Modern Drama in Performance

**Class code**  
ENGL-UA 9133-001/DRLIT-UA9133-001

**Instructor Details**  
Professor Nesta Jones  
Office: Room 203; Office Hours: 5.00 pm – 6.00 pm

**Class Details**  
Fall 2013  
Thursday 2.00 – 5.00pm  
Location: Room G07

**Prerequisites**  
The course is open to all students

**Class Description**  
The course examines the main features of modern drama from the late nineteenth century to the present day. Each week there is a theatre visit to see plays from the period in a number of different venues across the city: for example, the National Theatre, the Royal Court, selected West End houses, non-theatre spaces converted for performance, and site specific locations. The productions are chosen to illustrate the immense variety of work produced in theatre during the twentieth century and current today. They also provide excellent examples of contemporary techniques in theatre making, ranging from interpretations of traditional dramas and comedies, new writing, physical theatre, musicals, cross media pieces, and other alternative forms. Significant aspects of modern drama are also considered in class through examples on DVDs, examination of critical reviews, and analysis of additional texts where appropriate.

The theatre visits are normally scheduled for Wednesday evenings. The class takes the form of a seminar involving discussions led by the students, and talks by the tutor supported by audio/visual material with contextual hand-outs. The appraisal of each performance considers the content and form of the play; production aesthetic, tone and style; the playing space and actor/audience relationship; type of venue and audience constituency. There are two scheduled individual tutorials focusing on academic progress and assignments.

**Desired Outcomes**  
The first few sessions establish a context within which to discuss plays and develop a critical vocabulary for articulating a considered response to their performance. The student is encouraged to engage both intellectually and imaginatively with a variety of material by major drama
tists of the period, contemporary playwrights and theatre makers. By the end of the course a student should have an appreciation of the following:

a) the function of theatre in society, the significance of the communal event, and the act of transformation.

b) the ways in which theatre makers tell stories, explore ideas and situations, and stimulate the imagination.

c) the nature of acting, scenographic arts, theatre language, spatial aesthetics, and the collaborative
the importance of new writing, formal experimentation and research, in developing the theatre in the future.

Assessment Components

25%: Contribution to class discussion arising from the theatre visits. A number of students are selected each week to lead certain aspects of the appraisal.

25%: Essay not exceeding 1,200 words related to one play seen in the first five weeks of the course.

50%: Project essay not exceeding 3,000 words on an area chosen by the student under tutorial guidance, relating to at least three plays and not more than five plays studied on the course.

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: Demonstrates a clear, secure grasp of the subject and content. In the case of written work, guides the reader through well-reasoned and structured argument and shows evidence of research and critical use of source material. Contributes articulate observations in discussion, treats the ideas of others with respect, and embraces new experiences and points of view.

Grade B: Demonstrates a grasp of the subject and content. In the case of written work, shows an ability to structure an argument with evidence of research and critical use of source material. Contributes frequently to discussion and responds positively to the peer group.

Grade C: Demonstrates a grasp of the subject and content, but variably so. In the case of written work constructs a coherent structure and relevant, if limited argument, with some evidence of research and critical use of source material. Contributes infrequently to discussion but shows evidence of learning from the experience.

Grade D: Demonstrates an uneven grasp of subject and content. Some sense of structure and argument in the case of written work, but research is limited with an over reliance on secondary source material. Contributes only to discussion when required. Shows little evidence of learning experientially.

Grade F: Demonstrates a very limited grasp of subject and content. Weak or incoherent structure in the case of written work, with no evidence of research or critical use of source material. Contributes only to discussion when required and then without due thought or preparation. Shows no evidence of having learnt from the experience of the course.

Grade conversion

NYU in London uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

A=94-100
A-=90-93
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
Grading Policy

NYU in London aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.

Attendance Policy

NYUL has a strict policy about course attendance. No unexcused absences are permitted. While students should contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work, you should NOT approach them for excused absences.

