

HSPVA THEATRE DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The following policies and procedures are integral to a department that offers a complete and intensive training in theatre arts.

A. HISD CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

All rules, regulations, and grading procedures established by the Houston Independent School District and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) are in effect at HSPVA.

B. FACULTY-STUDENT-PARENT RELATIONSHIP/ LINES OF COMMUNICATION

The primary function of the faculty of this department is to assist the individual student. It is our hope that students and parents feel free to meet with staff members to openly discuss any concerns. Should a conference between the faculty and parent be requested, the theatre faculty expects the student also to be present.

Students or parents, if you have a concern regarding a faculty member or other person, please go directly to that person and try to resolve that concern. If you do not feel the conflict has been resolved, ask for a conference with the theatre coordinator or with your school counselor. If this fails to resolve the problem, ask for a conference with an assistant principal.

C. GRADES

- Each **Six Weeks Average** is determined by
 - Averaging assignments from every class.
 - Assignment categories include and are not limited to daily grade/participation averages, written assignments, performance grades, artistry and professionalism, along with receiving rehearsal, performance and crew grades (RPC) for work done on crews, rehearsals, and performances.
 - Students and parents can access all grades on Gradespeed at any time. If you have trouble gaining access to Gradespeed, please see your counselor.

D. ATTENDANCE POLICIES: CLASS, REHEARSAL, CREW, PERFORMANCE **PLEASE BE WHERE YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE WHEN YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE THERE! We depend on each other to create our art.**

- Unexcused tardies will receive conduct cuts. The faculty may assign detention for excessive tardies.
- Unexcused tardies includes going to lockers, etc. for missing materials after class has started.
- Students are expected to arrive to class and crew dressed out, in time, with required materials at hand.
- A note of explanation from a teacher or parent will excuse a tardy.

- **You must call the theatre department at 713-942-1966 before 8 am on the day of an absence for any one of the following reasons:**
 - You will miss and/or be late for a:
 - Class performance.
 - Production rehearsal.
 - Crew call.
 - Performance.
 - POST MORTEM MEETING
 - STRIKE
 - Class.
 - **Post Mortem Meetings and Strike** - just as important as any crew call.
- Crew members will receive hours for both Post Mortem Meetings and for Strike and will lose hours or be assigned Community Service for missing a Post Mortem Meeting or Strike call.
 - (Use common sense – if a group of people are depending on you –
 - **MAKE THE CALL!**)
- The following are possible consequences for not making the call:
 - Failing the class assignment.
 - Losing points on your RPC grade.
 - Removal from a role or crew management position and reassignment within the company.
 - Losing hours from your Thespian status
- Students may also be removed from a role or management position for:
 - Excessive absences from rehearsals or crews
 - Being absent from academic classes the day of or a day after a performance. HSPVA rules stipulate that a person who is absent on the day of a performance may not perform that evening.

(These rules may be applied on a case by case basis. Your faculty director and school administrators may be involved in a decision that excuses the rules for unusual circumstances.)

- Such penalties will first be discussed between the three full-time faculty members and the involved student(s) before any final action is taken. Disciplinary decisions can be protested through the Appeals Board.

E. THEATRE DEPARTMENT PROTOCOL

- Arrive for theatre classes, in dress code, with all supplies and be in place for **HSPVA Daily Announcements**.
 - School announcements begin at the start of class.
 - Please refrain from talking or any other activity which distracts your focus or the focus of others from the announcements.
- In classes where you are permitted to "sign out" to a rehearsal space, stay in the **rehearsal space**. Never leave your rehearsal area without letting the teacher, stage manager, or a scene partner know where you are going and when you will return.

