

# Hannah Formella Zdroik

## Lesson Plan 1 – Italian Renaissance

### Unmasking the Past: Exploring Commedia dell’Arte

*SLO: In what ways will the student demonstrate the historical and cultural significance of Commedia dell’Arte and its foundation in modern theatre through analyzation and development of their own Commedia dell’Arte case study?*

VITAL INFORMATION	
<b>Subjects (s) &amp; Topic(s) Covered</b>	Theatre (T) Theatre History
<b>Grade/Level</b>	9-12
<b>Standard(s)</b>	<p>Content Area Standard based on the Wisconsin Academic Standards for Theatre Education:</p> <p>Content Area: Theatre Performance (P) &amp; Theatre Production (D): <u>Standard 4 - CONNECT:</u> Students will relate prior knowledge and personal experience with theatre to cultural and historical contexts.</p> <p><u>TP.Cn.13.h: Cultural Social Context</u> Compare and contrast how two or more cultural and/or historical traditions impact production, text, or script.</p> <p><u>TD.Cn.13.h: Cultural Social Context</u> Compare and contrast how two or more cultural and/or historical traditions impact production, text, or script.</p> <p><u>TD.Cn.16.h: Cross Disciplinary</u> Evaluate the historical and cultural relationships between theatre and other disciplines and how it can impact society.</p> <p><u>TD.Cn.14.h: Research</u> Explain production choices based on the “given circumstances,” environmental and situational conditions of a theatrical work.</p> <p><u>Standard 2 - PERFORM:</u> Students will analyze, develop, and convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.</p> <p><u>TD.P.19.h: Public Presentation</u> Execute a production element in a classroom or public performance.</p>
<b>Objective(s) (I can...)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can identify and analyze the cultural and historical significance of Commedia dell’Arte.</li><li>• I can identify and describe the archetypes of Commedia dell’Arte and their relationship to a comedic storyline.</li><li>• I can identify how Commedia dell’Arte has impacted modern theatre and media.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can collaboratively make choices to develop a Commedia dell'Arte stock character and make connections based on historical value of this character.</li> <li>• I can collaboratively create and present a project on a Commedia dell'Arte character and use tactile elements to unite what I have learned.</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment/Rubrics</b>	Students will be assessed based on their participation, effort, and contribution. See below for the assessment rubric.
<b>Collaboration/Student Centeredness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are able to collaborate by working together on a project in which they make choices together.</li> <li>• Students have the autonomy to choose which character they would like to do a case study on.</li> <li>• Students get to design their own mask or costume for their character and make decisions on design.</li> <li>• Students get to choose the medium in which they present their project.</li> <li>• Students get to develop their own questions to ask the guest speaker.</li> </ul>
<b>Time Allotment</b>	<p>3 Class Periods – 60 minutes each</p> <p><u>Class 1:</u> Introduction, Direct Instruction, Guided Practice, Start of Collaborative Independent Practice</p> <p><u>Class 2:</u> Finish up Collaborative Independent Practice (Presentation preparation and mask creation) and Presentations</p> <p><u>Optional Class 3: Using Commedia dell'Arte in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:</u> Guest Speaker – Ben Formella, actor who attended Academia dell'arte (Either virtually or in person).</p> <p><i>Note: The instructor will need to contact the guest speaker ahead of time to book a date for the third class. The third class is optional but may enhance the learning objectives.</i></p>
<b>Materials</b>	<p><u>Teacher Materials:</u> Smartboard/Projector, whiteboard, dry erase markers, access to the internet, laptop, access to PowerPoint slides (attached file), posterboard, clay or <a href="#">Crayola Molding Magic</a> or <a href="#">Blank Face Masks</a>, Scissors, Markers, paint, art accessories (feathers, fur, etc.) as needed, <i>Improvisation for the Theater</i> (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) book by Viola Spolin, <a href="#">The Comic Mask in the Commedia dell'Arte: Actor Training, Improvisation, and the Poetics of Survival</a> book by Antonio Fava</p> <p><u>Student Materials:</u> Laptops, access to the internet, Microsoft PowerPoint or Google Slides (assumed to be available via Google Classroom), Pinterest access (optional), access to instructor PowerPoint slides, pen/pencils, journals, art supplies if they have any</p> <p><u>Space:</u>  <u>Class 1 &amp; 2:</u> Regular classroom setting and ability to work in partners/groups, and a presentation/playing space.  <u>Class 3:</u> Regular classroom space if guest speaker is virtual. If in person, would need a playing space like a classroom with clearing or an auditorium.</p>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Commedia dell'Arte Characteristics</a></li> <li>• Wisconsin Academic Standards for Theatre Education</li> <li>• <a href="#">Theatrefolk</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">National Theatre</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Leon Theatre</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">“Commedia dell’Arte: A Historical Overview”</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">“The World of Commedia dell’Arte”</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Italian Renaissance Music</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Commedia dell’arte - Britannica</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Brown University</a></li> </ul>
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**IMPLEMENTATION**