Excused absences will usually only be considered for serious, unavoidable reasons such as personal ill-health or illness in the immediate family. Trivial or non-essential reasons for absence will not be considered.

Excused absences can only be considered if they are reported in accordance with guidelines which follow, and can only be obtained from the appropriate member of NYUL's staff.

Please note that you will need to ensure that no make-up classes – or required excursions - have been organised before making any travel plans for the semester. See also section 11.1 - Make up days.

Absence reporting for an absence due to illness

On the first day of absence due to illness you should report the details of your symptoms by e-mailing absences@nyu.ac.uk including details of: class(es) missed; professor; class time; and whether any work was due including exams. Or call free (from landline) 0800 316 0469 (option 2) to report your absences on the phone.

Generally a doctor’s note will be required to ensure you have sought treatment for the illness. Contact the Gower Street Health Centre on 0207 636 7628 to make an appointment, or use HTH general practitioners if you cannot get an appointment expediently at Gower Street.

At the end of your period of absence, you will need to complete an absence form online at
http://bit.ly/NuCl5K. You will need to log in to NYU Home to access the form.
Finally you must arrange an appointment to speak to Nigel Freeman or Donna Drummond-Smart on your first day back at class. You must have completed the absence form before making your appointment.
Supporting documentation relating to absences must be submitted within one week of your return to class.

Absence requests for non-illness reasons

Absence requests for non-illness reasons must be discussed with the Academic Office prior to the date(s) in question – no excused absences for reasons other than illness can be applied retrospectively. Please come in and see us in Room 308, 6 Bedford Square, or e-mail us at academics@nyu.ac.uk.

Further information regarding absences

Each unexcused absence will be penalized by deducting 3% from the student’s final course mark. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from an examination (with authorisation, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, viva voce (oral examination), or an increased weighting on an alternate assessment component, etc.).

NYUL also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. If timely attendance becomes a problem it is the prerogative of each instructor to deduct a mark or marks from the final grade of each late arrival and each early departure.

Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for full details of the policies relating to attendance. A copy is in your apartment and has been shared with you on Google Docs.
Late Submission of Work

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor. Late work should be submitted in person to a member of NYU London staff in the Academic Office (Room 308, 6 Bedford Square) during office hours (Mon – Fri, 10:30 – 17:30). Please also send an electronic copy to academics@nyu.ac.uk for submission to Turnitin.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted more than 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Please note end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism: the presentation of another piece of work or words, ideas, judgements, images or data, in whole or in part, as though they were originally created by you for the assignment, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Please refer to the Student Handbook for full details of the plagiarism policy.

All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of their written work to www.turnitin.com and hand in a printed copy with the digital receipt to their professor. Late submission of work rules apply to both the paper and electronic submission and failure to submit either copy of your work will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.

Electronic Submission

The Turnitin database will be searched for the purpose of comparison with other students’ work or with other pre-existing writing or publications, and other academic institutions may also search it.

In order for you to be able to submit your work onto the Turnitin website, you will need to set up an account:

Go onto the Turnitin website http://www.turnitin.com
Click ‘Create Account’ in the top right hand corner
Select user type of ‘student’
Enter your class ID & Turnitin class enrolment password (these will be e-mailed to you after the drop/add period, or contact luke.harper@nyu.ac.uk if you have misplaced these). Follow the online instructions to create your profile.

To submit your work for class, you will then need to:

Log in to the Turnitin website
Enter your class by clicking on the class name
Next to the piece of work you are submitting (please confirm the due date), click on the
'submit' icon
Enter the title of your piece of work
Browse for the file to upload from wherever you have saved it (USB drive, etc.), please ensure your work is in Word or PDF format, and click ‘submit’
Click ‘yes, submit’ to confirm you have selected the correct paper (or ‘no, go back’ to retry)
You will then have submitted your essay onto the Turnitin website. **Please print your digital receipt and attach this to the hard copy of your paper before you submit it to your professor** (this digital receipt appears on the web site, immediately after you submit your paper and is also sent to your e-mail address). Please also note that when a paper is submitted to Turnitin all formatting, images, graphics, graphs, charts, and drawings are removed from the paper so that the program can read it accurately. Please do not print the paper in this form to submit to your lecturers, as it is obviously pretty difficult to read! You can still access the exact file you uploaded by clicking on the ‘file’ icon in the ‘content’ column.

