

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Modern Drama and Performance in London

DRLIT-UA 9133 or ENGL-UA 9133

NYU London: Fall 2022

Instructor Information

- Dr Alexandra Wood
- Office Hours: Tuesdays, 16.00-17.00, Room 302

Instruction Mode: In-person

Course Details

- Tuesdays, 9.00-11.45 or 13.00-15.45
- Location: Room 106

Course 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 in different types of venue across the city: for example, the National Theatre, the Royal Court Theatre, the West End and fringe venues such as The Yard. The productions are chosen to illustrate the immense variety of work produced in theatres in London today by a diverse range of artists. There is also a focus on work created by British creatives. They provide excellent examples of contemporary techniques in theatre making, ranging from interpretations of traditional dramas and comedies, new writing, musicals and adaptations of books and films.

The class takes the form of a seminar involving introductions to thematic and historical contexts by the tutor and discussions led by students. 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 three written assignments over the semester. There is reading for each seminar (excluding week 1), usually a play or an extract of a book (provided by the lecturer).

The specific content of the course is determined by the performances on offer in London at the time. Thus, study of the period is not necessarily exhaustive or chronological.

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Use a critical vocabulary to articulate a considered response to performances.
- Appreciate the function of theatre in society, the significance of the communal event, and the act of transformation.
- Understand the ways in which theatre makers tell stories, explore ideas and situations, and stimulate the imagination.
- Understand the importance of new writing, formal experimentation and research in developing the theatre in the future.

Assessment Components

Assignments / Activities	Description of Assignment	% of Final Grade	Due
Class participation	Contribution to class discussion arising from the theatre visits. Students are selected each week to lead certain aspects of the appraisal.	15%	Until Dec 6th
Play review	Review (500 words) of one of the productions seen in the first four weeks.	15%	Oct 4th
Essay 1	Essay (1,000-1,200 words) on one aspect of the theatre-making craft, such as Direction or Stage Design, with reference to at least two productions seen so far.	30%	Nov 1st
Essay 2	Essay (2,200-2,500 words) on a topic chosen by the student (eg. Music and Theatre or Adaptation on stage) referencing at least three productions studied on the course. To be submitted in lieu of an examination.	40%	Dec 6th

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Assessment Expectations

Letter Grade	Grade Percentage	Description
A-range	A = 93-100% A- = 90-92%	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.
B-range	B+ = 87-89% B = 84-86% B- = 80-83%	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.
C-range	C+ = 77-79% C = 74-76% C- = 70-73%	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.
D-range	D+ = 67-69% D = 65-66%	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.
F	F = below 65%	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.

Course Materials

Required Text(s) & Materials

No texts or materials need to be purchased for this course. There will be reading for each seminar, but these materials will be provided by the course tutor or will be available online. Some of these are indicated in the Course Schedule below, but others will be assigned during the semester.

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Optional Text(s) & Materials

Sources for performances (a few copies of each are available in Senate House Library)

- *Partition Voices: Untold British Stories*, Kavita Puri, 2019
- *Who Killed My Father*, Édouard Louis, 2018
- *The Cherry Orchard*, Anton Chekhov, various translations
- *John Gabriel Borkman*, Henrik Ibsen, various translations
- *The Boy With Two Hearts: A Story of Hope*, Hamed Amiri, 2020
- *My Neighbour Totoro* (film), directed by Hayao Miyazaki, 1988

General theatre:

- *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Theatre*, Simon Shepherd, 2009
- *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance*, P. Allain and J. Harvie (eds.), 2014
- *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*, Christopher B. Balme, 2008
- The *Theatre&* series from Macmillan International (e.g. *theatre & audience* by Helen Freshwater, *theatre & politics* by Joe Kelleher, *theatre & the city* by Jen Harvie)
- Digital Theatre+ (educational platform for the study of performing arts and dramatic texts)
- Drama Online (Digital Library resource with play texts and filmed live performances)

Resources

- Access your course materials: [Brightspace](#)
- NYU London and Living in London Info: [LDN](#)
- Databases, journal articles, and more: [Bobst Library](#)
- Assistance with strengthening your writing: [NYU Writing Center](#) (nyu.mywconline.com)
- Obtain 24/7 technology assistance: [IT Help Desk](#)

