



Menlo School US Creative Arts Electives

Student Perspectives - 2017

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Drama Elective	Instructor: Steven Minning
<i>What should a student interested in this course know that's NOT in the course description?</i>	
“That this course really helps you manage your stress”	
“It's not just acting, it's a lot of theater history and a few games, but mostly it's learning how to feel about theater and why it's important.”	
<i>I would recommend this course to students that...</i>	
“Attend Menlo School, Honestly, I recommend this course to everyone.”	
“Are curious about theater in general and not just about acting or playing games.”	

I would NOT recommend this course to students that...

“Only want to take drama to just be onstage.”

“Are not interested in learning about drama but just want to do acting without all of the lessons.”

“Are not patient and willing to do exercises which they will not understand the value of until later.”

“Only want to play games.”

Do you have any highlights from the course or were there specific skills that you learned?

“I loved when we performed scenes in the first semester.”

“I learned about the history of theater such as Greek and Roman theater.”

“It’s all so good that I don’t really have any highlights”

“This course, through our early unit on improvisation, has made it much easier for me to think on my feet.”

Jazz Dance Elective

Instructor: Jan Chandler

What should a student know that’s NOT in the course description:

“This class will teach you to pay attention to your body and learn how to work in a team.”

“This class is completely for beginners. You don’t need to have ANY prior experience and the class is very fun and engaging. It is not a very serious class, because everyone is just starting.”

I would recommend this course to students that...

“Want to have a fun yet structured class.”

“Enjoy moving, being creative and are looking for a class that will let them have a great time while learning about your own body, its movements and limitations in a beautiful way.”

“Want required/routine exercise. Are athletes, see chiropractors, or have bad posture.”

I would NOT recommend this course to students that...

“does not like trying new things or getting out of their comfort zone”

Do you have any highlights from the course or were there specific skills that you learned?

“Performing at the Creative Arts Assembly was the best part. The dances Jan choreographs are very upbeat and enjoyable!”

Jazz Dance Elective - Single Course

Instructor: Jan Chandler

What should a student know that's NOT in the course description:

“This class is good for people who want to be comfortable with doing something they aren't used to. You'll to learn how to present yourself.”

“The class dance for the dance concert is choreographed by the whole class, so you have to be willing to work with others and have a voice in the process.”

“You don't have to be a dancer to take this class, if you've taken dance before in the high school and want to do it again, there is no reason you cannot take this class.”

I would recommend this course to students that...

“want a way to be able to get some energy out during the school day and who are willing to try new things and take corrections to get better.”

“enjoy dancing and want to work on their technique.”

I would NOT recommend this course to students that...

“Won't take this class seriously because even though it's an art class, you can learn so much about who you are and your body from this class.”

Do you have any highlights from the course or were there specific skills that you learned?

"I learned a lot about my body and how to move better."

"The dance concert is something that has given me a lot of confidence. It takes courage to go out on stage, and the dance concert provides a really fun and safe opportunity to do that."

Orchestra	Instructor:
"Orchestra is a fun, engaging class and is a great way to make new friends and learn to understand and appreciate music."	
"Orchestra is a great stress relief and nice break from school work."	
"I would recommend this class to students who want a break from a rigorous schedule but also enjoy play good, but challenging music."	
"I would not recommend this course to students who just want to goof off and have no interest in music."	
"I further my musicality, my ability to read rhythms and to blend with other musicians, and overall improve myself as an artist and a musician."	
"Orchestra is also an awesome 'mental break' during my otherwise high stress day."	

AP Music Theory	Instructor: Karen Linford
<i>What should a student know that's NOT in the course description:</i>	
"The class can be small, and even though there's an entrance exam, people from different skill levels take the class. So, if you're behind or confused, that's ok. Ms. Linford is there to help."	
<i>I would recommend this course to students that...</i>	
"Are passionate about music and either do or don't want to major in music. I personally am not going to major in music, but I've been playing piano for 12 years, and singing for 6 years, and it was nice to learn a little bit about the history of music"	

and the foundations of music (what chords are used when, how single notes can be put together to form a chord, the different rhythms used throughout different centuries, what chords were "forbidden" (the augmented fourth), how social/political circumstances shaped the music)."

I would NOT recommend this course to students that...

"Have no background in music at all. I think you should be able to read music and know basic time/key signatures."

Do you have any highlights from the course or were there specific skills that you learned?

"When the Yale acapella group came to choir to do a workshop with us, they asked if anyone knew what homophonic texture was, and because of my music theory knowledge, I could answer."

Average "Academic Rigor" Rating (1-5):
3

Average "Amount of Homework" Rating (1-5):
2

Any other comments?