- In **acting classes**, performers are expected to have read the entire play, have made a photo copy of the scene or monologue being studied so that it may be marked, and have returned the printed script to the library.
- **Stay on task.** If you finish an assigned job or are asked to stop working on it, move to another task without being told. If you do not have work, please ask for a new assignment.
- **Students must read the call boards at least twice daily**, once at the time they arrive for theatre classes each day, and a second time before leaving school in the afternoon. We will make every attempt to post notices affecting the afternoon and evening, the previous day by 2:30 PM. Not reading the callboards cannot serve as an excuse for missing a call or any department information.
- **Please have email access, which you will check on a daily basis.** Whenever possible, updates will be sent to both students and parents through email.
- **Food and beverages** will not be taken into any theatre spaces. Water in spill proof bottles is permitted.
- Students whose names appears on the **Library Overdue Book List** will not be allowed to attend their primary focus classes and will perform community service duty instead.
- **The Theatre Appeals Board**, composed of the Thespian Board and the theatre faculty, will meet if any student feels he or she has received undue punishment from a crew head or faculty supervisor. To convene the board, submit a letter requesting the meeting and place the request in the Union Steward's box in the theatre office.
- We regret that our budget does not allow for student use of the **Departmental Supplies**, copier, or other equipment.
- Please knock before entering the **Department Office**.
- We cannot allow students to be in our office without our permission.
- HSPVA does not use bells to mark the end of classes. Theatre classes are dismissed by the theatre teachers and not by the clock.
- We conduct **Post Mortem meetings** after school the day after each show closes. This is the our opportunity to learn from Students and Staff ways in which our management systems and department goals are or are not being met.

F. CONDUCT CUTS and CONDUCT GRADES

Students are given a conduct cut when they break a rule and anti-conduct cuts for exceptional behavior or service. For each set of three conduct cuts (per grading cycle), the report card conduct grade is lowered one letter.

- Zero to two cuts, the conduct grade is E (excellent).
- Three to five cuts, S (satisfactory).
- Six to eight cuts, P (poor).
- Nine or more, U (unacceptable).

G. GENERAL BEHAVIOR

Some theatre students are prone to carry their acting to extremes. Posturing, gesticulating, emotional outbursts and loud displays of histrionics are easy to fall into but do not present us as professionals in our field. We conduct ourselves in a manner that will always reflect credit upon each of us and upon our department.

Values and Emotional Safety First:

- There are times and places for strong emotions. However, we are responsible for the emotions we leave in your wakes.
- Uncontrolled emotional outbursts are unprofessional. We learn to contain and channel powerful emotions in a way that is healthy and appropriate to time and place.
- Be more interested in learning than in being right.
- Being talented doesn't make us good people. We need to have enough humility to understand that the gift of our talents does not indicate any superiority over others.
- Our personal integrities are reflected in your ability to give, to compromise and to be flexible according to the needs of the greater good.

H. DAILY STAGE MANAGERS

Students are assigned on a rotating schedule to be a daily stage manager and are responsible for helping to manage classes. Students are expected to treat their peer, daily stage manager, with the same respect extended to any adult in authority. The following are expectations of the daily stage manager.

- Begin the class by
 - Preparing the workspace.
 - Take up any assignment due that day.
 - Appointing an ASM if necessary.
 - Leading a warm-up.
- Give adequate breaks and
 - Keep breaks under five minutes.
 - Monitor activity and noise in the halls during breaks.
 - Take role when reconvening.
- Keep track of who has been excused from the room during class.
- At the end of the class or rehearsal remind the class to
 - Stack and store furniture.
 - Clear area of personal items, props and trash (including the audience seating area!).
 - Release the class when the space is clean.
 - Turn off work lights before leaving.

I. GENERAL POLICY FOR LATE OR MISSED WORK

- All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period for which they are due, unless otherwise instructed by the teacher.

- **Turn in assignments without being asked to do so.** The assignment is considered late, if you do not get it turned in, even if the instructor does not ask for the work,.
- If you miss work due to absences, arrange to make up the work with the teacher **immediately** upon your return. Absences do not automatically extend due dates.
- Late penalties are **10% off the grade per day until the penalty reaches 50%**. Thereafter assignments will only get 50% of the final grade for the assignment.
- Individual teachers may enforce different policies for special assignments.