<b>Prior Knowledge</b>	Italian Renaissance – An overview
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<b>Focus of Lesson</b>	<p>The focus of the lesson is to do a deep dive into the world of Commedia dell’Arte. The students will explore the various characters associated with commedia, their physical character traits, their masks, and how Commedia dell’Arte has influenced modern theatre practices, and how Commedia dell’Arte.</p> <p><i>Note: This lesson plan can be used as a subunit of the Italian Renaissance. Students would have an overall view of what the Italian Renaissance entails before presenting this unit.</i></p>
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<b>Discussions &amp; Topics to Explore (Input)</b>	<u>Italian Renaissance</u>	“Rebirth.” Period of time between the 14 <sup>th</sup> –17 <sup>th</sup> Century. Opened ideas for art, text, design, and theatre.
	<u>Commedia dell’arte</u>	“Comedy of art.” Improvised, comedic scenarios present during the Italian Renaissance.
	<u>Improvisation</u>	The art of acting without anything planned beforehand.
	<u>Masks</u>	Commonly worn by Commedia dell’arte characters and made of leather.
	<u>Stock Characters</u>	Characters that were commonly known to appear in a Commedia dell’arte scenario. Usually separated into three categories: Master, Lovers, Slaves. There are several variations of each category that appear that have their own characteristics and traits.
	<u>Physicalization</u>	Expression or gestures using the body; to give shape to in physical terms.

<b>Cultural References &amp; Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academia dell’arte</li> <li>• Improvisation</li> <li>• Viola Spolin (gibberish game)</li> <li>• Modern examples</li> </ul>
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<b>Introduction/Anticipatory Set</b>	<p><u>Making Connections:</u> Watch <a href="#">“Commedia dell’Arte: A Historical Overview”</a></p> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your first impressions of Commedia dell’Arte?</li> <li>• How were the stories structured?</li> <li>• What is the purpose of Commedia dell’Arte? How is it the “key for modern texts”?</li> </ul>
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<b>Procedures</b>	<p><u>Direction Instruction (I Do):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The instructor will go over the vocabulary/input.</li> <li>• The instructor will introduce Commedia dell’Arte, its history, and the main character types of commedia. The instructor will talk about the use of masks. (See PowerPoint slides for information). However, the instructor will not go into depth with each character, as that is the purpose of the guided practice and the collaborative independent practice.</li> </ul>
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Guided Practice (We Do):

Watch [“The World of Commedia dell’Arte”](#)

Instructions before watching: As you watch the video, write down in your journals notes about what you are learning and big takeaways from the world of Commedia dell’Arte. Fill in the character map on the video worksheet (attached below) the best you can.

Guided Prompts:

- What are the character types you can identify?
- What are some physical characteristics?
- What is the value of the mask?

Activity: After the video, the instructor will prompt the students to get on their feet and in the space.

Play: [Italian Renaissance Music](#)

The instructor will direct the students by calling out a character archetype. The students will then need to act in the space like that character. The instructor is welcome to call out characters or a class of characters such as the ones listed below:

- Master- (Pantalone, Il Dottore)
- Lovers
- Zanni-(Arlecchino, Columbina, Pulcino, Brighella)

The instructor will lead the class in a class wide discussion: “Together, let’s verbally discuss your observations from the video and the activity.” The instructor or designated class volunteer will write down on the Smartboard/whiteboard the big ideas from the students.

Guided Prompts:

- What was easy about acting these characters out? What was difficult?
- Without the use of a mask, how were you able to portray your character type?
- How does the importance of the character contribute to a storyline?
- How can an actor utilize Commedia dell’Arte in modern theatre?

Collaborative Independent Practice (You Do Together):

Case Study Project:

Student pairs will choose a Commedia dell’Arte character to do an in-depth “case study.” The required elements included in the case study are listed below. Student pairs can pick a visual medium as to how they will collect their research. Students may use their laptops internet to do their research.

