

**COURSE TITLE:** DRAMA GAMES

**NO. OF CREDITS:** 5 QUARTER CREDITS  
[semester equivalent = 3.33 credits]

**WA CLOCK HRS:** 50  
**OREGON PDUs:** 50  
**PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48:** 50

**INSTRUCTOR:** Doug Larson  
doug@freedrama.net

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course shows teachers how to use drama techniques to make everyday classroom lessons come to life. Drama Games give teachers a new educational tool for any subject by using improvisational theatre concepts as an active form of learning. Improvisational theatre gives students a fun and interactive way to learn English, reading, literature, history, communications, speech and much more. These activities can be used with all ages of students and in any classroom setting.

Drama Games:

- Encourage creativity and the use of imagination
- Foster cooperation and teamwork
- Instill confidence and a strong self-image
- Provide focus and concentration
- Improve listening skills
- Encourage acceptance of each student's uniqueness
- Allow fun and humor to permeate the classroom

This course is appropriate for teachers of all subjects, grades K-12.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

1. Identified drama games that are age appropriate for their classroom.
2. Described how they will use drama games in their classroom.
3. Selected drama games to go with classroom lessons.
4. Created lesson plans that use drama games.
5. Tested drama games in their classroom.
6. Evaluated which drama games work best in their classroom.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participant's their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

**UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION**

**REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%

**CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)**

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

## ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

### REQUIRED TEXT

The course text is *175 Theatre Games (Warm-up Exercises for Actors)* by Nancy Hurley.

- **175 Theatre Games: Warm-up exercises for Actors**  
ISBN# 1566081645  
by Hurley, Nancy  
Meriwether Publishing

[Buy from Amazon](#)

### MATERIALS FEE

Text is approximately \$16 on Amazon.com

## ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

### A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION

#### Assignment #1:

Introduce yourself with a 1-2 page background statement that includes the following:

- A description of your current professional situation.
- A list of your anticipated outcomes from taking this course.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #1'.**

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#### Assignment #2:

1. Read the article "Whose Classroom Is It, Anyway? Improvisation as a Teaching Tool" by Ronald Beck and Rosalind Trieber.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11x5FYfEc0KcQPcrTuKLBW8axBf3-ki0z/view?usp=drivesdk>

1. Write a 2-3 page response highlighting: (a) What is improvisation? (b) Why use improvisation in the Classroom? (c) What did you find useful in the article for your classroom?

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #2'**

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#### Assignment #3:

1. Search YouTube for videos of the theater game improv show called "Whose Line is it Anyway?" or "Expert Village Improv Games"
2. Or you can use this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aY58REdGknc&feature=share&list=SPF4F337DC5A07B8A3>
3. Watch 10 videos and write a paragraph about each one of them explaining what game they played and if it might be something you could see students playing in your classroom.
4. If you are unable to see the videos, please contact me at [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net) for an alternative assignment.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #3'.**

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**Assignment #4:**

1. Read the book "*175 Theatre Games (Warm-up Exercises for Actors)*" by Nancy Hurley.
2. Make a list of 20 games you thought were interesting and easy to understand.
3. Give a short description of each of them game and detail what you particularly liked about it.
4. What are some subjects in your classroom that would work with the game? For example, there is a game called "Draw a Face Race" on page 7. That game could be adapted to use with a literature assignment where students race to draw a favorite character from the book.
5. Using your list of 20 games, write a brief statement for every game on how you might use each game in the classroom.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #4'.**

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**Assignment #5:**

MadScripts are fill in-the-blanks plays that are different each time you use them.

MadScripts you can use in the classroom are available at: <http://www.freedrama.net/madscripts.html>

1. How are MadScripts similar to improv?
2. How are they different?
3. How could MadScripts work in your classroom?
4. Which of the MadScripts would work in your classroom?
5. What new types of MadScripts (subjects and topics) would you like to see?

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #5'.**

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**Assignment #6:**

1. What are some lessons in your classroom that are important to you but students aren't excited about?
2. What are some subjects in your classroom that students aren't motivated to participate in?
3. How might drama games work with these lessons?
4. How might games work to motivate students to learn the subject matter?
5. Write a 2-3 page response highlighting: (a) Subjects and lessons your students struggle with; (b) How theatre games could be used with these subjects and lessons.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #6'.**

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**Assignment #7:**

1. Create some new lessons on different subjects or topics that involve theater games as a major part of the lesson.
2. Write 10 short lesson ideas with new games you haven't used in assignments previously.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #7'.**

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**Assignment #8:**

1. Create a theme unit for your classroom that involves several improv games. For example, if you did a theme unit on Pirates, you could introduce the unit with the Exaggeration Game (page 8 in the book) and have students talk on a common topic as a pirate.
2. Another lesson could be on famous historical pirates and students have to play 'Name Pantomime' (page 69 in book) and 'Guess who the pirate is'.
3. Send a 2-3 page outline, summary or PowerPoint presentation of your unit.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #8'.**

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## ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

### B. LEARNING APPLICATION

In this section you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you are not teaching in a classroom, please contact the instructor for course modifications. If you are a classroom teacher and start or need to complete this course during the summer, please try to apply your ideas when possible with youth from your neighborhood, at a local public library or parks department facility, (they will often be glad to sponsor community-based learning), or with students in another teacher's summer classroom in session.

