

Sample Lesson Plan

TEACHER: Lauren Rosi
UNIT NAME: Origins of Western Theater
LESSON TITLE: Commedia Dell'arte

COURSE: Honors Theater
GRADE LEVEL: High School
TIME: 2 hours

Materials Needed:

- Scratch paper
- Commedia stock character descriptions
- Stereotype slips
- Bucket

Lesson Objective(s):

- Analyze the role of a character within the play as it evolved throughout theater history.
- Examine and discuss the development of theater from Medieval period to the modern American drama.
- Students will investigate the use and evolution of archetypes, or stock characters, in pop culture as well as their own lives.
- Students will analyze and explore stereotypes in order to help students gain insight into the necessity of physical storytelling on and off stage.

Introduction/Previous Disciplines Addressed:

- Student will have been introduced to the characteristics, principals, and origins or Renaissance theater (liturgical and religious drama, medieval plays and commedia dell'arte) in an assigned reading and a PowerPoint presentation in previous classes.

Instructional Activities/Outline:

- 2 min- Take attendance while students remove shoes, put away phones, etc.
- 10 min- Physical & Vocal Warm Up
- 3 min- Introduce activity and expectations for the day
- 35 mins- Commedia in modern media
 - Students are broken into seven groups and each group is assigned a commedia stock character type. Students have 10 minutes to look over the general description of their characters (handout).
 - a. List any modern TV, movie or cartoon characters that they think best fit the description of their characters.
 - b. How can these characteristics be used to bring about humor?
 - c. Where might this character fit into a story or progressing the plot?
 - d. When they complete their answers, they will make a short presentation describing their answers for the class
- 7 min - BREAK

- 35 mins- Stereotype Models
 - Pick a stereotype slip out of a bucket. Have 4 students walk across the room, engaging with other stereotypes, using movement to show the stereotype that is written on their card. No talking, just showing through movement.
 - After each group of 4 has gone, discuss and reflect what they observed. Try and guess what stereotype they were playing. Discuss the importance of movement in conveying emotions & personalities. Ask the students how movement may apply to commedia dell arte.
- 15-20 mins -Class will culminate with a discussion on how stereotypes exist in the media now and how that affects the consumer- you! Discussion will be lead by students and facilitated by instructor. Key connections will be made to social stereotypes about the elderly, the disabled community and the current #blacklivesmatter movement.
- 5 min- Wrap up, introduce homework (worksheet), answer student questions.

Checking for Understanding:

Observational understanding/assessment during the activity:

- Teacher will assess students understanding by participation in classroom discussions during activities.
- Teacher will provide feedback to students through informal discussion and written commentary at the end of each exercise.

Assessment/Independent Practice:

- Find a stereotype or stock character in a show, movie or play you watch this weekend. Share your observations on their originality, relation to commedia, and perpetuation of stereotypes.
- In your journal, reflect on a time you have personally felt stereotyped. How will you approach your character development in the future as a result of your understanding of stereotypes?