

CIRCUS ARTS

Or How I Learned to Do the Thing I Always Wanted to Do

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Everyone has had circus dreams, and in this class you will make one of those dreams come to life. Circus, for thousands of years, has reinvented what was imaginable, literally creating dreams, manifesting human aspirations for the more-than-human. Though dreams are the product, circus begins and ends with the disciplined body. So we will dream big and exercise the will, training our bodies to achieve that which seemed impossible.

This three-week circus arts afternoon block is too short to cover all circus arts, so, given our time constraints, we will focus. By the end of class, each student will be performing a circus art of their choice in an original act for an audience. That's the goal.

Every class starts with moving, playing, warming up, and building up our ensemble. Every class we will work on universal circus basics: juggling and acrobatics. (Even clowns need to know these.) In the first week I hope to introduce the circus skills that I can do and teach: juggling, partner acrobatics, balance (stilt-walking, rolling globe, unicycle, rolla-bolla), and clowning. By the second week, students will choose an art and work mainly on that. The goal of the second week is to create an original act for the third week of the class. In the third week, we will bring the acts together to form a show that we will perform locally, at night, and in LaCrosse (during the school day).



At the end of class the students-turned-performers will write a 150-word reflection on their own efforts.

Evaluation and Expectations

In this class there is the basic *ring of expectations* and then there is the *big top of possibility*.

Expectations of students:

- * To participate fully in all-group activities.
- * To try everything in good faith.
- * To choose one art, learn its skills, and create an act.

Beyond this, there are opportunities for “Honors Level” circus work:

- 1) Helping to design and write the show as a whole.
- 2) Create costumes and props.
- 3) Help create music for the acts.
- 4) Assist in the acts of others.
- 5) Do something mind-blowing.

What Students Can Expect from Me

I will teach all the skills that I know how to teach and try to find support for those who want to venture outside of my skill-base. I will bring in my own equipment for students to use. I will offer support and critique of acts and provide an over-all directorial eye for the show. I will stress safe exploration of new, potentially-scary circus endeavors.