MBA Theater Classes:

The Seventh Grade Enrichment Course involves theater games, storytelling, learning theatrical conventions and devices, gaining greater confidence in front of a group, large group problem solving, initial collaboration (taking input from all and deciding how to create a unified scene incorporating everyone’s ideas), movement, and memorizing and presenting a polished solo Shakespearean performance.

The Eighth Grade Enrichment Course offers more complex theater games and narrative strategies, small group collaborative work on scene writing and development (how does one convey character through dialog and conflict), small group collaborative work on acting out scenes by Shakespeare and other classic writers. Generally, we allow students greater independence in their small groups as long as differences are being resolved positively and creatively. The emphasis is on the theatrical process with initial discussions of the product and criteria for criticism.

Theater Arts familiarizes students with drama from Ancient Greece to the present. Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to formulate, articulate, and defend their interpretation of plays using the vocabulary of dramatic criticism and terminology to enrich their interpretive abilities. Beginning with Aristotle’s elements of tragedy, students learn how to analyze plot, character, language, theme, and appeals to the senses, and how they have developed in the past 2,500 years. Likewise, they will examine the role of the playwright in society and how that role has changed over time. In addition, in class, students will learn how to prepare and execute a polished and interesting performance of a set speech, soliloquy, and scene from a play. Because theater is a live art form, students will also be asked to experience it firsthand as audience members and (whenever possible) as technical or performing artists. Here, students learn different styles of performance and their interpretive skills strengthen. Emphasis is placed both on the process and standards of excellent for the final product. In the final quarter, in teams, students help teach a modern play by researching and presenting biographical material, reviews, and scholarly criticism in class.

Studio Theater: Research and Production provides advanced research, study and hands-on experience with acting, directing, and technical theater. Theater Arts (or substantive theatrical experience) is required to take this course. The first quarter focuses on acting theory and practice. Students examine different acting styles and
schools of acting. They are graded on several polished, memorized performances. If students need to audition for college, these monologues help prepare them for that process. The second quarter examines the director’s role, including the skills and abilities needed as well as the process of play production. Students read and research short plays, looking at biographical information, reviews, and scholarly criticism. Students choose one play from which they direct two scenes. The third quarter focuses on artistic and technical components, including lighting, sound, scenic design, costume design, and property management. Here, students learn basics of design and operation of equipment. Guest designers are featured lecturers. The fourth quarter is the culmination of the course where all the previous study and research comes together to produce an evening of short one-act plays. Throughout the year, students are required to see professional theater and discuss it in terms of current issues in class. While process is still vitally important, students are expected to articulate their criteria and priorities for judging the success or failure of a dramatic production.