Introduction to
Course of Study in Drama

Stages 5 and 6
What is Drama?

Drama can be one of the most rewarding subjects a student can engage in - I think it is because as a practice, it touches on so many of the other subjects. In theory it crosses English, History, Politics, and the sciences, such as Psychology. In its art-form - it is music, voice, visual art, and design. It is a physical discipline - much like dance and P.E. It is also public speaking; it is debating. When students ‘do’ Drama, they learn about themselves, the world they live in, and how to both understand, represent, and critically reflect that world for an audience. Drama embraces new technologies, such as digital photography and video production, podcasting, vidcasting and online publishing.
The study of Drama develops the talents and capacities of all students - physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, creative and expressive - Drama practice develops sensitivity, teamwork, self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem.
Drama is a collaborative art form that involves the creative interaction of individuals using a range of artistic skills. Drama is an important means of understanding, constructing, appreciating and communicating social and cultural values; interpreting, valuing and transmitting the past and traditions; exploring, celebrating and challenging the present and imagining the future. Drama caters for a broad range of students from varying social and cultural backgrounds and allows for the exploration of attitudes and values of many groups in Australian society as students make, perform and critically study aspects of Drama and theatre in Australian and other societies and cultures.
In the Creative Arts K-6 syllabus, Drama students make, perform and appreciate their own Drama and that of others. In making and performing, students develop knowledge, understanding and skills about contexts and forms.

The contexts are:
- Situation
- Role
- Elements of Drama
- Performance
- Elements of Theatre.

The forms are:
- Improvisation
- Narrative Forms
- Movement and Mime
- Scripted Drama.
In Drama Stages 4-5 (Years 7-10) students will develop knowledge, understanding and skills, individually and collaboratively, through:

• 1 making drama that explores a range of imagined and created situations in a collaborative drama and theatre environment

• 2 performing devised and scripted drama using a variety of performance techniques, dramatic forms and theatrical conventions to engage an audience

• 3 appreciating the meaning and function of drama and theatre in reflecting the personal, social, cultural, aesthetic and political aspects of the human experience.

Values and attitudes:

Students will value and appreciate:

• the collaborative and diverse nature of drama and theatre
• the contribution of drama and theatre to enriching and sustaining cultures and societies.
In the Stage 6 Drama course (Years 11 & 12), students will develop:
knowledge and understanding about, and skills in, making
• drama through participation in a variety of dramatic and theatrical forms
• drama and theatre using a variety of dramatic elements, theatrical techniques
and conventions,
values and attitudes about
• the collaborative nature of drama and theatre
knowledge and understanding about, and skills in, performing
• using the elements of drama and theatre in performance
• in improvised and playbuilt theatre, and scripted drama
values and attitudes about
• the diversity of the art of dramatic and theatrical performance
knowledge and understanding about, and skills in, critically studying
• the place and function of drama and theatre in communities and societies, past
and present
• a variety of forms and styles used in drama and theatre
values and attitudes about
• drama and the theatre as a community activity, a profession and an industry.
Drama is an artform with a discrete body of knowledge including conventions, history, skills and methods of working. It is an integral aspect of our society and is taught in school curricula worldwide.
Students engage in an integrated study of:

1. the elements of drama
2. through the practices of making, performing and appreciating
3. within the context of a range of dramatic forms, performance styles and their dramatic techniques and theatrical conventions.

**Year 9 and Year 10**

**Course Structure**
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<td>TheatreSports&lt;br&gt;4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.4, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.4</td>
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<td>Mummers' Plays&lt;br&gt;4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.1.4, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 5.1.4, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3</td>
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<td>Puppetry&lt;br&gt;4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.4, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.4, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3</td>
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**2011 Year 9 and 10**

**Preliminary Overview**
Drama is a dynamic learning experience that caters for a diverse range of students and prepares them for effective and responsible participation in society, taking account of moral, ethical and spiritual considerations.
In this unit, students engage in improvisation as spontaneous, unscripted performance. Students use spontaneous improvisations to understand the Elements of Drama, Dramatic Structure, and develop situations and dramatic meaning through the use of their imagination and increasing level of skills.

