

OHS English teacher and drama coach Pat Price (right) gives students insight into Shakespeare's sonnets in the new Acting Shakespeare elective class at the high school. Students from left to right are Cheryl Lindsly, Adam Bayler (seated), Benjy Partin, and Olivia Presti. Other new electives include Street Law and Environmental Science.

## Street law, environment, the bard

### New course offerings keep high school kids interested, learning

Oberlin High School students are participating in three new elective classes offering real world experience in literature and drama, law, and the environment.

Superintendent Geoff Andrews said when he met last year with new high school principal William Baylis, the two agreed the high school needed a wider variety of electives to keep students engaged. He said although they discussed several options, the three new classes came about quite fortuitously.

"Each class came about as a result of an

opportunity," Andrews said. "The Shakespeare class came out of the OCEAN (Oberlin College Educational Alliance Network) program. The environmental program seemed especially appropriate for the Oberlin community. Even the street law class. Angela Wu had a class at the college last year where she taught improvisational acting techniques, and those students are going to act out different scenarios for the street law class."

English teacher and drama coach Pat Price is teaching Acting Shakespeare. She

said Oberlin College faculty members Phyllis Gorfain and Bob Pierce have helped her, and are helping her students, think of Shakespeare as more than just dusty literature.

"Shakespeare's plays on the page are just a script," Price said. "In this class, we use theatrical techniques to bring the plays to life."

She said she took the OCEAN class on Shakespeare, taught by Gorfain, during the

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summer. She said her husband's retirement as the band director at Vermilion High School afforded her the opportunity.

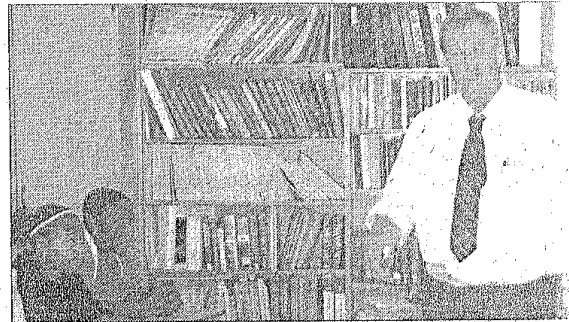
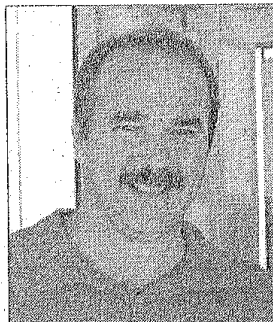
"I've always wanted to take an OCEAN class, but they were always at the beginning of the summer when Joe and I would go away on vacation," she said. "Because Joe retired this year, we decided we could get away some other time, so I took the class."

In the class she learned about critical analysis of Shakespeare's work. The analysis helps the director and actors interpret the lines for performance.

The students in Price's class will learn that same principle and see how it plays out in actual performances. The class will see "Measure for Measure" performed at the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival and at Oberlin College and compare the treatment by each director.

The students will earn high school credit as well as Oberlin College credit, if they earn at least a B in the class.

Veteran social studies teacher Bill Roniger is teaching the new street law class. He said the one-semester course is not a study of



Ron Bier (left) teaches a course on environmental science, while Bill Roniger (right) teaches students about "street law." (Photos by Eleanor Helper)

government on the students' level.

"Street law is a course that teaches how government and laws work in everyday life," Roniger said. "It's for students who want more hands-on experience than your typical civics course."

He said Wu, a 1997 OHS graduate and an attorney for Lorain County Legal Aid, helped develop the curriculum, which will study the courts and local government. The college students she trained to act will assist by depicting various court and local government functions, such as trials or city council passing an ordinance.

Roniger said he hopes to have students attend an actual court session and city council meeting, but such arrangements have yet to be worked out.

Seventy students have signed up for the course. Roniger is teaching two sections this semester and will teach two more in the second half of the school year.

Science teacher Ron Bier said the environmental science course serves as an option to chemistry for juniors and seniors, and 29 students have taken that option. He said he jumped at the chance to teach it when it was offered.

"I expressed an interest," Bier said. "I'm really interested in the environment and ecology. I guess you could call me a 'tree hugger.'"

He said putting the course together in this first year of teaching it has been a challenge. But he said the textbook is well-organized into topics of interest.

"The one I'm intrigued with is population dynamics," Bier said. "But it's not a gloom and doom scenario. There's a lot about what we can do."

Students will actually get to do some of what can be done with a community action service require-