J. PARTICIPATION IN NON-DEPARTMENTAL SHOWS

We support our students' participation in theatres outside of PVA and will accommodate the job as long as the student remains in good academic standing, and the outside job does not interfere with department responsibilities. Theatre majors who want to participate in a show or program outside of HSPVA, which rehearses or performs during the school year must:

- Consult the faculty before auditioning or accepting such assignments.
- Come to our office during lunch, with the proposed performance and rehearsal schedule.
- **Bring A Request for Absence Form.** (available online)

K. ELIGIBILITY TO PERFORM

The Theatre Department wants its students to do well in academic classes. It is therefore most important that students work diligently to keep their academic assignments complete, grades passing, and to seek help if they feel they need it.

- The Department complies with the "no-pass, no play" state law. Consequently, a theatre major who fails a cycle (six week grading period) of an academic or the primary (your focus area) art area class will become ineligible for extra curricular work in the art area.
- The period of ineligibility extends until the students is determined to be passing all subjects at the next progress report (three weeks) or cycle (six weeks).
- If you fail a theatre class outside of your focus, you may be considered ineligible to work in that area for three weeks.
- During the period of ineligibility you are assigned to an in-house study hall, meeting at the same time as your crew or rehearsal assignment. Students who miss or are late for study hall will be required to make up the time. Students in study hall will not receive Thespian hours for time spent in study hall.
- Ineligibility periods follow the UIL calendar published each school year. However, the faculty may extend ineligibility if we think it is best for a student's academic success.
- The theatre department faculty may consider exceptions to the above rules for Advanced Placement classes on a case-by-case basis.

L. CASTING

The theatre faculty makes every attempt to choose the role that is the most educationally viable for each student, while being as fair and open-minded as possible.

We will do our best to give a role to each **Level III and IV** student at some point in each season. We will also try to refrain from having anyone monopolize larger roles. It is our preference to spread the larger roles among a variety of students so that students can have more equitable experiences. It is possible for a student not to be cast in a role when that student had the most promising audition, because this is educational theatre.

- Casting opportunities include:
 - The department's main stage productions.
 - The All School Musical.
 - The Black History production.
- Students are cast on the basis of:
 - Their audition.
 - The level of their union card.
 - Their participation in the season ticket sales campaign.
 - Their involvement with the department.
 - Their suitability for the role.
 - Their seniority.
 - Professional attitude and behavior
 - Other roles they have had.

Learning to make the most of a role you would not have chosen lead to the biggest growth opportunities. The process of casting is difficult and done carefully. Please know that we are doing our best and that the truth of this career includes the ability to not take casting decisions personally (no small accomplishment).

Level I and II students are not eligible for the department main stage productions. As with most pre-professional training programs, the first two years of class time are devoted to learning the craft. Level I and II students will perform at the end of the year in Showcases of short plays.

M. THEATRE ATTENDANCE

- Theatre majors are required to see all **departmental productions**.
- To that effect a free preview performance is available on the last dress rehearsal for all departmental performances.
- Attendance at other performances requires a ticket.
- Theatre majors are encouraged to see as much live **theatre outside of HSPVA** as is possible.
- If you accept a **complimentary ticket** to a performance at any theatre outside of HSPVA and you find that you will not be able to attend, it is essential that you make every effort to **find someone** who will use the

ticket for you **OR**, If that is not possible, **call the box office to release the seat**. Should you fail to release your ticket, the department could lose the privilege of receiving complimentary tickets at that theatre.

- As an audience member, it is important that you respond positively and respectfully to the performance. Speak positively and be sure to stay through the curtain call.
- Theatre majors are expected to set the example for others on **proper theatre etiquette**:
 - Arrive on time.
 - Focus on the performers; do not take focus during their performances.
 - Keep your feet on the floor and off the chairs.
 - Applaud and laugh as appropriate.
 - If, for any reason, you arrive when a performance is in progress, stand quietly at the back of the room until there is a clear break, applause or an usher seats you.
 - Cell phones must be OFF throughout performances. Texting included!

