

EN2D8-30 European Theatre

24/25

Department

English and Comparative Literary Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Stephen Purcell

Credit value

30

Module duration

18 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

N/A

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

- To introduce a range of major plays from the European dramatic tradition, concentrating on classical tragedy, seventeenth-century tragedy and comedy, metatheatre, Naturalism, and on conflicting twentieth-century concepts of dramatic ideology and form.
- To study plays in their historical context and as texts for performance, which involves reference to the original staging conventions and to modern productions. Where possible, plays are studied in performance – on stage or on the screen.
- To explore changing theatrical representations of class and gender.
- To consider the relationship between dramatic form, intellectual debate and cultural conditions, as reflected in the plays and theatrical periods in question.
- To introduce students to a number of theories of the drama, with reference to their practical application in playtexts and production.
- To consider the uses dramatists have made of existing genres and traditions.
- To develop students' ability to analyze dramatic texts both as literature and as texts for performance.

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.

Term 1

Week 1 Introduction

Week 2 Aeschylus, The Oresteia

Week 3 Sophocles, Oedipus the King

Week 4 Sophocles, Antigone

Week 5 Euripides, The Bacchae

Week 6 Reading week

Week 7 Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy

Week 8 Calderon, Life's a Dream

Week 9 Moliere, Tartuffe

Week 10 Racine, Phèdre

Term 2

Week 1 Ibsen, Hedda Gabler

Week 2 Chekhov, The Seagull

Week 3 Strindberg, Miss Julie

Week 4 Wedekind, Spring's Awakening

Week 5 Brecht, Life of Galileo

Week 6 Reading week

Week 7 Lorca, Yerma

Week 8 Beckett, Endgame

Week 9 Churchill, The Skriker

Week 10 Crimp, Attempts on Her Life

Term 3

Week 1 Reviewing European Theatre: revision lecture and seminars

Week 2 Revision seminars

Week 3 Revision seminars

Learning outcomes

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

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of several major trends in European theatre and of the work of historically-significant playwrights
- Articulate a sense of the expressive possibilities of different dramatic languages: for example, poetic rhetoric, naturalistic dialogue, the choric voice, subtext, mise en scene, movement
- Demonstrate some familiarity with key theoretical debates, including Aristotle, Stanislavski and Brecht
- Develop skills in reading dramatic texts
- Develop argumentative skills in academic essays

Indicative reading list

Primary texts:

The set text, which students should buy, for the first half of Term 1 is Richard W. Corrigan (ed.) *Classical Tragedy, Greek and Roman* (Applause Books)

Many plays studied later in this module are available in several editions. Recommended texts :

Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy* (Revels Student Edition) Calderon, *Life is a Dream*, trans. John Clifford (Drama Classics, Nick Hern Books) Moliere, *Tartuffe and Other Plays* (Penguin) Racine, *Iphigenia, Phaedra and Athaliah* (Penguin Classics) Ibsen, *Three Plays* (Drama Classics, NHB) Strindberg, *Plays One* (Methuen) Chekhov, *Four Plays* (Drama Classics, NHB) Wedekind, *Spring's Awakening* (Applause) Lorca, *The House of Bernada Alba and Other Plays* (Penguin) Brecht, *Life of Galileo*, trans. John Willett (Methuen) Beckett, *Endgame* (Faber) Churchill, *The Skriker* (NHB) Crimp, *Attempts on her Life* (Faber)

Secondary reading:

Greek Tragedy

Peter D. Arnott, *Public and Performance in the Greek Theatre* (Routledge, 1989)
P.E. Easterling, ed, *Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge University Press, 1997)
Barbara Goff, ed, *History, Tragedy, Theory: Dialogue on Athenian Drama* (University of Texas Press, 1995)
Simon Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge University Press, 1986)
Richard Green and Eric Handley, eds, *Images of the Greek Theatre* (British Museum, 1995)
Edith Hall, *Dionysus since 69: Greek Drama at the Dawn of the Third Millennium* (OUP, 2004)
Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh, *Greek Tragedy and the British Stage* (OUP 2005)
John Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (Chatto & Windus, 1962)
Martha Nussbaum. *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge University Press, 1986)
Adrian Poole, *Tragedy: Shakespeare and the Greek Example* (Blackwell, 1987)
Rush Rehm, *Greek Tragic Theatre* (Routledge, 1992)
Erich Segal, ed, *Oxford Readings in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford University Press, 1983)
M.S. Silk, ed, *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond* (Clarendon Press, 1996)
Oliver Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action* (Routledge, 1978)
Jean-Pierre Vernant and Vidal Naquet. *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (Harvester, 1981)
John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin. eds, *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context* (Princeton University Press, 1990)