"The class jumps around a bit (especially with ear training, sometimes it's really easy, and sometimes it's really hard), so you might have to do some extra practice on your own if you're not completely comfortable with the information."

Chamber Choir

Instructor: Karen Linford

What should a student know that's NOT in the course description:

"If it's your first time in chamber and you're a little shy, I'd recommend taking the class with a friend. You also shouldn't feel the need to be in Chamber after taking a year of women's/mixed choir. There is nothing wrong with singing in a smaller group for another year to get more comfortable if needed!"

"It is very fun to bond with other students in the class, and is an outlet to just enjoy singing."

"They should know there are singers in the class that have been in chorus before and are experienced."

I would recommend this course to students that...

"Like to sing with energy. They should also like to sing a variety of music (we don't just sing pop, we also sing some classical and folk music)."

"Those who like to sing, want to get better at singing, and those that have a tough schedule and want to relieve stress!"

I would NOT recommend this course to students that...

"Don't like to sing."

"Just want to hang with friends and fool around during class, because it is still a serious class and Ms. Linford works very hard to prepare everything."

Highlights from the course and/or specific skills that I learned:

"I sang for a while, but I was really quiet. Chamber helped me get louder and develop my sound."

"I learned how to blend and harmonize."

"I've enjoyed working in single gender groups on songs of our choice."

Other comments:

"Although this class is a fun and relaxing class, you are still expected to work hard and go to many of the events. It is a small time commitment, but when there is a performance, you should be on time and have fun. You don't NEED to know how to read music, but it can help if you start look at music and look at the pattern of the notes (when they move up, the pitch goes up, etc...). We also don't go on as many trips as we used to, so the description could be adjusted. The music we learn can be hard if you aren't singing the melody (especially if it's a sing you're familiar with and you have to sing completely different notes), but there are people around you singing the same part who can help."

"I like chorus class a lot and hope a lot more people join next year."

Select Mixed Chorus

Instructor: Karen Linford

What should a student know that's NOT in the course description:

"It is a class to be yourself and not be afraid to sing."

"This class will not only give you great friendships--but an environment where you feel it's okay to try. You don't have to be a good singer at all, but you will still have fun experiencing the joy of a group of people singing."

I would recommend this course to students that...

"...want a fun, relaxed opportunity to incorporate music/singing into their class schedule."

I would NOT recommend this course to students that...

"...don't like to try new things"

Do you have any highlights from the course or were there specific skills that you learned?

"I have learned how to read music, compose a piece, harmonize, sing with a group, hold a part, sing a solo, and develop my voice."

Other comments:

"Mama Linford is an angel, and she will make the experience one of the best classes you've ever had."

Studio Art

Instructor: Nina Ollikainen

"Be prepared to work really hard and expand your creativity."

"I would recommend this course for students who want to improve their skills working with a variety of materials and subject matter."

"I would not recommend this course to students who resist trying new ideas and who are unwilling to experiment with art materials."

"I learned how to take my ideas and thoughts and transfer them into drawings and paintings."

<p>"I learned how to draw and paint faces, figures, architecture, and landscapes and worked with both realism and abstraction, and in the process improved on my artistic skills."</p> <p>"I'm excited that 3-D design and animation will be added to the second semester activities!"</p>	
<p><i>Average "Academic Rigor" Rating (1-5):</i> 3</p>	<p><i>Average "Amount of Homework" Rating (1-5):</i> 0-1</p>

<p>Advanced Art Instructor: Nina Ollikainen</p>	
<p>"I really like this course because everyone in the class is passionate about creating art and there is a shared spirit of fun."</p>	
<p>"I would recommend this course to students who have developed some skills in art but really want to improve further and try new things."</p>	
<p>"I would not recommend this course for students who do not want to challenge themselves and who just want to slack off."</p>	
<p>"We get to develop our own projects and go as deeply as we want into any subject."</p>	
<p>"I've learned so many new ways of expressing my ideas visually."</p>	
<p><i>Average "Academic Rigor" Rating (1-5):</i> 3</p>	<p><i>Average "Amount of Homework" Rating (1-5):</i> 1-2</p>

<p>Topics in Fine Art Instructor: Nina Ollikainen</p>	
<p>"Topics in Fine Art is great because it teaches you the same skills as you would learn in AP Art, but you can work at your own pace."</p>	
<p>"I find it a much more relaxing course as compared to the AP 2-Design course I took the previous year."</p>	

“I would recommend this course to students who have done Advanced Art and wish to concentrate on particular areas in art.”	
Average “Academic Rigor” Rating (1-5): 3	Average “Amount of Homework” Rating (1-5): 3