Course Schedule

Topics & Assignments

Week/Date	Topic	Performance	Reading / Assignments
Session 1: 6 th September	The syllabus, and introduction to writing about performance. Introduction to <i>Silence</i> and discussion about the audience.	September 7 th : <i>Silence</i> , adapted from Kavita Puri's <i>Partition Voices: Untold British Stories</i> by Sonali Bhattacharyya, Gurpreet	

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Week/Date	Topic	Performance	Reading / Assignments
		Kaur Bhatti, Ishy Din and Alexandra Wood, Donmar, 7.30pm.	
Session 2: 13 th September	Student-led appraisal of <i>Silence</i> . Introduction to <i>Who Killed My Father</i> and adaptation.	September 14 th : <i>Who Killed My Father</i> , adapted by Ivo van Hove from the book by Édouard Louis, Young Vic, 7.30pm.	<i>Ivo van Hove in Conversation</i> [PDF provided]
Session 3: 20 th September	Student-led appraisal of <i>Who Killed My Father</i> . Introduction to Anton Chekhov, Naturalism and <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> .	September 21 st : <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> , a reimagining of Anton Chekhov's play by Vinay Patel, The Yard, 8.00pm.	<i>The Cherry Orchard</i> by Anton Chekhov [available online]
Session 4: 27 th September	Student-led appraisal of <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> . Introduction to <i>The Clinic</i> and New Writing.	September 28 th : <i>The Clinic</i> by Dipo Baruwa-Etti, Almeida, 7.30pm.	
Session 5: 4 th October	Student-led appraisal of <i>The Clinic</i> . Introduction to Henrik Ibsen and <i>John Gabriel Borkman</i> .	October 5 th : <i>John Gabriel Borkman</i> by Henrik Ibsen, a new version by Lucinda Coxon, Bridge Theatre, 7.30pm.	<i>John Gabriel Borkman</i> by Henrik Ibsen [available online] Play review (500 words)
Session 6: 11 th October	Student-led appraisal of <i>John Gabriel Borkman</i> . Introduction to <i>Six the Musical</i> and discussion of theatre	October 12 th : <i>Six the Musical</i> by Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss, Vaudeville Theatre, 8.00pm.	

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Week/Date	Topic	Performance	Reading / Assignments
	as entertainment.		
Session 7: 18 th October	Student-led appraisal of <i>Six the Musical</i> . Discussion of national theatres, and introduction to <i>The Boy with Two Hearts</i> .	October 19 th : <i>The Boy with Two Hearts</i> , by Hamed and Hessam Amiri, adapted for the stage by Phil Porter, National Theatre (Dorfman stage), 7.30pm.	
Session 8: 25 th October	Student-led appraisal of <i>The Boy with Two Hearts</i> . Introduction to <i>Elephant</i> and discussion of hybrid forms (eg. gig theatre).	October 26 th : <i>Elephant</i> by Anoushka Lucas, Bush Theatre, 8.00pm.	
Session 9: 1 st November	Student-led appraisal of <i>Elephant</i> . Introduction to <i>My Neighbour Totoro</i> and puppetry in theatre.	November 2 nd : <i>My Neighbour Totoro</i> , adapted by Tom Morton-Smith from the feature animation by Hayao Miyazaki with music by Joe Hisaishi, Barbican, 7.00pm.	Essay 1 (1,000-1,200 words)
Session 10: 8 th November	Student-led appraisal of <i>My Neighbour Totoro</i> . Introduction to <i>Mary</i> and discussion of history plays.	November 9 th : <i>Mary</i> by Rona Munro, Hampstead Theatre, 7.30pm	
Session 11: 15 th November	Student-led appraisal of <i>Mary</i> . Introduction to <i>Super High Resolution</i> and	November 16 th : <i>Super High Resolution</i> by Nathan Ellis, Soho Theatre, 7.30pm.	Extract from <i>Theatre & Politics</i> by Joe Kelleher [PDF provided]

