

## **Living/Learning Center Programs**

The University of Vermont

<http://www.uvm.edu/lcenter/>

### **Magic: The Art of Illusion**

#### **Overview of the Program:**

Magic is the art of conjuring tricks and performing illusions of the seemingly impossible to entertain, motivate, and stimulate the imagination of an audience. The Magic program intends to teach participants the theories behind a multitude of magic forms. Apart from studying the theories, participants will have a firm knowledge of the history and foundations behind each form and the magicians who have evolved this art with their creativity, and practice behind each of their performances.

#### **Learning Objective 1**

Each member will assist in teaching and developing skills in different disciplines of magic with the help and guidance of the program directors, guest speakers, and/or instructional videos. This, in turn, will promote imagination in the creation of new tricks. Our advisor will probably very active in this objective in teaching us new tricks and presentation styles. As directors, this objective is the most exciting and second to the most informative objective in this proposal.

#### **Action Steps**

- One cannot practice the fundamentals enough. We will always review basic sleights and principals of magic on a consistent basis. A newcomer will have no trouble joining our program even late in a semester.
- Not one member will be denied the ability to perform a trick. There are many different ways to perform one trick. Small hands and/or stubby fingers and the like will not be obstacles in becoming an amateur magician.
- Members will meet weekly to watch a magic performance as either footage on the projector or as a live performance from members of the program. The performance may involve production, vanishing, transformation, restoration, teleportation, escapology, levitation, penetration, or prediction magic. A discussion of theories, observations and opinions will follow each performance. (critique) (we will use video footage already available among the directors and the members of the program)
- Members will learn basic and advanced understanding of human psychology and the physics behind some fundamental illusion and tricks during weekly meetings.
- Members will create at least one trick, on their own time, from the knowledge gained in discussions, which may be presented to the program during any of the weekly performances. (due to the fact that most tricks are based on resourcefulness, members are expected to provided their own supplies)
- The members of the suite will share subscriptions to innovative magic magazines like Genie and Magic. This reading option will promote in depth learning and interest in other magic forms.

## **Learning Objective 2**

Each member will learn about the history and practice of Magic with the intent of being well informed on the responsibility and purpose of magic as a form of visual and mental entertainment. To be specific, members will learn about the foundations and founders behind each of different forms of magic. They will also learn the passed down tradition of secrecy (the magician's oath) and the modern interpretations of old practices.

### **Action Steps**

- Members will research a form of magic or a magician of their choice. The research should include their topic's history and importance. They will then present what they learned to the program by the end of the semester or whenever they are prepared to do so. (members will read materials from the Bailey/Howe Library and from other sources on an individual basis) (one weekly meeting may become a research day if members have trouble doing the research on their own)
- With every performance member must uphold the tradition of magic by taking the magician's oath so that the feel of illusion among spectators is never lost.

#### The Oath

*"As a magician I promise never to reveal the secret of any illusion to laymen, unless that one swears to uphold the Magician's Oath in turn. I promise never to perform any illusion for any layman without first practicing the effect until I can perform it well enough to maintain the illusion of magic."*

- Members will watch monthly movies/documentaries involving both past (Mullahs to Harry Blackman) to modern (Doug Henning to spycraft) interpretations of magic (available through BBC in YouTube form).

## **Learning Objective 3**

Each member will gain an understanding of the importance of practice and presentation within the performance art of magic. This is the objective where we, as directors, learn a lot. Helping each other practice magic and presentation will teach volumes for the experienced and novice alike. Our advisor will likely be a key player in this objective. Practice makes perfect.

### **Action Steps**

- The members will be given the opportunity to play as both magician and /or an audience volunteer in the weekly meetings, so they may better understand through experience the proper presentation of a magician. Skills such as composure, timing, misdirection, and voice projection as well as magician's patter will be stressed. Peer positive feedback following individual practice routines by members will better prepare them for large scaled performances in front of non-members.
- Members will be encouraged to post videos of their magic performances to magic community websites (MagicCafe, MagicVideoDepot) for critique and advice from magicians around the

world. (technologies required for video capture will be provide by the members/program directors)

### **Community Service**

We will provide a fun and safe form of entertainment for the UVM community that would promote community building through audience participation. Within the same realm of having shows for the UVM community (staff, faculty, and peers) we would also like to hold public performances to promote imagination in young minds. For example, we will present a show for children at the local L/L daycare, have performances in the Fireplace Lounge and even look into obtaining a permit to perform street magic in downtown Burlington!

We also plan on holding a fundraiser performance accompanied with a raffle (playing cards used in place of tickets). Raffle winners get to participate with the magic performance and receive prizes for their participation in the show. The money earned from the fundraiser will go to a charity of the program members choosing.

It is possible that as a final test of mastery of magic for some members, that they will be invited to perform side by side with our adviser, Christopher McBride at his local gig at the Lincoln Inn in Essex Junction!

### **Living & Learning Community Interaction**

Performing will be our staple activity in our program, yet there is a lot to be learned from watching professionals perform. We will host screenings of various performances by professional magicians that will be made available to the L/L Community in the Fireplace Lounge. In addition there are some great movies and documentaries on magic that we could share with the larger community at L/L and UVM. All showings will be open and advertised to non-program members to promote community interest among the Burlington and UVM communities. It is possible that some of the documentaries could be supplemented with live demonstrations could become a community service act as well.

We will also strive to bring together the L/L community by asking various other L/L programs to participate/help us. Some examples of L/L community integration with magic could be asking the Anime As an Art Form program to find some anime movies with a theme of magic, requesting the Fiber Arts program to help us make props and gimmicks, and asking the Photography program to help us evaluate our form in performing magic by taking high speed pictures and portraits or group photos for our advertisements. In fact, James, a senior member of the Anime program as already suggested an anime movie for our program! Many magic shows have a performance beat/music and the Music Appreciation program could provide that. Global Village could be a contributor to our program as there are many regional styles and origins of magic. For example, we could have a week where the Magic program and a specific house in the Global Village could collaborate on putting on a show with magic that is native to their region of interest.