AP Studio Art 2-D Design and 3-D Design		Instructor: Nina Ollikainen
“AP Art takes as much time as any other AP, so expect to spend a lot of time working outside of class.”		
“I would not recommend this course for anyone who has a busy academic and sports schedule. It takes a long time to complete art and combined with a heavy schedule, there just aren’t enough hours in the day to do it all.”		
“I would recommend this course for students who already have the beginnings of a quality art portfolio and for those who are confident in their skill sets.”		
“My work in this course has given me inspiration to incorporate my skills for other subjects and service projects.”		
“Be prepared to do the bulk of your 3-D work outside of class time. Creating three dimensional work takes longer than two dimensional artwork.”		
Average “Academic Rigor” Rating (1-5): 5	Average “Amount of Homework” Rating (1-5): 5	

Advanced Photography	Instructor: Pete Zivkov
<p><i>What should a student know that’s NOT in the course description:</i></p> <p>“Potential students should know that this course is very independent and largely self-motivated. You have a lot of freedom to do whatever you want creatively within the rotations, and you can work by yourself if you want to.”</p>	

“Potential students should know that a large part of the photography happens on campus (shooting pictures of people or nature around Menlo), but one can do work outside of class as much as they want. The amount of pictures you get in our outside of school depends on how you gear your photographic lifestyle.”

I would recommend this course to students that...

“...are independent, confident, creative, and can challenge themselves to do something a little outside of their comfort zone.”

I would NOT recommend this course to students that...

“...do not have the patience to take photos for a whole class period.”

Intro to Moviemaking

Instructor: **Tripp Robbins**

“I would recommend this class to students who are looking for a creative outlet in their busy schedules.”

“I would recommend this class to students who are looking to expand their creativity, make new friends and closer relationships by group film projects, and learn more about the art of film and functions of a camera.”

“I would NOT recommend this class to someone who thinks they can get an easy A doing nothing.”

Advanced Moviemaking

Instructor: **Tripp Robbins**

“I love this class. It challenges me, but it's definitely the class I get most excited about.”

“I would not recommend this class to students who thrive in extremely structured classes. The great part about this class is that it requires a tremendous amount of personal responsibility, including using class time effectively.”

“Even though you don't have homework, be prepared that filming will take some time outside of class.”

Intro Journalism	Instructor: Tripp Robbins
“I would recommend this course to students who love to write and make videos, and want to expand their writing repertoires.”	
“I have found a love for making journalistic videos, as opposed to writing in AP style.”	
“Be prepared to think critically about what you believe in... These are the kinds of discoveries that make this class so fun to participate in.”	

Advanced Journalism	Instructor: Tripp Robbins
“This class is the most practical class at Menlo. It taught me how to collaborate with all types of Menlo students in order to finish a product. I also think this class can be extremely beneficial no matter what field you go into, because besides teaching students how to speak the truth, students must learn to write without bias and interact with different types of people in the Menlo community for interviews.”	
“1) Meeting deadlines is important 2) If you don't take this class at least somewhat seriously it will not help your GPA 3) It's a whole lot of fun!”	
“It is a very independent class - you work on your schedule as long as you get your stuff done.”	
“I would recommend journalism to someone who is naturally curious, likes writing or wants to improve, and is OK with getting feedback from peers/editors.”	

Yearbook (Publication Design I, II & Leadership)	Instructor: Tripp Robbins
“It has a perfect balance between being relaxing yet also stressful at times. At the end of the day, you feel like you've really contributed to an amazing book yet also had tons of fun bonding with others in the process.”	
“Yearbook involves students from all four grades and you truly get to bond and get to know some of these upper and underclassmen which is really cool.”	
“I've learned how to manage my peers and how to produce what's asked of you in a timely and effective manner.”	

"I always look forward to attending yearbook class as I feel as though it is a chill class that I can relax and have some fun in."

"I would not recommend this class to someone who wants to use the class as an easy 'A' and slack off."

Creativity & Problem Solving

Instructor: **Tripp Robbins**

"Highlights of the class include learning Design Thinking, how to be playful, to not judge ideas, to not to defend your limitations, to step outside your comfort zone."

"I would recommend this class to students who enjoy working with classmates on small design thinking projects."

"It is really up to the class what they want to do."

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Instructor Tripp Robbins

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Orchestra

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"I would recommend this class to students who want a break from a rigorous schedule but also enjoy play good, but challenging music."

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Instructor: Karen Linford

AP Music Theory

What should a student interested in this course know that's NOT in the course description?

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I would recommend this course to students that...

"Are passionate about music and either do or don't want to major in music. I personally am not going to major in music, but I've been playing piano for 12 years, and singing for 6 years, and it was nice to learn a little bit about the history of music and the foundations of music (what chords are used when, how single notes can be put together to form a chord, the different rhythms used throughout different centuries, what chords

were "forbidden" (the augmented fourth), how social/political circumstances shaped the music)."