#### Assignment #9:

Use 10 improv games in two different subject areas (5 games per subject).

Evaluate how these games helped students learn the subject matter. For ideas: review the article "Improv ?Techniques? For? The ? Mathematics ?Classroom" from the University of Arizona: [http://math.arizona.edu/~ayoung/pdf/improv\\_presentation.pdf](http://math.arizona.edu/~ayoung/pdf/improv_presentation.pdf)

Complete one of the following:

- Write a summary of how the games worked in different subjects.

OR

- Have the students write an evaluation of what they learned.

OR

- Create a PowerPoint presentation with pictures of the activity.

OR

- Make a video.

NOTE: If you do pictures or a video please get parental permission.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #9'.**

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#### Assignment #10:

MadScripts are fill-in-the-blanks plays that are different each time you use them.

MadScripts you can use in a lesson are available at: <http://www.freedrama.net/madscripts.html>

1. Try four MadScripts in your classroom.
2. Write a summary of how MadScripts worked in your classroom, have the students write an evaluation of what they learned, create a PowerPoint presentation with pictures of the activity, or make a video.

NOTE: If you do pictures or a video please get parental permission.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #10'.**

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#### Assignment #11:

(Required for 400 and 500 Level)

Assignment #11-A:

- Create a lesson reflecting what you've learned in this course.
- Use The Heritage Institute [lesson template](#) or one from your district.
- Implement your lesson with students in your classroom.
- Write a 250-500 word commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback on your lesson.
- We encourage you to share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by also contributing your Lesson Plan to The Heritage Institute Lesson Plan Library [here](#).
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Send your lesson plan and your commentary via email to your instructor.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #11-A'.**

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**OR**

Assignment #11-B:

- Create a lesson reflecting what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)
- Use The Heritage Institute [lesson template](#) or one from your district.
- We encourage you to share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by contributing your Lesson Plan to The Heritage Institute Lesson Plan Library [here](#).
- Write a 500+ word article concerning any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students.
- Please refer to the guidelines on our blog [What Works: Teaching at its Best](#) prior to writing your article.
- When you submit your article to your instructor, please also email a copy to [Renee Leon](#) THI blog curator and media specialist.
- Indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.
- Submit your lesson along with your article via email to your instructor.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #11-B'.**

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### **Assignment #12: (500 Level ONLY)**

In addition to the 400 level assignments complete **one (1)** of the following options:

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#### **Option A)**

Search the Internet for more improv theater games. Make a list of resources including links to 10 websites with good theater games and a paragraph description for each website on what you would use from the website. Write a 2-3 page paper with your results.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #12-A'.**

**OR**

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#### **Option B)**

Create 2-3 new MadScripts or 2-3 new improv game lesson plans to go with your current units/lessons. Try them on your students. Write a 2-3 page paper evaluating the results of using the new MadScripts or games; or have students write their reactions to the new lessons and submit in a summary. Or create a PowerPoint presentation with pictures of the activity or a video. Mad-Script examples:

<http://www.freedrama.net/madscripts.html>

NOTE: If you do pictures or a video please get parental permission.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #12-B'**

**OR**

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#### **Option C)**

Have students select their own improv games and share them with the class. You can write a summary of how the lesson went, have the students write an evaluation, create a PowerPoint presentation with pictures of the activity or a video.

NOTE: If you do pictures or a video please get parental permission.

**Send to instructor: [doug@freedrama.net](mailto:doug@freedrama.net). Subject line to read 'Games #12-C'.**

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### **C. INTEGRATION PAPER**

Assignment #13: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

#### **SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER**

**(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments.)**

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when, and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

**Send to your instructor at their email address. Subject line to read "(put course name here) Integration Paper"**

## **INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:**

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

## **QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:**

Doug Larson, M.S., received his teaching degree from Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington and taught third grade and middle school in Dubois, Idaho. He was also the drama director for both the elementary and high school creating original productions for the school as well as directing well known shows such as the Wizard of Oz. He also taught 2nd graders English in South America for a year and used drama and puppets as a way to teach conversational English.

Doug is also a published playwright. In 1988, his first play "Nicolas Brooks" had instant success by winning the Youth Division at the Spokane Civic Theatre Forum Festival. He then formed his own theatre group in 1989 called Tailors of the Imagination.

In 1990, his play "A Man and His Plant" was produced at the Spokane Civic Theatre Forum Festival in the adult division. The play went on to win third place in a national contest and then was published by the Dramatic Publishing Company as a part of an anthology "Short Stuff for Mature Actors." When relocating to New Mexico, he taught drama at New Mexico State University and taught theatre game workshops to local schools. He started a theatre group called the Poco Loco Players, which won state level awards for acting.