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Week/Date	Topic	Performance	Reading / Assignments
	discussion of political theatre.		
Session 12: 22 nd November	Student-led appraisal of <i>Super High Resolution</i> . Introduction to <i>Reasons You Should(n't) Love Me</i> and representations of disability on stage.	November 23 rd : <i>Reasons You Should(n't) Love Me</i> , written and performed by Amy Trigg, Kiln Theatre, 7.30pm.	
Session 13: 29 th November	Student-led appraisal of <i>Reasons You Should(n't) Love Me</i> . Introduction to <i>Baghdaddy</i> and discussion of portrayal of war on stage.	November 30 th : <i>Baghdaddy</i> by Jasmine Naziha Jones, Royal Court Theatre, 7.30pm.	
Session 14: 6 th December	Student-led appraisal of <i>Baghdaddy</i> . Reflections on the semester.	December 7 th : No performance.	Essay 2 (2,200-2,500 words, final assessment)

Course Policies

Co-curricular Activities

- Tickets for performances will be handed out in class. Travel by bus, tube or Overground train, and some theatres (eg. Donmar) are within walking distance of Bedford Square. It is important to be punctual for each performance allowing sufficient time to travel to the venue. Some theatres do not allow admittance to latecomers. While most performances start at 7.30pm, there are some that differ (7.00 and 8.00pm) so always check.

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Classroom Etiquette

- Food, including gum, is not to be consumed during class.
- Mobile phones should be turned off or put on silent, and should not be used during class, except for emergencies.
- Please raise your hand to signal you would like to speak.

Final exams

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the London Academics team (nyul.academics@nyu.edu). Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

Academic Honesty, Plagiarism and Late Work

Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the [University and school policies](#). You can find details on these topics and more on this section of our NYUL website (<https://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html>) and on the Policies and Procedures section of the NYU website for students studying away at global sites (<https://www.nyu.edu/academics/studying-abroad/upperclassmen-semester-academic-year-study-away/academic-resources/policies-and-procedures.html>).

Attendance

Key information on NYU London's absence policy, how to report absences, and what kinds of absences can be excused can be found on our [website](#) (<http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/attendance-policy.html>)

To ensure the integrity of the academic experience, class attendance is required and expected promptly when class begins. These rules apply to class excursions and activities as well.

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations, but must follow NYU London's absence reporting procedure. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#)

Moses Accommodations Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Inclusivity Policies and Priorities

NYU's Office of Global Programs and NYU's global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

Pronouns and Name Pronunciation (Albert)

You can edit your pronoun and name pronunciation information on your Albert account, making it visible for faculty and staff. Information on how to do this can be found on the [Pronouns and Name Pronunciation web page](#).

Bias Response

The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community. For more information, including how to report an incident, visit the [Bias Response Line website](#).

Your Lecturer

Dr Alexandra Wood (she/her) is a playwright and lecturer from London. Her plays have been produced on London stages and beyond for the last fifteen years. She is a recipient of the George Devine Award for Most Promising Playwright (2007), a winner of a Fringe First award (for *The Initiate*), and has been shortlisted for the Susan Smith Blackburn Award and the Patrick White Playwrights' award.

Her plays include: *Silence*, co-writer for an adaptation of Kavita Puri's 'Partition Voices' (Donmar / Tara Theatre), *The Tyler Sisters* and *The Empty Quarter* (Hampstead Theatre), *Never Vera Blue* (Futures Theatre), *The Human Ear* and *The Initiate* (Paines Plough), *Ages* (Old Vic New Voices), a translation of Manfred Karge's *Man to Man* (Wales Millennium Centre), *Merit* (Plymouth Drum), an adaptation of Jung Chang's *Wild Swans* (Young Vic / ART), *Unbroken* (Gate Theatre) and *The Eleventh Capital* (Royal Court Theatre). Her audio work includes *Descent* (Audible Originals) and *Twelve Years* (BBC Radio 4). Her plays are published by Nick Hern Books.

She studied at the Universities of York, Birmingham and Roehampton, where she completed her PhD, focusing on the playwright's creation of dramatic character. She has taught playwriting in universities (including NYU London), theatres and schools.