Please also see the Late Submission of Work policy, above.

Students must retain an electronic copy of their work for one month after their grades are posted online on Albert and must supply an electronic copy of their work if requested to do so by NYU in London. **Not submitting a copy of a piece of work upon request will result in automatic failure in the assignment and possible failure in the class.** NYU in London may submit in an electronic form the work of any student to a database for use in the detection of plagiarism, without further prior notification to the student.

Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are set out in the Student Handbook.

**Required Text(s)**
Details of the play texts to be read before or after each theatre visit, and where to purchase them, are given at the beginning of the semester.

**Further Reading** *(recommended)*
A select bibliography of recommended reading is given at the beginning of the semester.

**Copies in NYU-L course collection at Senate House Library**

**Internet Research Guidelines**
Details will be given at the beginning of the semester.

**Additional Required Equipment**
None
Session 1
5th September
An introduction to the course followed by an overview of theatre in London.
New Writing: original work, translation and adaptation.
Theatre visit 1, 11th September, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, based on the novel by Mark Haddon, adapted by Simon Stephens, at the Apollo Theatre.

Session 2
12th September
Appraisal of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.
Content, form, narrative and configuration.
Theatre visit 2, 18th September, *War Horse* adapted by Nick Stafford from the novel by Michael Morpurgo, at the New London Theatre.

Session 3
19th September
Appraisal of *War Horse*.
Naturalism and Realism.

Session 4
26th September
Appraisal of *A Doll’s House*.
Farce, satire and parody.
Theatre visit 4, 2nd October, *Hysteria* by Terry Johnson, at Hampstead Theatre.

Session 5
3rd October
Appraisal of *Hysteria*.
The politics of theatre and political theatre, and the Royal Court Theatre.
Essay 1 set
Theatre visit 5, 9th October, *The Ritual Slaughter of Gorge Mastromas*, at the Royal Court Theatre.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Session 6</th>
<th>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; October</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appraisal of The Ritual Slaughter of Gorge Mastromas.</strong></td>
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<td>Essay 1 submitted</td>
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Women playwrights.

Theatre visit 6, 16<sup>th</sup> October, *Chimerica* by Lucy Kirkwood, at the Harold Pinter Theatre.

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<th>Session 7</th>
<th>17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; October</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Appraisal of Chimerica.</strong></td>
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<td>Real and fictional dramatic portraiture.</td>
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<td>The British Musical.</td>
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<td>Essay 1 returned</td>
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Theatre visit 7, 23<sup>rd</sup> October, *Handbagged* by Moira Buffini, at the Tricycle Theatre.

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<th>Session 8</th>
<th>24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; October</th>
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<td>A visit to the National Theatre to see a performance of <em>Liola</em> by Luigi Pirandello, in a new version by Tanya Ronder in the Lyttelton Theatre, and a back-stage tour.</td>
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<td>Theatre visit 8, 30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; October, <em>Billy Elliot - The Musical</em> by Lee Hall and Elton John, at the Victoria Palace Theatre.</td>
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<th>Session 9</th>
<th>31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; October</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Appraisal of Handbagged and Billy Elliot – The Musical.</strong></td>
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<td>Immersive Theatre.</td>
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Theatre visit 9, 13<sup>th</sup> November, *The Drowned Man: A Hollywood Fable* devised by Punchdrunk, at Temple Studios.

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<th>Session 10</th>
<th>14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; November</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Appraisal of The Drowned Man: A Hollywood Fable.</strong></td>
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<td>Post-colonial theatre.</td>
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Theatre visit 10, 20<sup>th</sup> November, *The Island* by Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona, at the Young Vic.

