
- Students will research the Grimm Brothers and their fairy tales.
- Students will explore how real events are adapted into musicals.

Essential Questions

- Who influenced Sondheim?
- How does Sondheim's music function within musical theater?
- What motivates people to enter into dangerous situations?
- Why did the Grimm Brothers write fairy tales?
- How have they been used in culture?
- How has the "tale of Sweeney Todd" evolved?

Acquired Knowledge

- Stephen Sondheim is the descendant of Oscar Hammerstein and was influenced by him.
- Sondheim's music is very complex and reflects trends in 20th Century classical music rather than musical theater.
- Motivation can come from a variety of areas.
- The Grimm Brothers collected folk tales that taught morality.
- Many people from authors to dramatists to film producers have borrowed from the Grimm Brothers.
- Sweeney Todd is a tale that developed through penny-novels and dramas.

Acquired Skills

- Ability to research successfully on the internet
- Analysis of musical styles.

Assessments

Formative

- Peer assessment
- Personal critique

Summative

- Development of a fairy tale into a musical piece

Benchmark

- Frequent checks for understanding and in-class discussion

Alternative

- Oral or virtual assessments and quizzes.

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

- Anticipatory Sets: brainstorm list of Grimm fairy tales
- In-Class Activities: discussion, listening to musical examples, watching Into the Woods and Sweeney Todd, viewing guides
- Cross-Content Writing Activities: research into the origins of fairy tales
- Home-Link Activities: sharing favorite childhood fairytales
- Possible Dilemmas: discussion of death and justice
- Accommodations: reading guide, simplifying tasks
- Extensions: research into Sondheim's other works
- Technology: internet research, iPod, YouTube videos

2020 NJSL

Theatre

1.4.12acc.Cr1a
1.4.12acc.Cr2a
1.4.12acc.Re8a

1.4.12prof.Cr2a
1.4.12acc.Pr6a
1.4.12adv.Re8c

Unit 11: The Future of Musical Theater and Film (Duration: 4 Days)

Why Is This Unit Important?

Musical theater is an important part of American drama and music tradition. A final discussion as to the future of musical theater and the role film can play will summarize the semester.

Enduring Understandings

- Broadway still faces many challenges today.
- Modern Broadway musicals still follow popular trends that are shaped by societal implications, as well as by film.
- Students will synthesize discussions from the semester to come up with solutions to problems facing musical theater today.

Essential Questions

- What challenges face producers of musical theater today?
- What are possible solutions to these problems?
- What can we use from the past to help us predict future trends in musical theater?
- How might Hollywood affect musical theater today?

Acquired Knowledge

- Financial and creative problems challenge many producers today.
- Hollywood has influenced Broadway in the past and continues so today.

Acquired Skills

- Synthesis of knowledge from the semester
- Problem solving

Assessments

Formative

- Peer assessment
- Personal critique

Summative

- Proposal essay

Benchmark

- Discussion of challenges and solutions
- Research into current problems and trends

Alternative

- Oral or virtual assessments and quizzes

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

- Anticipatory Sets: make a list of recent Hollywood musicals
- In-Class Activities: research, discussion, viewing *Once, All Things Considered* podcast
- Cross-Content Writing Activities:
- Home-Link Activities: reflection, writing
- Possible Dilemmas: understanding Irish slang
- Accommodations: oral assessment, poster/PowerPoint instead of writing
- Extensions: viewing and research of recent musicals such as *Fame*, and *Nine*
- Technology: podcast, iPod

2020 NJSLS

Theatre

1.4.12adv.Re7a

1.4.12adv.Cr2b

1.4.12acc.Cn11a

1.4.12adv.Cr2a

1.4.12prof.Cr2b

Unit 12: One-Act Musical Theater (Duration: Semester-Long Unit)

Why Is This Unit Important?

Students will gain a greater understanding and appreciation of musical theater by creating their own one-act musical. Students will use knowledge gained about the elements and history of musicals to create their own modern musical.

Enduring Understandings

- 1. Books, poems, and plays can all be adapted into musicals.
- 2. Musicals can be written and performed according to various styles.
- 3. Music plays an important role in plot and character development.

Essential Questions

- How is a musical structured?
- Where are topics found for musicals?
- What creates good drama?
- What types of music are appropriate for advancing plot?

Acquired Knowledge

- The book must keep the story line clear and easy to follow, create characters, bring the characters into song gracefully and make the audience care at all times.
- The ending of each scene must project the action forward and capture a moment of transition, realization or decision.
- Topics can be found in literature, plays, poems and films, as well as original.
- Show tunes typically follow an AABA structure.

Acquired Skills

- Writing a book
- Developing characters
- Writing lyrics
- Producing a musical
- Developing teamwork
- Problem solving

Major Assessments

Formative

- Peer assessment
- Personal critique
- Topic Proposal

Summative

- Final Draft
- Performance of musical

Benchmark

- Rough draft of musical
- In-class discussion

Alternative

- Oral or virtual assessments and quizzes

Suggested Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

- Anticipatory Sets: brainstorming ideas
- In-Class Activities: comparing original material its subsequent musical, reading various properties, writing, editing, rehearsing, performing
- Cross-Content Writing Activities: writing plot and characters
- Home-Link Activities: brainstorming of ideas
- Possible Dilemmas: interpersonal conflict with team
- Accommodations: small defined tasks, mini-goal deadlines, scaffolding
- Extensions: change one-act musical into a full-length musical; write original music
- Technology: music notation software, MP3 player, word processing

2020 NJSL

Theatre

1.4.12adv.Cr1a
1.4.12adv.Cr2a
1.4.12acc.Pr6a

1.4.12prof.Re8c
1.4.12adv.Cn11a
1.4.12adv.Cn11b

21st Century Skills & Career readiness Practices

CRP2. Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.