The game of *TheatreSports* is employed as a “framework for the teaching of theatre skills: storytelling, focus, musicianship, status, physicalisation, dance, mime, timing, singing, theatre history, stage presence, stagecraft, voice training, characterisation, playbuilding, discipline, and good sportsmanship” (Pierse, 1995, pp. 19-20).
In response to works of Visual Art, students are encouraged to explore a range of performance possibilities associated with Non-Realistic performance styles, such as the creation of abstract, strange, symbolic, and dream-like performance works. In particular, students engage with the Elements of Drama to show how they work together to communicate dramatic meaning, such as a heightened interpretation of the world through the use of stylised acting.
Mumming

Students learn the dramatic tradition and structure of the Mumming Show, which were folk plays, usually short comic dramas with rhyming texts, which appeared from the mid to late 18th century in England.

In Performance troupes, students engage in the collaborative process to devise and present originally scripted Mumming Shows and build and sustain characters appropriate to the performance style.

Throughout this unit, students learn how to apply the elements of drama and learn about stock characters, playbuilding structure, storyline adaptation, characterisation, scriptwriting, and audience engagement.
In this topic, students learn the style of theatre which involves the manipulation of puppets. Students engage, experientially in both the making and the manipulation of various puppets. Some of the forms of puppetry students engage with include:

- Recycled puppetry,
- Bringing inanimate objects to life,
- Finger and hand puppetry
- Shadow puppetry
- Bodies as puppets, and
- Black light puppetry.

In small groups, students collaborate to devise, rehearse, and present a performance in the theatrical tradition of Puppetry.
In this unit, students engage in Music Video Production; they choose a song and develop a mimed performance so that the message is reframed (takes on a different meaning to the original recording).

The dance-/mimed performance includes elements such as an entrance and exit, hitting beats, frame and focus, lip-syncing, interesting use of choreography, and an interesting message vis-à-vis the audience.

Specifically, performances include the element of shadow puppetry using bodies as puppets as the backdrop to the performance, which is videoed, edited and digitally published.
Improvisation, Playbuilding, Acting

Elements of Production in Performance

Theatrical Traditions and Performance Styles

The components in the Preliminary course are interrelated and are taught in an integrated program of study.

Year 11 Preliminary Course Structure
### 2011 Year 11 Preliminary Overview

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<td>History of Acting</td>
<td>Stanislavski</td>
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<td><strong>Term 2</strong></td>
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<td>Acro and Stage Combat</td>
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<td>Television Presenting</td>
<td>Live Radio Show</td>
<td>Acting for Screen</td>
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<td>Studies in Drama: Approaches to Acting</td>
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Drama practices are active, experiential, critical and reflective.
History of Acting

This topic reveals the key ideas that shaped performance from the Greeks to the present day: the relationship of acting to rhetoric; acting seen as declamation; and acting in the modern sense, including such features as realism, epic acting, and the notion of the ritual or ‘holy’ actor.
Acting is a normal human activity. Everybody acts almost every day.

Acting is a way of showing our understanding of the world and passing it on to other people. When people tell stories, they act out parts of it - imitating voices, actions, gestures.
In this unit, students engage in a study of Stanislavski and his ‘System of Acting’. Students learn about his life and his work in context of the social, historical, political, and cultural influences, as well as principles and acting techniques.

Students engage, practically and experientially, in exercises, improvisations, and text analysis, based on the Stanislavski ‘method’ of performance production.

In particular, students learn about ‘naturalism’ as a specific performance style and are taken through the Stanislavski process of performance development.
In response to works of Visual Art, students are encouraged to explore a range of performance possibilities associated with Non-Realistic performance styles, such as the creation of abstract, strange, symbolic, and dream-like performance works. In particular, students engage with the *Elements of Drama* to show how they work together to communicate dramatic meaning, such as a heightened interpretation of the world through the use of stylised acting.

Students explore, in production, the use of technology and various elements of production, and how they might help to convey meaning.
Acro & Stage Combat

This topic explores, experientially, the physical theatre performance styles of acrobatic balances and stage combat. Students engage in a series of exercises, balances and stunts to help them convey meaning in performance work. In the Acro component, students learn a variety of balances, and lifts. In performance, such skills can be useful to use in place of set, props, and objects, such as the physical representation of a door using bodies, rather than using an actual door.

The unit on Stage Combat teaches students various physical stage-tricks to imitate fighting, kicking, punching etc. Alongside learning the actual steps to perform these tricks, students are assessed on their ability to weave them into a convincing performance, in the tradition of comedy.
This Unit includes the three topics of:
• Television Production
• Live Radio Play, and
• Acting for Screen.

