



**Gifted LearningLinks Program  
Course Syllabus**

**Instructor name: C. Mehler  
E-mail address: xxx@xxx.xxx**

**Course Title: The Play's the Thing: Playwriting 101**

**Course Description:**

From Shakespeare to Neil Simon, playwrights create dramas and comedies for live performance. By reading published plays, viewing performances and writing themselves, students develop their skills as a playwright. Students create a play from their own idea, learning the fundamentals of playwriting from character development to dialogue and plot.

*High school credit: 1 semester*

**Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- a) discuss the theatre from historical, social, and production standpoints.
- b) analyze plays as literature.
- c) understand the broad swath created by American musical theatre.
- d) attend a play and react to it critically.

**Resources and Materials:**

1. Sweet, Jeffrey. *The Dramatist's Toolkit*  
(Amazon page [http://www.amazon.com/Dramatists-Toolkit-Craft-Working-Playwright/dp/0435086294/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1253155592&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Dramatists-Toolkit-Craft-Working-Playwright/dp/0435086294/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1253155592&sr=8-1))
2. Laurents/Styne/Sondheim, *Gypsy*  
(Amazon page [http://www.amazon.com/Gypsy-Arthur-Laurents/dp/1559360860/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1253156170&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Gypsy-Arthur-Laurents/dp/1559360860/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1253156170&sr=8-1))
3. Simon, Neil, *The Collected Plays of Neil Simon Volume 1*  
(Amazon page [http://www.amazon.com/Collected-Plays-Neil-Simon-Star-Spangled/dp/0452258707/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1314509111&sr=1-3](http://www.amazon.com/Collected-Plays-Neil-Simon-Star-Spangled/dp/0452258707/ref=sr_1_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1314509111&sr=1-3))
4. Hansbury, Lorraine, *A Raisin the Sun*  
<http://www.amazon.com/Raisin-Sun-Lorraine->

**Student Evaluation and Grading Policies for Credit Courses Only:**

**CTD Grading scale**

<b>A+</b> 97-100	<b>B+</b> 87-89	<b>C+</b> 77-79	<b>D+</b> 67-69	<b>F</b> Below 60
<b>A</b> 93-96	<b>B</b> 83-86	<b>C</b> 73-76	<b>D</b> 63-66	
<b>A-</b> 90-92	<b>B-</b> 80-82	<b>C-</b> 70-72	<b>D-</b> 60-62	

Each of 9 assignments, including Assignment #0, is worth 10 points. A penalty of 2 points on any of these assignments may be assessed for unexcused lateness. In the event that you know in advance that you are going to be late with an assignment, please have a parent call or e-mail the instructor. The instructor's main concern is that the student maintain contact, even when there is difficulty.

**Instructor Biography:**



Charlie Mehler has worked for the Center for Talent Development in various capacities (online, Saturday Enrichment Program, Summer Program) for ten years. He has taught math, computer operations, and theatre for nearly a quarter century. Charlie recently completed a PhD in theatre at Louisiana State University (Geaux Tigers!).

**Contact Information:**

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Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor if you have any questions or concerns.

**Schedule:**

	<b>Topic/Focus</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Reading Assignments</b>	<b>What do I need to turn in?</b>
<b>Assignment 1</b>	<i>The Dramatist's Toolkit</i>	Read <i>Dramatist's Toolkit</i>	Answers to questions in Assignment #1
<b>Assignment 2</b>	Climactic Moment	Write a short description of the climactic moment in your play	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Climactic decision that a main character makes</li> <li>2. Why the decision is a surprise</li> <li>3. Why the decision is inevitable</li> </ol>
<b>Assignment 3</b>	<i>Gypsy</i> Forward and Backward Motion  Character Arc	Read <i>Gypsy</i>	One to two page essay answering question in Assignment #3
<b>Assignment 4</b>	Action Outline and Character Arcs for <i>Your Play</i>	Action Outlines – three scenes, more than one location preferred, scene-by-scene description of plot  Character Skeleton for each character – at least three characters, no more than six	Action Outline and Character Skeletons
<b>Assignment 5</b>	Writing a One-Act Play	First Draft of <i>your</i> one act play 12-15 pages with at least three characters and three scenes	First Draft of One Act Play - Action Outline and Character Skeletons must be approved before writing draft
<b>Assignment 6</b>	Multicultural Issues	When is cross-racial casting appropriate? Are there times when it is not?  Read <i>The Odd Couple</i>  Read <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	Response on the efficacy of plays with cross-racial casting

	<b>Topic/Focus</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Reading Assignments</b>	<b>What do I need to turn in?</b>
<b>Assignment 7</b>	Rewrite	Rewrite one act play	Second draft of one act play
<b>Assignment 8</b>	Performance	Round table reading of your play	Feedback Report

Please see ASSIGNMENTS on Blackboard for more detail on each Assignment.

GLL Sample