CRP4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.

CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.

CRP11. Use technology to enhance productivity.

CRP12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

Example: Throughout the course, the students are expected to develop personal thoughts and opinions on various pieces of work, and communicate them in a clear a democratic fashion.

Throughout various units, students are expected to utilize the internet and various other resources to conduct research on pieces that span over the past 100+ years, comparing information from different sources, to complete their journal assignment.

Throughout the course, the students participate in various collaborative activities, ranging from independent work to presenting a completed product onstage as a group. These activities rely on their abilities to communicate effectively and work cooperatively with their peers.

Technology Integration

8.1.5.IC.1: Identify computing technologies that have impacted how individuals live and work and describe the factors that influenced the changes.

8.1.5.IC.2: Identify possible ways to improve the accessibility and usability of computing technologies to address the diverse needs and wants of users.

Example: Throughout the course, students are asked to use the internet to research the history of and trends in musical theatre. Many resources can be found on YouTube, as well as on websites dedicated to the world of musical theatre. Students are asked to consider the impact of musical theatre prior to the most recent 30 years, and how the world of theatre-going has changed because of the world wide web, and audio/visual devices.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Language Arts

NJSLSA.R7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

NJSLSA.W3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Example: Throughout the course, students consume various pieces of theatre-related art in multiple ways, from reading, to watching, to performing. By creating their own musical theatre pieces, they are recording their thoughts and ideas, as well as reflecting and sharing with peers. Additionally, they are expected to develop their own narratives and effectively build them into a storyline.

Social Studies

6.1.12.CivicsPD.1.a : Use multiple sources to analyze the factors that led to an increase in the political rights and participation in government.

6.1.12.HistoryCA.2.a: Research multiple perspectives to explain the struggle to create an American identity.

6.1.12. CivicsDP.3.c: Examine the origins of the antislavery movement and the impact of particular events, such as the Amistad decision, on the movement.

6.1.12.HistoryCC.3.a: Evaluate the role of religion, music, literature, and media in shaping contemporary American culture over different time periods.

6.1.12.HistoryUP.13.a: Determine the extent to which suburban living and television supported conformity and stereotyping during this time period, while new music, art, and literature acted as catalysts for the counterculture movement

Examples: Musicals such as *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Hair*, *Showboat*, *Oklahoma!* *Hairspray*, *West Side Story*, *Rent*, etc. are examined for their rich content involving the societal and political shifts. These shifts include, but are not limited to WWI and WW2, the Vietnam War, American Expansionism, the Civil Rights Movement, Immigration, widespread illnesses, as well as domestic changes and sexual revolution.

Holocaust Mandate

This curricula addresses issues of bias, bigotry and the history of African-American slavery through viewing peices of musical theatre that reflect historical time periods. Musicals such as *Fiddler On The Roof* and *Ragtime* are examined for their source material pertaining to a history of prejudice and displacement of the Jewish community, linked to American immigration and war. Additionally, the course will highlight the works of many Jewish composers, writers, and performers, including Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim.

Amistad Mandate

This curricula addresses issues of bias, bigotry, and the history of African-American slavery through viewing pieces of musical theatre that reflect historical time periods, and how such shows were written with the core message of equality. Musicals such as *Showboat* and *Hairspray* are examined for their source material pertaining to the American history of prejudice against the black community. Additionally, the course will showcase the performances of many black and African American actors who have immortalized specific portrayals and songs.

AAPI Mandate

This curriculum addresses the issues of bias, bigotry, and the history of African-American slavery through viewing peices of musical theatre that reflect historical time periods, and how such shows were written with the core message of equality. Musicals such as *South Pacific* and *The King and I* are examined for their source material pertaining to issues surrounding bias against the Asian American Pacific Islander community. Additionally, the course will highlight works of AAPI writers and performers, as well as their integration into mainstream involvement in the arts.

LGBTQ/Disabilities Resources

Example: This curriculum examines pieces of theatre created by and performed by individuals of the LGBTQ community, as well as discusses the cultural impact of the LGBTQ community on the world of live theatre. Additionally, content is examined that challenges physical accessibility in musical theatre, calling for the inclusion of disabled performers. The following are resources intended to inspire discussion, debate, and conversation surrounding these issues.

The Broadway Blog: [Rainbow Proud: 10 LGBT Moments in Musical Theatre](#)

New Musical Theatre: [Let Pride Be Your Guide](#)

YouTube.com: [Ali Stroker performs at the 2019 Tony Awards](#)

The Theatre Times: <https://thetheatretimes.com/disabled-bodies-american-theatre/>

The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/30/theater/falsettos-broadway.html>