



Educational Programming for University Classes

The following workshops are available for university classes in English and Theatre. All of our workshops include performance of scenes by actors from The Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company, and interactive exercises for students. In order to perform scenes and get students up and moving around, we will require a space where chairs and desks can be moved out of the way! We can adapt all workshops to fit the length of your regular class period.

For English, Literature, or Theatre History Classes:

History of Shakespeare's Theatre

This workshop uses a combination of lecture and performance to familiarize students with the performance conditions for acting companies in Early Modern England. Students will learn about the architecture of Early Modern playhouses and how that architecture affected the scenic structure of Shakespeare's plays; the composition and behavior of Early Modern theatre audiences; the practical considerations of staging plays in Shakespeare's lifetime and the business of theatre; and the integral role of the theatre audience in creating theatrical performances of Early Modern plays. Scenes that the actors perform in this workshop focus on Shakespeare's use of the theatre audience in the text and scenic structure of his plays.

Textual Cues to Performance

This workshop teaches students about the textual analysis that actors undertake when they prepare performances of Shakespeare's plays. The workshop discusses the difference between prose and verse in Early Modern play dialogue; the specific structures of Shakespeare's verse and metrical scansion as a tool for actors; the use of rhetorical devices and their relationship to character motivation; embedded stage directions and other indications of physical movement and staging in the plays' texts; and textual cues to the status relationships among onstage characters. Actors demonstrate how details of text lead them to specific performance choices.

For acting students: This workshop can be a practical intensive in acting Shakespeare. We have adapted this workshop to be a multiple-day preparation of Shakespeare monologues in advance of some universities' auditions for productions of Shakespeare's plays.

Editing Shakespeare's Plays

This workshop explores the process of printing in Early Modern England, tracing the path that Shakespeare's plays have taken to come to us in the modern editions which we read in university classrooms. Students will examine pages from Quarto and Folio editions of Shakespeare's plays and discuss the differences between printed plays from Shakespeare's own lifetime, as well as the changes that modern editors have made to create the versions of the plays that we commonly read. Actors will demonstrate the implications for performance of small differences in the detail of printed plays.

For Acting Classes:

Please see above note regarding **Textual Cues to Performance**

Physical Acting Techniques and Shakespearean Text

This workshop offers acting students an overview of Rudolf Laban's effort shapes, Jacques Lecoq's work with the four elements, and other physical acting tools, and relates these physical tools to the performance of Shakespeare's text. Students learn to unite physical action with the structure of Shakespearean verse in order to help audiences better understand Shakespearean language.

Discussions of Specific Plays

When we have a full-length production in rehearsal, we can also arrange a discussion of that specific play in rehearsal and performance, with actors performing scenes and discussing their rehearsal process with students.

With sufficient preparation time, we can also arrange discussions of specific plays that you may be reading in class, with actors performing scenes and discussing their understanding of character from a performance perspective.

Educational Programming for Secondary Classes

All workshops above can be adapted to the high school classroom. With sufficient notice we can arrange to spend a full school day at your high school or middle school and visit a different class each hour. This arrangement works well when multiple English classes are reading the same Shakespeare play.

After School Workshops

We can custom design an after school workshop for your theatre students, focusing on acting Shakespeare's language. This format is particularly applicable if your school is producing one of Shakespeare's plays and the cast needs intensive preparatory work on Shakespearean language.

Summer Day Camps

In cooperation with your high school or middle school, we can offer a two-week theatre daycamp, which will focus on Shakespeare, but also teach basic principals of acting. Typical daycamp schedule is 2-3 hours a day, with no classes on weekends. Daycamps culminate in a public performance by the students and Pigeon Creek's actors.

The High School Residency

Each fall, the Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company does a 4-6 week residency at one West Michigan high school, in which 4-5 of our professional teaching artists rehearse and perform one of Shakespeare's plays alongside a cast of student actors. The residency is currently booked through 2012, but the company will be taking applications for the fall of 2013.

The Teaching Artists of the Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company

The actors of the Pigeon Creek Shakespeare Company not only have significant training in acting and extensive professional stage experience; many of our actors also have extensive background in education. Our teaching artists include early childhood education specialists, certified elementary and secondary teachers, and university professors.