*Note: The instructor may assign pairs or students may pick their own partner, based on the instructor’s discretion.*

Examples include:

- PowerPoint Presentation/Prezi, etc.
- Canva
- Posterboard
- Pinterest Board

	<p><u>Case Study required included elements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Role/Description:</u> What role/hierarchy is your character?</li> <li>• <u>Name:</u> Have you given your character a name?</li> <li>• <u>Storyline:</u> What dynamic do they bring to the story?</li> <li>• <u>Physical Characteristics/Movement:</u> What does your character look like? What kind of clothing do they wear? How do they act?</li> <li>• <u>Mask:</u> What are the characteristics of the mask? How does it add to the character's traits? If they don't wear a mask, how can this character's traits be portrayed?</li> <li>• <u>Interaction:</u> What is the relationship between your character and others?</li> <li>• <u>Motivation:</u> What is driving them?</li> <li>• <u>Modern Examples of Characters:</u> What modern day characters may resemble these character archetypes?</li> <li>• <u>Make a mask from modeling clay that represents your character OR Design a costume for your character. You may use Canva or draw one out. Focus on color and design.</u></li> </ul> <p><u>Class 2:</u> Finish working on presentations and masks. Group presentations for the class via "Gallery Walk." Half the class will stand by their work and present multiple times per group while others stop by to see and learn what the groups created. For those not presenting, they will required to fill out the "Modified Lehrman Look" Worksheet (attached below). This worksheet is meant to assess the learning of students as they learn details from each other's case studies. These worksheets will serve as the closing section for Class #2. After 20-30 minutes, the groups switch and those who were walking around learning will then stand by their work and present. The instructor should stop by each project as well.</p> <p><u>Class 3: Guest Speaker/Guest Artist: Using Commedia dell'Arte in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</u> The student homework will be to research Academia dell'arte online, and develop at least 3 questions to ask the Guest Artist, Ben Formella.</p>
<p><b>Check for Understanding</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After direct instruction and guided practice, the instructor may ask verbally if students have questions.</li> <li>• After each class, the instructor may encourage students to write down on a slip of paper any questions they may have or need to have clarified, and address them at the start of the next class period if applicable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Closure</b></p>	<p><u>After Class 2: Reflection – Modified Lehrman Look Review (Worksheets)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Verbal Discussion for the Class. In the interest of time, not all sections will be shared, but students can choose what they would like to share about what they've learned from their classmates' case studies.</li> </ol> <p><b>Statement(s) of Meaning:</b> <i>Student states what was interesting, exciting, and what stood out to them.</i></p> <p><b>Respectful Questions:</b> <i>What questions do you have for the group that presented that they may not have answered?</i></p>

