

University of Roehampton International Summer School

Department of Drama, Theatre and Performance

Module Title: Acting Workshop

Module Code: DRA020N251AH

Module Rationale

This module provides students an opportunity to engage with vocabularies and techniques of acting ranging from the representational to the abstract. The module develops a performer's understanding of being on stage through methods such as storytelling, spatial composition, physicality, character development and textual analysis. Students will learn compositional strategies for approaching and rehearsing these methods and will develop their understanding of acting practices through exploratory workshops and a small-group performance essay. It enables students to develop problem-solving, decision-making, organisation, and imaginative argumentation skills.

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will have:

- a developed understanding of a wide range of techniques and vocabularies of acting and their functions for communication;
- an ability to apply modes of physical and vocal expression effectively in the construction of meaning in performance;
- an awareness of circumstances (political, personal, historical, social, cultural, ideological, imagined) that inform and stimulate acting practice;
- an ability to effectively use a range of stimuli (objects, everyday life, text, biography, sensory, memory, physical, images, environment) as part of an acting process;
- an ability to collaborate and apply decision-making skills in small groups.

Syllabus

A range of issues will be covered in this module, such as:

- vocabularies of performance ranging from the traditional (given circumstances, subtext, objective, intention, obstacle, and action using theorists such as Hagen and Stanislavsky) to the more abstract compositions of time (tempo, duration, kinesthetic response, and repetition) and space (shape, gesture, architecture, spatial relationship, topography, using the work of Anne Bogart);

- rehearsal methodologies such as improvisation, observation, rehearsal, tasks, tactical engagement with plots/scenarios, situations, conflicts emerging from representing, resistance, and collaboration;
- physical applications of the body in performance: applying concepts of action and impulse (engaging with theorists such as Grotowski, LeCoq, late Stanislavski, and others);
- developing character (through physicality, gesture, emotion);
- engaging with texts through research, analysis, audience (engaging with the work of Boal)

These issues will be addressed through select readings and applications of the theories and practices of Anne Bogart, Constantine Stanislavski, Jerzy Grotowski, Uta Hagen, Jacques Le Coq, Augusto Boal, and others.

Indicative weekly breakdown:

Week one:

Day 1 Introduction

Day 2 Inner life and physical action

Day 3 The paradox of acting

Day 4 Verbal action: communicating with words and subtext

Week two:

Day 5 Orchestrating emotions

Day 6 Theatre trip and discussion

Day 7-8 Workshops; presentation of mini papers on readings; individual research and essay preparation

Week three:

Day 9 Workshops; presentation of mini papers on readings; individual research and essay preparation

Day 10 Theatre Trip and discussion

Day 11-12 Group discussion; rehearsal and presentation of practical essays