

**University of Roehampton International Summer School****Department of Drama, Theatre and Performance****Module Title: Introduction to the London Stage****Module Code: DRA020C199H****Module Tutor: Glenn Odom****Course Rationale**

London is one of Europe's most exciting theatrical cities with a range of productions on offer at any given time. are introduced to the wide diversity of theatre in London from the major subsidised companies, through the commercial West End to smaller fringe venues and productions. **Weekly visits to new or recent events in the capital** are introduced with a critical context and are discussed the following week within seminar groups. As part of the seminars, students will explore a range of strategies for analysing dramatic texts in production and reading live performance.

Students will be introduced to a range of dramatic forms, conventions and aesthetics, which are employed on current London stages. Students will be encouraged to identify trends in productions and analyse the social and cultural contexts through which they are formed and constructed. Students will explore the relationship between contemporary theatre practices and specific periods of theatre history, i.e. the influence of earlier dramatic forms, conventions, contemporary stagings of classics, and contemporary responses and reworkings of the canonical texts/productions.

The module will focus on plays which are currently running in repertory in the London theatre, the actual content varies from one term to another. Students will have an opportunity to visit the latest productions of major subsidised companies such as the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and the Globe Theatre, new-writing theatres such as the Royal Court, through to smaller 'fringe' theatres and productions at alternative venues.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students who successfully complete this module will have acquired:

- Knowledge and understanding of a range of dramatic, theatrical and performance practices and developments from a variety of national and international, historical and contemporary contexts
- Knowledge and understanding of the processes through which theatrical performance has been constructed, circulated and received throughout a variety of historical and cultural contexts
- Knowledge and understanding of the relationship between dramatic texts, theatrical institutions and performance conventions from a variety of genres and within and across different cultural and historical contexts;
- Skills in analysing, interpreting and evaluating dramatic and theatrical texts from a range of critical perspectives

- Skills in the identification of performance possibilities within dramatic texts
- a grounding in a variety of conceptual and theoretical approaches to the consideration of drama and theatre as a cultural and social activity
- a grounding in key developments in theatre history, and the ability to interrogate the 'centrality' of particular elements within this tradition
- competence in study, research, and writing skills appropriate to degree level drama and theatre studies
- skills in the organisation of materials and arguments in assessed work.

Students will gain:

- An understanding of theatre and drama as cultural activity, and examine theatre as a social institution;
- developed skills in reading dramatic texts, with particular attention to conditions of performance.
- Skills in critical analysis and writing about drama, theatre and performance
- A considered exploration of the nature of performance, and the role of dramatic representations in the construction of social identities and ideologies
- An introduction to a range of key dramatic texts, and to practices of critical reading that are informed by an awareness of specific dramatic conventions
- An introduction to a range of approaches to the understanding of theatre and drama, derived from a variety of disciplines, such as aesthetics, anthropology, cultural studies, historiography, semiotics, politics, psychology

A range of issues and materials will be studied on this course, for example:

- key British playwrights, practitioners and companies, such as: Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard, Caryl Churchill, Conor McPherson, Stephen Daldry, Sam Mendes, Royal Shakespeare Company, National Theatre, Royal Court, Complicite,
- historical development of British performance
- staging British identities – different notions of Britishness, how British identities are constructed and represented on the London stage, analysing British 'identity' through notions of class, gender, ethnicity, region and culture.

- different forms and conventions; tribunal theatre, verbatim theatre, site specific theatre.
- theatrical responses to significant national and international events and issues - 9/11, the war on terror, terrorism, New Labour,
- different kinds of theatrical institutions that operate within the capital; e.g. subsidised and non-subsidised theatre, the fringe, West End, regional repertory companies, festivals.
- the West End Musical: the 'book' musical, the 'concept' musical the mega musical, the 'jukebox' musical, the rock musical, the musical as product and commodity.
- the Globe Theatre: the Shakespeare experience and contemporary theatrical revivals of Shakespeare's plays

### **Teaching and learning methods**

Lectures	10%
Seminars	50%
Workshops/group research	20%
Tutorials/ Supervised independent research	20%
Assessment	
Coursework Portfolio	100%