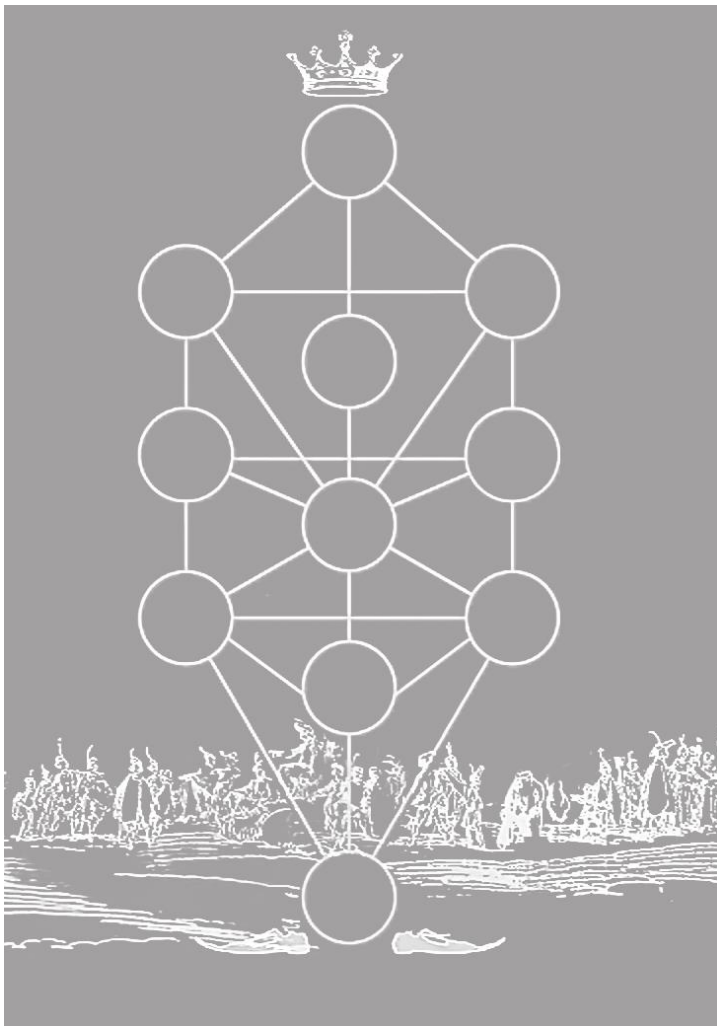
	<p><b>Neutral Questions:</b> <i>Student groups ask neutral questions about the work – there is no opinion. Such as: “Tell me more about...” “What guided your choices about...”</i></p> <p><b>Opinion Time:</b> <i>With permission from the presenting groups, groups</i></p> <p>Those who do not wish to verbally share can write their thoughts on the worksheet. All students will be required to submit one worksheet.</p> <p><u>After Class 3: Think-Pair-Share:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think are the key elements that make Commedia dell’Arte timeless and relevant today?</li> <li>• What techniques in Commedia dell’Arte can you incorporate into your future (acting, jobs, adventures)?</li> <li>• What insights did you gain about improvisation and Commedia dell’Arte?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Differentiation: Remediation &amp; Enrichment Activity</b></p>	<p><u>Remediation:</u> Closed Captions on videos will be enabled for students who are DHH.</p> <p>The instructor may help groups that are in need of assistance by prompting them with questions that may further their logic.</p> <p><u>Enrichment Activity:</u> If the guest speaker can attend in person, he will implement physical activities that he learned from Academia dell’arte and ask the students for participation in these activities.</p> <p><u>Alternative (if no guest speaker):</u> Students will group together, and each will choose a differing character. They will come up with a short skit (1-2 minutes) based on their character traits and interact with each other. This activity is informal. Students can decide whether they want to use spoken English or gibberish. For assistance on this, the instructor may want to reference pg. 112 of Viola Spolin’s “Improvisation for the Theater (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)” on Gibberish or Physicalization (pg. 16). Students are encouraged to use the masks they create!</p>
<p><b>Homework Assignment(s)</b></p>	<p>The homework assignment will be due before Class #3. The students will be asked to do quick research on Academia Dell’arte in Italy. They will need to write 3 questions they would like to ask the Guest Speaker.</p> <p>If the instructor does not invite a guest speaker, the homework will be to do a Character Profile on a modern example of a Commedia dell’Arte character, which would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of Character</li> <li>• What Commedia Character do they represent?</li> <li>• What time period was the character written in?</li> <li>• What are their characteristics and physical movements?</li> <li>• What are their motivations?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Students’ Questions</b></p>	<p>Clarification Questions from students:</p> <p>Questions during Discussion:</p>

<b>Resources/Ideas from Students</b>	
<b>Improvements/To Note for Next Year (or the next time the lesson is done)</b>	

Video Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

As you watch the video, make notes of what you learn. Fill in the graph as best as possible as you watch the video to see how the characters of Commedia dell'Arte are arranged.



## Modified Lehrman Look Worksheet for Case Studies

*Each student group should fill out one Lehrman sheet for each group that presents. Write at least one statement or question per section. You will hand these in at the end of class.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Presenting: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Case Study: \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement(s) of Meaning:** *Student states what was interesting, exciting, and what stood out to them.*

**Respectful Questions:** *What questions do you have for the group that presented that they may not have answered?*

**Neutral Questions:** *Student groups ask neutral questions about the work – there is no opinion. Such as: “Tell me more about...” “What guided your choices about...”*

**Opinion Time:** *With permission from the presenting groups, groups*



## Assessment/Rubric:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Journal & Verbal Discussions /20 Points**

The student actively participated in discussion through writing and verbal group discussions. The student contributed ideas towards the prompted discussion questions and collaborative aspects Commedia dell'Arte.

### **Participation/Collaboration /30 Points**

The student participated in the discussion, activities, and decision-making process for Commedia dell'Arte case study. The student, with a partner, created a case study on a specific stock character and collaboratively answered the required questions and elements. The student displayed teamwork and a positive attitude towards the project.

### **Creation/Visual Aid /40 Points**

Each student contributed ideas towards the case study. The partners created and developed an in-depth research project based on a character of their choice and successfully used a medium in which they could both thrive in presenting to the class.

### **Presentation /50 Points**

The student, with a partner, performed their case study project to the class via a Gallery Walk. The students remained enthusiastic about their topic of choice. The presentation was provided with a corresponding visual aid of choice. The presentation was successfully given. Equally, the student pair was able to listen to other groups when it was their turn to listen to other groups present.

### **Reflection /20 Points**

The student participated in a thoughtful Modified Lehrman Look and made engaging connections between Commedia dell'Arte art form.

### **Guest Speaker / 40 Points**

The student prepared 3 questions for the guest speaker and participated in the guest speaker's activities and discussion.

### **Total: /200 Points**