In the Television Production topic, students engage with the medium of television as well as a variety of multi-literacies, including digital literacies. In a series of practical workshops, students learn how to design, write and perform for various types of television presenting.

In the Live Radio Play, students, in groups, research, script and perform a live radio show in front of an audience. Students choose a genre of radio, create a suitable ‘fictional’ station and write various segments to include within it.

In the Acting for Screen topic, students learn the art of screen-style performance, in particular, students appreciate how acting for camera contrasts and compares to performance work in the theatre.
Boal & Meyerhold

This topic explores approaches to actor training in the 20th century and its realisation in theatre production or other forms of drama performance. The study involves the theoretical and experiential exploration of the philosophical and practical approaches to these two practitioners' work and the manifestation of their techniques, process and specific exercises, for performance.

Students must consider the aesthetics and expression of the actor's presence and its relationship to audience engagement. Specific examples from the practitioners' theatre work, contemporary theatre practice and the student's own experiential learning should be used to explore the topic.
Year 12 HSC Course Structure

Australian Drama and Theatre

Studies in Drama and Theatre

Group Performance

Individual Project
Either:
• Critical Analysis,
• Design,
• Performance,
• Scriptwriting, or
• Video Drama.
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<td><strong>Core: Group Performance</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Studies in Drama Topic 5: Brecht</strong></td>
<td><strong>H1.1, H1.2, H1.3, H1.4, H1.5, H1.6, H1.7, H1.8, H1.9, H1.10, H1.11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Core: Australian Drama and Theatre</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Studies in Drama Topic 5: Brecht</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Core: Australian Drama and Theatre</strong></td>
<td><strong>H1.1, H1.2, H1.3, H1.4, H1.5, H1.6, H1.7, H1.8, H1.9, H1.10, H1.11</strong></td>
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This topic explores Berthold Brecht’s artistic and political goals, epic staging and other dramatic techniques and conventions evident in his plays. Students must investigate, theoretically and experientially, the different ways Brecht sought to bring large and complex ideas and events onto the stage, and consider the implications for the performance of these plays in the contemporary world. The following two plays are studied:

This topic explores, theoretically and experientially, the traditional and contemporary practices of Australian drama and theatre and the various ways in which artistic, cultural, social, political and personal issues and concerns are reflected in different contexts. Students investigate how different Australian practitioners use dramatic forms, performance styles, techniques and conventions to convey ideas and influence the ways in which audiences understand and respond to ideas and images presented in the theatre.

The following two plays will be studied:


Individual Project

In the Individual Project, students learn how to initiate and present a project in an area of interest. In preparing their Individual Project, students learn how to plan, evaluate and structure their work into a refined presentation that meets the criteria of each project.

They learn how to use skills appropriate to the area in which they are working, whether it is based on critical reviews of performances, dramaturgy, direction, design, performance, scriptwriting or drama on video. They learn how to manipulate theatrical elements and conventions to achieve their aims.
Group Performance

Each student learns to collaborate with a group to devise and perform in a piece of original theatre. They learn how to work cooperatively in creating dramatic works, presenting their own opinions confidently and listening to the ideas of others. They develop their Group Performance using a variety of playbuilding techniques and approaches. They learn to structure their work using dramatic elements and theatrical conventions. They learn how to edit and refine their work through rehearsal, evaluation and editing. In their performance they use expressive skills that are appropriate to the chosen style or form. They learn how to realise and sustain a role and how to establish a relationship with the audience.
The Higher School Certificate Program of Study Drama Stage 6 Syllabus

The purpose of the Higher School Certificate program of study is to:
• provide a curriculum structure which encourages students to complete secondary education;
• foster the intellectual, social and moral development of students, in particular developing their:
  - knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes in the fields of study they choose
  - capacity to manage their own learning
  - desire to continue learning in formal or informal settings after school
  - capacity to work together with others
  - respect for the cultural diversity of Australian society;
• provide a flexible structure within which students can prepare for:
  - further education and training
  - employment
  - full and active participation as citizens;
• provide formal assessment and certification of students’ achievements;
• provide a context within which schools also have the opportunity to foster students’ physical and spiritual development.