

TH352-30 Writing for Theatre and Performance

22/23

Department

SCAPVC - Theatre and Performance Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Silvija Jestrovic

Credit value

30

Module duration

20 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Through a combination of writing workshops and critical seminars, students will be exposed both to traditional dramaturgical thinking rooted in a cause and effect logic and to nonlinear writing based on principles of montage, association and intuition.

Constituent elements of the dramatic text such as action, character, dialogue, space and ways in which they function within different dramatic structures will be explored simultaneously with more experimental and interdisciplinary approaches to playwriting rooted in visual art and popular culture.

Module aims

The goal of this module is to introduce students to different dramaturgical approaches and creative processes embodied in a range of textual forms—from traditional dramatic writing to performance scenarios. The main purposes of the module are to enable students to develop their practical and creative skills in playwriting and also their critical skills in exploring the strategies and processes involved in their own work and that of notable practitioners.

The module aims to expose students to different techniques and strategies of the playwriting craft,

while at the same time encouraging them to toy with “dramaturgical rules” in search for their individual voices as writers.

The module will assist students in:

1. producing a playwriting portfolio, that will include both short exercise pieces and the final project—a fully developed play or performance scenario;
2. exploring collective writing
3. examining critical concepts and practice in playwriting and performance writing;
4. understanding through practice and discussion the specific aspects involved in the creative process of writing for stage;
5. conceptualising the student’s own practice as playwrights in relation to other playwrights’ works and creative approaches

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Autumn Term

Week 1 Where to start? Writing from Memory

Week 2 Conjuring up the Character

Week 3 Dialogue

Week 4 Plot vs story

Week 5 Dramatic Structure and its Variations

Week 6 Reading week

Week 7 Portfolio preparation and group play starting points

Week 8 & 9 Group play development

Week 10 Group play readings

Spring Term

Week 1 - Full length play warm up - Writing Images

Week 2 - Full length play warm up - Writing objects

Week 3 - Full length play: Action & Setting + full length play workshop

Week 4 - Full length play: Time/Space + ditto

Week 5 - The journey of your play + ditto

Week 6 - reading week

Week 7 - best beginnings + full length play workshops

Week 8 - best endings + ditto

Week 10 - re-writes, wrap up and next steps

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- By the end of this module students will be able to understand the specific nature of writing for theatre and performance and to demonstrate a practical and critical knowledge of playwriting and performance writing in terms of subject and medium, selection of material, dramaturgical techniques and strategies, genre and form, constituent aspects of dramatic text including structure, action, character, dialogue, and space, as well as knowledge of representative examples by notable playwrights.
- By the end of the module the student should be able to demonstrate critical and creative skills in the reading, imitation and generation of dramatic texts and performance scenarios.
- By the end of the module the student should be able to articulate knowledge, understanding and appreciation of relevant dramatic and performance work.
- By the end of the module the student should be able to explain generic and formal dramaturgical conventions.
- By the end of the module the student should be able to show skill in the practice of writing for stage; offer critical feedback of each others work.
- By the end of the module the student should be able to writing skills and the ability to apply these in appropriate forms.
- By the end of the module the student should be able to the capacity to analyse and critically examine diverse forms of playwriting and performance writing.
- By the end of the module the student should be able to capacity for independent thought and judgment.
- By the end of the module the student should be able to the capacity to adapt and transfer the creative and critical skills involved in writing to a variety of working environments.
- By the end of the module the student should be able to the ability to understand, interrogate and apply a variety of theoretical positions and weigh the importance of alternative perspectives.
- By the end of the module the student should be able to have time-management and organisational skills.