N. RE-AUDITIONS

All theatre majors, except seniors, are expected to pass a re-audition at the end of each year to check progress in the theatre program. The re-audition counts as a theatre final exam, (1/4 of the overall grade) of the second semester.

- **For performance focus students in levels 1, 2 & 3** the re-audition consists of:
 - The performance of two prepared monologues; Musical Theatre students will perform one contemporary monologue and one song.
 - At a length of 60 to 90 seconds in each. (The pieces will be timed and stopped when they reach 90 seconds. Not sticking to the time limit affects the grade.)
 - In Levels One and Two, both pieces are to be contemporary realism.
 - Level Three should have one piece from contemporary realism and one classical piece.
 - Unless a piece is intended as A.R.T.S. competition material (**JUNIORS only**), the pieces need to be new material, not performed previously for auditions or classes.
 - The faculty must approve the pieces.
 - Memorization grades for the two pieces.
 - Arc breakdowns of the characters in the plays and in the monologues or songs for the two performed pieces, by the assigned deadlines.
- **For design/production focus students in levels 1 & 2** the re-audition requirements are
 - Perform one monologue.
 - Memorization grade on the monologue.
 - Arc breakdowns of the character in the play and in the monologue.
 - A re-audition design project will be assigned.

- **For design/production focus students in level 3**, the re-audition requirements include
 - A theatrical design project.
 - Arcs for the selected play(s), by the assigned deadline.
- **Students in Levels One and Two** will also
 - Turn in a **Big Binder** (due the first day of re-auditions). The big binder includes a collection of your performance repertory, accumulated arcs, journals and classroom handouts.
- **The Title Page (typed)** with your name, Theatre Department HSPVA, the year you started at HSPVA, the year of your graduation.
 - **Section I – Re-audition Interview Grade Sheets & Notes** from the previous years, placed in chronological order.
 - **Level 2** – A grade sheet was made when your Big Binder was graded for Level I. Have that grade sheet and grader's notes included in this section.
 - **Section II – Journals** organized chronologically. The **journal index** (typed) should focus on concepts, plays, and exercises or work done in that class day.
 - **Section III – Handouts** received during various theatre classes.
 - **Section IV - Play Research** which includes arcs, reports and dramaturgy. This is organized in alphabetical order by play title with a table of contents (typed).
 - **Section V - Repertory** that includes monologues, scenes, and music that you have ever prepared (in or out of school). Music is to be organized by genre; Monologues and scenes in alphabetical order by play title with a table of contents (typed).
- Turn in a **Portfolio** review of all your design materials.
- **Interview** with the theatre faculty.

O. PREPARING FOR SENIOR YEAR

- Graduating seniors **who are in Level IV** are expected to present a **Senior Recital**. Guidelines for the senior recitals will be given to the seniors before they start their recital preparations.
- Students who graduate from HSPVA will receive an HISD High School Diploma. In addition, certain students who graduate from HSPVA will be awarded a Certificate. ***To receive an HSPVA Certificate in Theatre Arts a senior must have:**
 - Been in theatre the full junior and senior years.
 - Maintained an Art Area GPA of 85%.
 - Received at least an 85% on the senior recital.
 - Earned a green Thespian Union card with all corners intact.

