

Cross-departmental courses: Drama and Improvisation
Windesheim University of Applied Sciences
Cohort 2022-2023

Welcome to the course Drama and Improvisation.

My name is Sheila Zwanenburg, and together we will learn and work with drama and improvisation. In this paper you can find all the practical information about this course.



1. Practical information

Name: Drama and Improvisation

Abbreviation: EN-IN-DRIM

Faculty: Education (B&E)

Lecturer: Sheila Zwanenburg

Contact information: s.zwanenburg@windesheim.nl

Class hours: Wednesdays, 17.30 - 19.30

2. Course description

This course is an introduction to Drama and Improvisation. In seven sessions, we will explore the basic underpinnings of body language, acting, and dramatical design. In its core, this course is practical. The main goal, therefore, lies in connecting drama techniques to practical work situations.

Aims:

Our work in these sessions centers on the following aims:

- Students can demonstrate the 5 basic concepts of dramatical design/form
- Students can demonstrate suitable and clear body language
- Students can demonstrate credible emotions
- Students can consciously design a basic mise-en-scène (*movement and settings of the actors on stage*) and effectively choose suitable props and clothing
- Students can apply and demonstrate the Aristotelian construction of scenes.



Skills:

We realize these aims by recognizing, applying and practicing the following 5 practical skills:

- The 5 basis concepts of dramatical design/form
- Body language
- Tempi
- Strengthen, weaken and enhance emotions
- Improvising (accepting, blocking, creativity).

Qualities:

Practicing these concrete skills improves the following abstract professional qualities:

- gaining self confidence relating to presenting for a group
- concentration
- verbal and non-verbal communication
- improvisation skills and creativity



3. Course information

Pre-condition for entering the module

Approval and inclusion of ENIN-DRIM elective in the Learning Agreement supplied by the home university. There are no subject-related pre-conditions in effect.

Level of the module

This is an introductory level course. Students are thus not required to possess knowledge of Drama, Theater or Improvisation.

Discipline area

Taal- en cultuurwetenschappen (Language and Cultural Sciences)

Educational support, media, and E-learning

Materials on elo.windesheim.nl

Literature

All necessary literature will be provided by the lecturer. Hand-outs are on N@tschool, and sessions will briefly touch upon drama theory.

Contact hours

14 hours (7 classes of 1.5/2 hours).

Lecturer activities

Interactive group assignments and brief theoretical presentations.

4. Grading

Study load

This course awards 2 ECTS. Each ECTS equals a study load of 28 hours, including contact hours.

Final grading requirements

Your final grade consists of four parts:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| • Attendance rate of 80% | (grading: sufficient/insufficient) |
| • Active participation | (grading: sufficient/insufficient) |
| • Submission of scene script and mise-en-scene | (grading: sufficient/insufficient) |
| • Scene performance | (grading: 1-10) |
| • Vision paper | (grading: 1-10) |

Calculation grading

- Attendance, participation, and submission **must** be sufficient.
- The numerical grade is calculated as follows: scene mark + vision paper marks : 2 = final mark.
- The minimal passing mark is a 5.5.

5. Assessment 1: Scene performance

For your final grading, you will perform a dramatic scene. In this scene, you will incorporate the skills you have studied in hand-outs and practiced during the sessions. By applying these skills, you will aim to act: you transform into another person. The extent to which you transform measures your performance grade.

Please find instructions and a grading schematic below.



Instructions

1. Please find the principle guidelines for your scene below:

- performed in duos or groups of three
- a scene is about 5 to 6 minutes long
- you submit a draft of your script a week in advance of your performance
- before your performance, you submit your script and a mise-en-scene.

2. Form trio's. Choose a dialogue/scene for your final examination. You may find inspiration in the following:

- your favorite movie/film
- TV shows
- plays
- adaptation of a book
- <http://www.simplyscripts.com> for TV, film, play, unknown scripts, etc.
- <http://www.lazybeescripts.co.uk/oneactplays/index.htm> for one-act plays
- <http://www.imsdb.com/> for movie scripts

3. Adapt the script: give it a “treatment” in which you indicate the emotions, the lay-out, etc. For an example of this, please read the “Girl, Interrupted” script. This is an example of a monologue (one person in the scene), but it serves to indicate how you can adapt a dialogue as well. The initial scene was changed by adding lines that appear elsewhere in the movie in order to make it more suitable for a 5-minute scene. Similarly, most scripts are quite long.

You can pick a scene, change it, and shorten it to your liking by doing the following:

- removing, changing and/or adding lines
- removing, changing and/or adding actions
- changing dialogue 5Ws, the beginning and/or ending
- shorten sentences, change the language so that it becomes easier to pronounce and/or remember

4. Your scene grade measures to what extent you use the *skills* to *transform* into another person. This is measured by using a grading system similar to the schematic below. In this schematic, you will find which features of your scene will be graded. Importantly, thus, use this schematic as a check-list. Have you included all 9 features into your script? Next, ask a classmate to view your scene using this checklist. Are the choices in your script visible in your acting?