Doug also started the successful website called freedrama.com which has provided free plays to schools and community groups around the world. His 2002 victory as a writer was being included in the Love Creek Production's play festival in New York City.

His monologue "Pearls of Wisdom" is the true story of the struggles young women face growing up in rural Idaho. Another success was a 2004 mid-west tour of his play "The Redneck" (renamed Operation Redneck) by the professional theatre group Retroact Productions. During this time, freedrama.com became very popular receiving thousands of visitors a day.

The plays on freedrama.com (now freedrama.net) have been performed on every continent including Antarctica. He also got involved in developing film projects as a writer and producer. In 2008, he started a new series about War Veterans. The series has been featured by Apple iTunes and YouTube. The most successful episode has been "Saving Lives in World War II" which won an Emmy Award in 2009 for best Advanced Media Historical Documentary (Rocky Mountain Region).

In 2010, he won a Telly Award for his full length documentary about a wildlife park in Arizona. And in 2011, he won a second Emmy Award for his short documentary about an organization called Paws and Stripes that helps veterans with PTSD by using service dogs.

Here is a video made by my wife and I for a 48 hour film project where we had to write a short movie based on film prompts (character named Kelly, prop [measuring tape], and line of dialog: "You only live once"). See the wacky results - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXMgYV0sN4Q>

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **DRAMA GAMES**

**Bany-Winters, Lisa**, *On Stage: Theater Games and Activities for Kids*, Chicago Review Press, 1st edition, 1997, paperback, 171 pages, ISBN-13: 978-1556523243. Book review on Amazon.com: "A compendium of theater games that is sure to delight young thespians. While the material is not new and many of the games are classics ("Mirrors," "Change Three Things," and "Freeze"), Bany-Winters has a clear and concise way of explaining both the activity and its purpose, making her work a useful source for ensemble-building games for student-run drama groups and rehearsal techniques for adult teachers/directors. Often renamed for greater child appeal, the activities range from vocal warm ups to improvisational scene work, and many include helpful suggestions for variations on familiar games.

Exercises in puppetry, mask making, costuming, makeup, and set design, as well as several short scripts, round out the presentation. Explanations of theatrical terms are smoothly incorporated into the text. Tips for young actors and short anecdotes about theatrical figures or plays are featured throughout. Simple black-and-white graphics add touches of humor. One drawback is the list of "Suggested Plays and Stories for Kids," which includes some titles that are beyond both the abilities and interests of preteens. Nevertheless, this will be a terrific addition to drama collections."

**Hurley, Nancy**, *175 Theater Games*, Meriwether Publishing, 2009, paperback, 119 pages, ISBN-13: 978-1566081641 From publisher: "The games and exercises in this book are designed to be used as warm-ups at the beginning of a theatre class. They have been used successfully with middle school students and they can easily be adapted for use with younger children, older teens and adults in various settings. The games are divided into thirteen sections: Easy Reference; Clowning; Co-operation & Teamwork; Focus & Concentration;

Getting Ready; Improvisation; Listening; Name Games; Observation; Pantomime; Stretching & Relaxation; Stage Movement; Voice. The games have been adapted from many books, workshop and standard group activities. This is a comprehensive collection of tested games and exercises. A must book for every theatre library."

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**McKnight, Katherine and Scruggs, Mary**, *The Second City Guide to Improv in the Classroom*, Jossey-Bass, 1st edition, 2008, ISBN-13: 978-0787996505. From publisher: "Most people know The Second City as an innovative school for improvisation that has turned out leading talents such as Alan Arkin, Bill Murray, Stephen Colbert, and Tina Fey. This groundbreaking company has also trained thousands of educators and students through its Improvisation for Creative Pedagogy program, which uses improv exercises to teach a wide variety of content areas and boost skills that are crucial for student learning: listening, teamwork, communication, idea-generation, vocabulary, and more. The scores of ready-to-use exercises offered here can be used to teach a wide variety of subjects including language arts, math, science, and social studies as well as to build classroom community and develop cooperative learning skills. All of the lessons are linked to current national standards for the United States and Canada, and have been proven particularly effective with kinesthetic learners and students with attention difficulties."

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**Rooyackers, Paul and Bowman, Cecelia**, *101 Drama Games for Children*, Hunter House, 1st edition, 1997, 160 pages, ISBN-13: 978-0897932110. From publisher: "Drama games are not staged plays but a dynamic form in which children explore their minds and the world around them. They can use their play-acting in sensory games, pantomimes, story games with puppets, in creating masks and costumes, and much more. Drama games allow children to get more in touch with themselves and what they want to be, and are a delightful way to discover the freedom, creativity, and expression of acting- and living."

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**Spolin, Viola**, *Theater Games for the Classroom: A Teacher's Handbook*, ISBN-13: 978-0810140042

From the publisher: "This book offers the most comprehensive theater instruction for all types of students, from small children to young adults. It includes over 130 theater games, plus exercises and instructional strategies. This handbook is full of games that can be used in the classroom. Not only is it educational and can it spark interest in learning, but it is fun for the students...and even the teacher!"