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Do you have any highlights from the course or were there specific skills that you learned?

"When the Yale acapella group came to choir to do a workshop with us, they asked if anyone knew what homophonic texture was, and because of my music theory knowledge, I could answer."

Rating (on a scale of 1 to 5): Academic Rigor - 3; Amount of Homework - 2

Any other comments?

"The class jumps around a bit (especially with ear training, sometimes it's really easy, and sometimes it's really hard), so you might have to do some extra practice on your own if you're not completely comfortable with the information."

Chamber Choir

What should a student interested in this course know that's NOT in the course description?

"If it's your first time in chamber and you're a little shy, I'd recommend taking the class with a friend. You also shouldn't feel the need to be in Chamber after taking a year of women's/mixed choir. There is nothing wrong with singing in a smaller group for another year to get more comfortable if needed!"

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"They should know there are singers in the class that have been in chorus before and are experienced."

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“Those who like to sing, want to get better at singing, and those that have a tough schedule and want to relieve stress!”

I would NOT recommend this course to students that...

“Don't like to sing.”

“Just want to hang with friends and fool around during class, because it is still a serious class and Ms. Linford works very hard to prepare everything.”

Do you have any highlights from the course or were there specific skills that you learned?

“I sang for a while, but I was really quiet. Chamber helped me get louder and develop my sound.”

“I learned how to blend and harmonize.”

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Other comments:

“Although this class is a fun and relaxing class, you are still expected to work hard and go to many of the events. It is a small time commitment, but when there is a performance, you should be on time and have fun. You don't NEED to know how to read music, but it can help if you start look at music and look at the pattern of the notes (when they move up, the pitch goes up, etc...). We also don't go on as many trips as we used to, so the description could be adjusted. The music we learn can be hard if you aren't singing the melody (especially if it's a song you're familiar with and you have to sing completely different notes), but there are people around you singing the same part who can help.”

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Do you have any highlights from the course or were there specific skills that you learned?

“I have learned how to read music, compose a piece, harmonize, sing with a group, hold a part, sing a solo, and develop my voice.”

Other comments:

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Instructor: Jan Chandler

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“The dance concert is something that has given me a lot of confidence. It takes courage to go out on stage, and the dance concert provides a really fun and safe opportunity to do that.”

Instructor: Nina Ollikainen
Studio Art Courses

Art

“Be prepared to work really hard and expand your creativity.”

"I would recommend this course for students who want to improve their skills working with a variety of materials and subject matter."

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"I'm excited that 3-D design and animation will be added to the second semester activities!"

Rating (on a scale of 1 to 5): Academic Rigor - 3; Amount of Homework - 0-1

Advanced Art

"I really like this course because everyone in the class is passionate about creating art and there is a shared spirit of fun."

"I would recommend this course to students who have developed some skills in art but really want to improve further and try new things."

"I would not recommend this course for students who do not want to challenge themselves and who just want to slack off."

"We get to develop our own projects and go as deeply as we want into any subject."

"I've learned so many new ways of expressing my ideas visually."

Rating (on a scale of 1 to 5): Academic Rigor - 3; Amount of Homework - 1-2

Topics in Fine Art

“Topics in Fine Art is great because it teaches you the same skills as you would learn in AP Art, but you can work at your own pace.

“I find it a much more relaxing course as compared to the AP 2-Design course I took the previous year.”

“I would recommend this course to students who have done Advanced Art and wish to concentrate on particular areas in art.”

Rating (on a scale of 1 to 5): Academic Rigor - 3; Amount of Homework - 3

AP Studio Art 2-D Design and 3-D Design

“AP Art takes as much time as any other AP, so expect to spend a lot of time working outside of class.”

“I would not recommend this course for anyone who has a busy academic and sports schedule. It takes a long time to complete art and combined with a heavy schedule, there just aren’t enough hours in the day to do it all.”

“I would recommend this course for students who already have the beginnings of a quality art portfolio and for those who are confident in their skill sets.”

“My work in this course has given me inspiration to incorporate my skills for other subjects and service projects.”

The following comment is specific for 3-D Design:

“Be prepared to do the bulk of your 3-D work outside of class time. Creating three dimensional work takes longer than two dimensional artwork.”

Rating (on a scale of 1 to 5): Academic Rigor - 5; Amount of Homework - 5

Steven Minning

Drama Elective

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"It's not just acting, it's a lot of theater history and a few games, but mostly it's learning how to feel about theater and why it's important."

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Do you have any highlights from the course or were there specific skills that you learned?

"I loved when we performed scenes in the first semester."

"I learned about the history of theater such as Greek and Roman theater."

"It's all so good that I don't really have any highlights"

"This course, through our early unit on improvisation, has made it much easier for me to think on my feet."