In addition, these tips will help you to bring out the elements which will be graded:

- show, don't tell: telling the story through text is often less vivid than telling the story through body language;
- focus on actions in your script, instead of text;
- less text is more;
- transformation is easier when you choose a character that is dissimilar to yourself;



Grading Schematic

| Skills applied | Weak .25 | Sufficient .5 | Above average .75 | Great 1 |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| 1. 5W Clearly and accurately | Not clear | Choices don't always work | Clear for the audience what the intent is | Clear, understandably communicated, and transformative |
| 2. Body language Status/composure choices | Not clear/suitable | Not always clear/suitable | Suitable status | Creates atmosphere through variation and dynamicism |
| 3. Body language Status conviction | Not convincing | Not always convincing | Convincing | Intensifies the scene on a whole |
| 4. Emotions Intensities: suitability | No variation/choices not suitable | Not always suitable/not much variation | Suitable/varied | Choices aid transformation |
| 5. Emotions Conviction | Audience not moved | Audience Some times moved | Audience is pulled into feeling/atmosphere | Audience is touched |
| 6. Tempo | Choices not clear | Choices clear but not always consistent | Choices clear and consistent | Choices aid tension/interaction |
| 7. Stage/mise-en-scene | Limited use | Choices don't always work | Entire space is used/appropriate | Scene enhancing, tension building, audience is transported into the space |
| 8. Props and clothing | Limited use | Choices don't always work | Choices work/appropriate | Choices aid transformation |
| 9. Aristotelian structure <i>silences, build-up, tension, conflict</i> | Choices in build-up are not clear Audience distracted | Choices don't always work Audience sometimes distracted | Choices work/appropriate Audience stays interested | Choices create tension Audience gets in flow |

6. Assessment 2: Vision Paper

In your vision paper, you apply the learned skills to (future) professional situations. The paper consists of two sections. In section 1, you explain how each skill learned in class improves your professional qualities. In section 2, you write an essay on how these skills and qualities fit into your future profession.

Rules

- follow the structure as outlined in assignment
- you submit both a printed copy (in session 7) and a digital copy (Word file via e-mail, so NOT a PDF file!)
- answer all questions, and answer them fully
- keep section 1 and section 2 separate; don't turn your assignment into one large vision paper without sections
- use the theories, techniques and insights gained during the course
- explicitly refer to these theories
- read questions *carefully*.

Section 1

During our sessions, you have worked on recognizing, applying and practicing the following practical *skills*:

- I. The 5 basis concepts of dramatical design/form (5Ws)
- II. Body language: status
- III. Body language: tempi and intensity
- IV. Strengthen, weaken and enhance emotions
- V. Improvising (accepting, blocking, creativity).

These *skills* improve the following *qualities*:

- gaining self confidence relating to presenting for a group
- concentration
- verbal and non-verbal communication
- improvisation skills and creativity.

Question 1. Explain how *each* of the 5 *skills* relate to at least *two* of the *qualities*. Your answer should be detailed and comparative:

1.1.1 Describe the workings of each skill.

1.1.2 Sketch the features of each quality.

1.1.3 Clearly outline the bridge between each skill and quality.

Features to include:

- What happens on part of the performer? What about the audience?
- What precise detail connects skill to quality?

Section 2

Write a vision paper of at least 600 words. In this paper, you include the following:

Question 2.1. Describe a situation in your future job field. This can be an individual case of a common work problem, a situation you have experienced yourself, an experience you will probably come across later in your career. Choose a situation in which *two* "qualities" (see page 1 of your study guide) play an important role.

2.1.1 Explain why these two qualities are important in this situation.

2.1.2 Explain why these two qualities are important in a broader context of your work.

Features to include:

- What happened precisely in this situation? Explain the set-up.
- Describe your own actions and role in this situation.
- Describe the roles of others.
- Think of all the possible factors that can affect the situation. What about location? Coworkers? Factors that are beyond your control?

Question 2.2. Describe how these two qualities can be improved in this situation.

Features to include:

- Outline *precisely* what your expectations are of the situations.
 - What does the situation look like at the beginning? What are the 5Ws?
 - What elements do I need to change?
 - What does the situation look like after my intervention?
- Describe all the techniques you can think of.
- Describe how you *practically* apply these skills.
- What is the outcome of the situation? Is this expected, or surprising?
 - What is the outcome for yourself?
 - What is the outcome for others?
- Reflect on the role of yourself.
- Reflect on the role of others.

7. Provisional course schedule

| Week | Topics | Reading preparation on Net@school | Assignment preparation + deadlines |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1 Wed. 16-11 | Introduction to EN-IN-DRIM - basics of theatre - tableaus vivant / begin-middle-end - emotions | - EN-IN-DRIM Study Guide | |
| 2 Wed. 23-11 | Body Language: Status - high and low status - tableaus/5W - conflict and action | - Amy Cuddy: Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are (YouTube) | |
| 3 Wed. 30-11 | Body Language: Tempo (speed) and intensity (size) - tempo (speed) - make actions bigger | - Acting Basics | |
| 4 Wed. 7-12 | Improvisation - accepting, blocking and creativity | - Aristotle - Improvisation | |
| 5 Wed. 14-12 | Improvisation - structure + intensities: working towards tension | | |
| 6 Wed. 21-12 | Dialogue adaption - dialogue adaption | - Example script - Instructions final scene | - Form trio's final scene - Memorize dialogue A+B |
| 7 Wed. 11-01 | Composition: pulling it all together - voice, spatial composition, relations and movement | | - Prepare first draft final scene |
| 8 Wed. 18-01 | Examination - final scene/examinations | | - Deadline: Final scene script - Deadline: Mise-en-scene - Deadline: Vision paper |



I wish you a lot of fun, and I hope you will learn a lot!