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<th>Session 11</th>
<th>15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; November</th>
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<td>Make-up class.</td>
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<th>Session 12</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appraisal of The Island</strong></td>
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Multicultural, intercultural and inclusive theatre.

Theatre visit 11, 27th November, *nut* by debbie tucker green, in The Shed at the National Theatre.

**Session 13**
28th November

Appraisal of *nut*.

Theatre for, by and with children.

Tutorials on Essay Two.


**Session 14**
5th December

Appraisal of *Matilda The Musical*.

Summary and conclusion.

Tutorials as required.

**Session 15**
12th December

Exam: Submit Essay Two.

**Classroom Etiquette**

Toilet breaks should be taken before or after class or during class breaks.

Food & drink, including gum, are not to be consumed in class.

Mobile phones should be set on silent and should not be used in class except for emergencies.

Laptops are only to be used with the express permission of the teacher.

Please kindly dispose of rubbish in the bin provided.

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

A theatre visit each week. Directions to the venue will be given in the preceding class. Please be punctual for each performance allowing sufficient time to travel to the venue. Some theatres do not allow admittance to latecomers.

All freshman classes have at least one co-curricular excursion per semester. Usually on a Friday or weekend.

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**

Further visits to the theatre, cinema, concerts, museums, exhibitions and other places of cultural interest. Watch British television and read the newspapers. Observe street fashion and other aspects of social behaviour.
Nesta Jones is Director of Research at Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, an affiliate institution of the University of Manchester. Formerly Reader in Theatre Arts and Head of Drama for many years at Goldsmiths, University of London, she has initiated a number of degree programmes in drama and theatre arts at both undergraduate and postgraduate level; and established educational and professional links with institutions, arts organisations and theatre companies in mainland Europe, Australia, South Africa and the USA. She has published on JM Synge and David Mamet (Methuen), Sean O’Casey (Methuen and Chadwyck-Healey) and Brian Friel (Faber & Faber); organised projects for the British Council (in Georgia and Slovakia), the National Museum for the Performing Arts, Shakespeare’s Globe and London Weekend Television; directed theatre productions and workshops at venues across Europe (Amsterdam, Arnhem, Berlin, Bologna, Budapest, Dublin, Edinburgh, Giessen, Glasgow, Krakow, Valencia and London) and North America (Boston, Minneapolis, Washington DC, and Toronto); and given papers and demonstrations at international conferences in Atlanta, Cambridge, Columbia, Jerusalem, Montreal, New York, Nitra, Oporto, Oxford, Seattle and Sofia. She has been an External Examiner for PhD, MPhil, MA and BA degrees at the Universities of Exeter, Glasgow, Hull, London, Middlesex, Warwick, York, Central St. Martins, and Trinity College, University of Dublin, and is currently External Examiner at Leeds Metropolitan University for postgraduate and research degrees.

With other academics and practitioners from the UK, she founded CONCEPTS (Consortium for the Coordination of European Performance and Theatre), a member of the Council of Europe’s Network Forum that initiated pan-European projects with funding from the European Commission, the European Cultural Foundation and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. She has been a consultant to the University of Wales, University of Surrey, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Leeds Metropolitan University, British Centre of the International Theatre Institute, International Women Playwrights, Laban Centre for Movement and Dance, Pan Intercultural Arts, Centre for Performance Research, Victoria and Albert Museum, University of the Arts London and The Lir, Ireland’s National Academy of Dramatic Art. In addition she has researched in the USA and was a Visiting Professor at Middlebury College, Vermont, and Visiting Director for the Potomac Theatre Project at the Olney Festival Theatre. She is currently a Contributing Editor of *New Theatre Quarterly* (Cambridge University Press) and the e-journal, *Stanislavski Studies* (Stanislavski Centre, RBC), and involved in projects with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare’s Globe; and is researching on the ‘voicing’ of Shakespeare’s verse in a national and international context, and modern European theatre practice (playwrights, actors, directors, designers, producers and trainers).