P. SEASON TICKET POLICIES

The Department generates the funds it needs for productions through the sale of Season Tickets. **All students are expected to actively participate in the sales campaign.**

- Students receive **commission awards** for sales up to the opening of the first show.
- The **goal** for each student is to sell ten Season Tickets.
- The **required number** of sales is
 - Two for Level I Students.
 - Three for Level II Students.
 - Four for Levels III & IV Students.
- Student salespersons are responsible for
 - Soliciting the ticket sale.
 - Turning in the order form and payment promptly.
 - Making sure the filled Season Tickets are delivered to the subscriber either by direct delivery or making sure the Mail or Hold at Box Office options are clearly marked on the order form.
 - Keeping a record of orders they have taken, turned in, and delivered.
- Season Ticket Subscribers may **exchange their season tickets** for another performance of the same play as long as they do so before the performance time of the tickets they are exchanging. Subscribers may
 - Bring in their tickets.
 - Mail them.
 - Fax them to ATTN: Theatre Department at 713-942-1968. Cut the tickets in half; tape them onto a piece of paper; write their name, telephone number, the date and time of the desired performance, and instructions whether to mail the new tickets or hold them at the door.

Q. INDIVIDUAL TICKET SALE POLICIES

- **Box Office** opens one hour before performance time.
- **General Sales Ticket Price** is printed on the ticket. There are no children's prices. Checks for tickets should be made out to HSPVA.
- **Refunds** are not available for tickets sold. If an audience member has trouble with any of our policies, listen politely and get one of the full time faculty members to handle the situation.
- **Group Sales Discounts** are available through contacting a member of the faculty at 713-942-1966.
- Students in the acting or production company of a departmental show will receive a **complimentary coupon** to that production. The coupon may be given to anyone; however, it must be exchanged for a ticket for a particular performance subject to ticket availability.
- We are unable to take **Reservations**.
- **For Sold-out Performances** we sell **Standby Tickets** an hour before curtain at the box office. Unused seats are filled with standby ticket holders five minutes before curtain. Any standby ticket holder not seated is refunded the ticket price.

R. HOUSE POLICIES

- House opens 30 minutes before curtain.
- All seats are general admission (No reserved seats except for P*A*T*R*O*N*S during the main series of shows)
- Everyone entering the theatre must have a ticket except for PVA faculty, staff, our department's graduates and the press. Refer anyone without a ticket to the box office.
- Latecomers will be seated at appropriate breaks in the performance as stipulated by the director.

S. CHANGING AREAS OF FOCUS WITHIN THE THEATRE DEPARTMENT

If a theatre student decides that he/she would like to change art area focus within the theatre department, the following requirements must be met:

1. Student can petition to change art area focus only at the end of the semester by re-auditioning for their current focus and ALSO auditioning for a requested program (*Example: Re-audition at the end of the Fall semester to enter the Spring semester as an actor/designer/musical-theatre student, OR at the end of the Spring semester to return in the Fall as an actor/designer/musical-theatre student.*)
2. The student must meet eligibility requirements regarding passing grades within their art area.
3. In order to audition to change art area focus, the student must submit a portfolio of design work or an audition that effectively represents their craft including the following components:

To Move to Design

Samples of photos, renderings, sketches and drawings of designs that the student has created,

To Move to Straight Acting

Perform 2 contrasting monologues; Requirements are the same as those for any end-of-the-year acting re-audition.

To Move into Musical Theatre

- **Before** acceptance a candidate for Musical Theatre must take a semester of private voice lessons.
- Prepare 2 contrasting songs from published musicals; 16 bars each

All applicants will:

Write a letter (TYPED) to the theatre faculty, explaining their desire to change theatre focus and why they should be allowed to do so. Include an artist statement (2-3 sentences) that clearly reflects the student's philosophy of the craft and their individual contribution through their art.

If accepted, the student will remain on probationary status for one (1) full semester during which time he/she will maintain all passing grades in art area and academic area classes and thereby maintaining eligibility status.

**T. REGARDING RELOCATING FROM ONE DEPARTMENT TO ANOTHER
DEPARTMENT WITHIN HSPVA**

In the interest of good communication, the art area faculty has agreed on the following policy: A student desiring to change art areas must discuss this decision with their current department chair BEFORE filling out an application form. Should a student not follow this procedure, either department chair can choose to disqualify the move.