

AHA International

Theatre Course April to June 2010

Contemporary British Theatre

THE COURSE OUTLINE MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

THIS IS NOT A MUSICAL THEATRE COURSE

This course is written as a result of finding interesting plays that can be seen in production in London during your stay. London is vibrant and lively with new plays and revivals. We shall be seeing several new plays and some classics. We shall be visiting commercial and subsidised theatres, examining community theatre and students will be encouraged to visit fringe productions and to discover and analyse street theatre. All the plays will give us new insights into the way we view events in our own time or the way we represent and understand the past and our literary heritage. We shall be analysing personal relationships through the medium of theatre, always a subjective experience as well as an intellectual and objective one. The course is designed to take advantage of what is available here and to analyse and examine not only the plays, playwrights, directors and actors but our own demands and desires as theatregoers. How much are we prepared to be challenged by what we see and hear in the theatre? Are we ready to embrace new and different forms of theatre?

Elements of production to be considered are: performance space; audience and actors; set; lighting; sound; costume; actor's performance techniques; directorial; interpretation; audience reception.

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES: of the course are to offer students an understanding of a wide variety of theatrical companies, genres and techniques in the context of the traditions of theatre-going in London. Students will also be encouraged to examine theatre as a way of challenging the status quo and to analyse and write critically about theatre.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students should look forward to increasing their ability to analyse and appreciate the way that writers and performers both respond to and challenge their audiences. By the end of the course students should be able to:

- 1) Write reviews of live performances and read them with discernment.
- 2) Read and analyse a play script.
- 3) Have developed an increased knowledge of the wide variety of theatre on offer, with an understanding of the way theatre of ideas functions.
- 4) Make informed choices about their own theatre going or involvement in performance, based on the knowledge acquired.
- 5) Be willing and able to implement and/or appreciate innovative theatre whenever the opportunity arises.

Attendance

Every class (on- or off-site) must be attended. Absence will only be accepted on grounds of sickness. Sickness must be notified in advance in person (by phone, note or email) to Leah or me. Any absence not for sickness will affect your grade.

Assessment

Work that is not handed in on time will lose marks. Marks will be docked for each day that work is overdue. Marks will be deducted from the final mark for any class, field trip or theatre visit that you do not attend, unless you are ill. Marks up to five per cent of your final mark will be deducted for non attendance and for discourteous behaviour towards your fellow students in class.

1) a) Write a review of *Enron* - write this as if for a local paper in a place where the reviewer is required to encourage theatre attendance. b) Write a review of *Taking Steps*. This should be written for a more academic paper such as the Times Literary Supplement. **Both reviews should be handed in together on 04 May.**

25% of final mark

2) a) An account of the staging of *The White Guard*. b) A production history of *Anderson's English*. **Both papers handed in together on 04 May.** NB. A production history can be written before seeing the play.

25% of the final mark.

3) a) An essay; you will be offered a choice of questions. b) A brief report on what you have learned from your fellow students. One paragraph should describe what you have learned in discussion and one what you have learned from the presentations.

Both papers should be handed in together on 08 June.

25% of the final mark.

4) An examination in which you will be asked to answer two previously unseen questions. **This will probably be written in class time on 15 June.**

a) Question one will relate to staging.

b) Question two will be an academic question based on plays seen. There will be a choice of questions.

25% of the final mark

AHA Students' Calendar April-June 2010

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This calendar may be subject to change.

Classes will take place on Mondays from 3.30 to 5.30 & on Tuesdays 3.30 to 5.30

All classes are at 6 Great James Street except when there are field trips.

Monday 12 April: An introduction to the course.

Tuesday 13 April: Some introductory remarks about *Enron* by Lucy Prebble. A review workshop.

Tuesday 13 April: An evening visit to The Duke of York's Theatre to see *Enron*.

PLEASE GET TO ALL THEATRES IN GOOD TIME. LONDON THEATRES DO NOT ALLOW LATECOMERS IN UNTIL A SUITABLE BREAK IN THE PERFORMANCE, WHICH MAY BE WELL INTO THE PLAY.

Monday 19 April: A discussion about *Enron*. Preparation for seeing *Taking Steps* by Alan Ayckbourn.

Tuesday 20 April: A second review workshop. We shall leave before our usual time in order to get to The Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond.

Tuesday 20 April: An evening performance of *Taking Steps* at the Orange Tree Theatre.

Monday 26 April: A discussion about *Taking Steps* and preparation for seeing *The White Guard* by Mikhail Bulgakov in a version by Andrew Upton.