Indicative reading list

Indicative plays:

Brecht, Bertolt *Mother Courage*. (Methuen Drama, 1995)

C. Churchill. *Top Girls* (Drama Online)

Beckett, S. *Waiting for Godot* (Drama Online)

Ibsen, Henrik. *A Doll's House*. (Cambridge UP, 1995)

Maraini, Dacia. *Only Prostitutes Marry in May: Four Plays*. (Guernica 1994)

Müller, Heiner. *Hamletmachine* (PAJ, 1984)

H. Pinter. *Betrayal* (Drama online)

S. Stevens, *Pornography* (Drama online)

Stivicic, Tena. *Three Winters* (Drama online)

Indicative readings on writing techniques:

Deeney, John ed. *Writing Live*. (Arts Board/ Baring Foundation, 1998)

Dromgoole, Dominic. *The Full Room: An A-Z of Contemporary Playwriting*. (Methuen, 2000)

Edgar, David. *State of Play: Playwrights on Playwriting*. (Faber, 1999)

Pfister, Manfred. *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*. (Cambridge UP, 1988)

Please note: This is subject to change and to being expended.

Research element

Dramaturgical research related to the student's choice of material to develop into a play

International

Includes an international selection of material through which to explore the art and craft of playwriting

Subject specific skills

By the end of this module students will be able to: understand the specific nature of writing for theatre and performance and to demonstrate a practical and critical knowledge of playwriting and performance writing in terms of subject and medium, selection of material, dramaturgical techniques and strategies, genre and form, constituent aspects of dramatic text including structure, action, character, dialogue, and space, as well as knowledge of representative examples by notable playwrights/ performance writers.

Transferable skills

These skills are transferable to other forms of creative practices (e.g. devising, solo performance) as well as for writing in other media and formats (script writing, writing for digital media, gaming, applied drama)

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	18 sessions of 3 hours (15%)
Project supervision	4 sessions of 1 hour (1%)
Supervised practical classes	2 sessions of 1 hour (1%)
External visits	2 sessions of 3 hours (2%)
Other activity	9 hours (2%)
Private study	150 hours (41%)
Assessment	140 hours (38%)
Total	365 hours

Private study description

The students will need to dedicate time to read and analyse assigned play-texts and also to develop , write and rewrite their own scripts

Other activity description

Viewings/ theatre visits

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Portfolio portfolio of short scripts developed through the Fall term	30%	40 hours	Yes (extension)

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component			
Play Group play	20%	30 hours	Yes (extension)

Reassessment component

Alternative assessment No

We will set an alternative assessment that could be done individually, but for a collective project e.g., dramaturgical research

Assessment component			
Full length play	50%	70 hours	Yes (extension)

Weighting**Study time****Eligible for self-certification**

Students will write a full length play

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Use of standard departmental feedback form for assessment as well as a 15 minute individual tutorial session with students to discuss feedback

Oral feedback will be available on individual exam performance.

Availability**Courses**

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UTHA-QW34 Undergraduate English and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of ULNA-R1WB Undergraduate French and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of UGEA-RW24 Undergraduate German and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of UHPA-R4W4 Undergraduate Hispanic Studies and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of ULNA-R3WA Undergraduate Italian and Theatre Studies
- UVCA-LA99 Undergraduate Liberal Arts
 - Year 2 of LA99 Liberal Arts
 - Year 2 of LA92 Liberal Arts with Classics
 - Year 2 of LA73 Liberal Arts with Design Studies
 - Year 2 of LA83 Liberal Arts with Economics
 - Year 2 of LA82 Liberal Arts with Education
 - Year 2 of LA95 Liberal Arts with English
 - Year 2 of LA81 Liberal Arts with Film and Television Studies
 - Year 2 of LA80 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
 - Year 2 of LA93 Liberal Arts with Global Sustainable Development
 - Year 2 of LA97 Liberal Arts with History
 - Year 2 of LA71 Liberal Arts with Law
 - Year 2 of LA91 Liberal Arts with Life Sciences
 - Year 2 of LA75 Liberal Arts with Modern Languages and Cultures
 - Year 2 of LA96 Liberal Arts with Philosophy
 - Year 2 of LA94 Liberal Arts with Theatre and Performance Studies
- UTHA-W421 Undergraduate Theatre and Performance Studies
 - Year 3 of W421 Theatre and Performance Studies
 - Year 3 of W421 Theatre and Performance Studies
- Year 2 of UIPA-W4L8 Undergraduate Theatre and Performance Studies and Global Sustainable Development