Tuesday 27 April: A guided tour of the reproduction of Shakespeare's Globe and a visit to the Globe Museum. Arrangements for this field trip will be made prior to the visit.

NB THE NEXT CLASS IS ON WEDNESDAY

Wednesday 28 April: We shall gather at The National Theatre at 6.00 to hear a talk about *The White Guard*, which will end at c.6.45. It will be possible to eat in the theatre before 7.30 when we shall see the play.

Monday 03 May: A discussion about *The White Guard*. Essay questions will be handed out and there will be an essay writing workshop.

Tuesday 04 May: Preparation for seeing *Anderson's English* by Sebastian Barry. An introduction to street theatre and community theatre. After the break each student will speak about some theatre experience that is not part of the course. This need not cost any money; some of the best theatrical experiences are free. **Hand in your reviews of *Enron* and *Taking Steps*, your account of the staging of *The White Guard* and the production history of *Anderson's English*.**

Tuesday 04 May: An evening visit to Hampstead Theatre to see *Anderson's English*.

10 May to 14 May HALF TERM

Monday 17 May: Preparation for seeing *Women Beware Women* by Thomas Middleton. A discussion about *Anderson's English*.

Monday 17 May: An evening visit to The National Theatre to see *Women Beware Women*.

Tuesday 18 May: Student presentation. A discussion about *Women Beware Women*.

Monday 24 May: Preparation for seeing *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare.

Tuesday 25 May: More preparation for *Macbeth*.

Tuesday 25 May: An evening visit to Shakespeare's Globe to see *Macbeth*. **THIS IS AN OUTDOOR THEATRE SO PLEASE WEAR WARM CLOTHES AND SENSIBLE SHOES FOR STANDING.**

Monday 31 May: A discussion about *Macbeth*. Another student presentation.

Tuesday 01 June: Preparation for seeing *London Assurance* by Dion Boucicault. **This class will end early so that we can go to The National Theatre for a backstage tour at 5.15. There will be time for something to eat after the tour and before we see the play.**

Tuesday 01 June: An evening visit to The National Theatre to see *London Assurance*.

Monday 07 June: A visit to the Theatre Gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum. **Please meet in the foyer at 3.45.**

Tuesday 08 June: A discussion about *London Assurance*. **Essays and reports to be handed in.** If there is time I will say a few words about *Henry IV Part 1*.

Tuesday 08 June: **Evening tickets have been booked for you to see Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part 1* at Shakespeare's Globe. This will not be taught or examined and I hope you all enjoy it.**

Monday 14 June: Examination preparation.

Tuesday 15 June: Examination

Bibliography

(Additions will be made as the course progresses)

Aristotle *The Art of Poetry* - any decent paper back translation.

Elaine Aston and George Savona, *Theatre as Sign System: A Semiotics of Text and Performance*, London/NY: Routledge, 1991

Michael Billington, *State of the Nation: British Theatre Since 1945*, London: Faber and Faber, 2007.

Enoch Brater (editor), *Feminine Focus: The New Women Playwrights*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Jacky Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Peter Brook, *The Empty Space*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990

John Drakakis and Naomi Conn Leiber, (editors) *Tragedy*, Harlow/NY: Longman, 1998

Richard Eyre, *National Service: Diary of a Decade*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd., 2003.

David Hare, *Obedience, Struggle and Revolt*, London: Faber and Faber, 2005.

Alexander Leggatt, *English Stage Comedy 1490 -1990: Five Centuries of a Genre*, London: Routledge, 1998.

Peter Mudford, *Making Theatre from Text to Performance*, London/New Jersey: The Athlone Press, 2000

Katie Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama*, Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004.

M.S.Silk, (editor) *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Don Taylor, *Directing Plays* London: A& C Black (Publishers) Ltd., 1996

Shakespeare

Jonathan Bate, *The Genius of Shakespeare*, Oxford: Picador, 1997.

Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

David Scott Kaston, *Shakespeare After Theory*, NY/London: Routledge, 1999.

Frank Kermode, *Shakespeare's Language*, London: Allen Lane, 2000.

Isobel Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry: A Student's Guide*, London: Routledge, 1996 (Useful for its analysis of the way such ideas are evident in literature)

Kiernon Ryan, *Shakespeare (Second Edition)* London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995.

Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Kevin Sharpe & Peter Lake, *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, London: The Macmillan Press, 1994.

Leah Scragg, *Shakespeare's Mouldy Tales: Recurrent Plot Motifs in Shakespearean Drama*, London: Longman, 1992