Aeschylus

Neil Astley, ed, *Tony Harrison: Bloodaxe Critical Anthologies* (Bloodaxe, 1991)
Simon Goldhill, *Language, Sexuality, Narrative: The Oresteia* (Cambridge University Press, 1984)
A.J. Podlecki, *The Political Background of Aeschylean Tragedy* (University of Michigan Press, 1966)
Oliver Taplin. *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Clarendon Press, 1977)

Sophocles

Christine Battersby, *Phenomenal Woman* (Polity, 1998)
Maurice Bowra, *Sophoclean Tragedy* (Clarendon Press, 1944)
Rebecca Bushnell, *Propheying Tragedy: Sign and Voice in Sophocles' Theban Plays* (Cornell University Press, 1988)
Cynthia P. Gardner, *The Sophoclean Chorus* (Iowa University Press, 1986)

Knox, Oedipus at Thebes: Sophocles' Tragic Hero and His Time (Yale University Press, 1957)
Charles Segal, Tragedy and Civilization: An Interpretation of Sophocles (Harvard University Press, 1981)
George Steiner, Antigones (Clarendon Press, 1984)
R Winnington-Ingram, Sophocles: An Interpretation (Cambridge University Press, 1980)
T. Woodard, ed, Sophocles: A Collection of Critical Essays (Prentice-Hall, 1966)

Euripides

E.R. Dodds, The Greeks and the Irrational (California University Press, 1973)
Justina Gregory, Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians (University of Michigan Press, 1991)
Michael Halleran, Stagecraft in Euripides (Croom Helm, 1985)
F. L. Lucas, Euripides and his Influence (Harrap, 1925)
Emily A. McDermott, Euripides' Medea: The Incarnation of Disorder (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989)
Anton Powell, Euripides, Women and Sexuality (Routledge, 1990)

Lope de Vega and Calderon

Anthony Cascardi, The Limits of Illusion: Critical Studies of Calderon (Cambridge University Press, 1984)
Walter Cohen, Drama of a Nation: Public Theatre in Renaissance England and Spain (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)
H.Gerstenger, Lope de Vega and Spanish Drama (1974)
F.A. Icaza, Lope de Vega (1962)
D.R.Larson, The Honor Plays of Lope de Vega (1977)
Michael D. McGahan, Approaches to the Theatre of Calderon (University Press of America, 1982)
Melveena McKendrick, Women and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age (Cambridge University Press, 1974)
Theatre in Spain 1490-1700 (Cambridge University Press, 1989)
Paul Julian Smith, Writing in the Margin: Spanish Literature of the Golden Age (Clarendon Press, 1988)
A.S.Trueblood, Experience and Aesthetic Expression in Lope de Vega (1974)
Edward M. Wilson, Spanish and English Literature of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Cambridge University Press, 1980)
Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, Feminism and the Honor Plays of Lope de Vega (Purdue University Press, 1994)

Molière

Andrew Calder, Moliere, the Theory and Practice of Comedy (Athlone, 1993)
Stephen H Flack, . Music, Drama and Laughter: Moliere's Comedy-Ballets (Papers on French Seventeenth-Century Literature, 1995)
Nathan Gross, From Gesture to Life (Columbia University Press 1982)
Lionel Grossman, Men and Masks: a Study of Moliere (John Hopkins, 1963)
Roxanne Decker Lalande, Intruder in the Play World: the Dynamics of Gender in Moliere's Comedies (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996)
W. G. Moore, Moliere, a New Criticism (Oxford University Press, 1962)
Virginia Scott, Moliere, a Theatrical Life (Cambridge University Press, 2000)
P.A. Wadsworth, Moliere and the Italian Theatrical Tradition

Racine

C. Abraham, *Jean Racine* (Twayne, 1977)

A G. Brereton, *French Tragic Drama in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Grant & Cutler, 1973)

Lucien Goldmann, *The Hidden God* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964)

M. Hawcroft., *Word as Action: Racine, Rhetoric, and Theatrical Language* (Oxford University Press, 1992)

Ted Hughes, tr., *Phedre* (Faber & Faber, 1998)

E.D. James and G. Jondorf, *Racine, Phedre* (Cambridge University Press, 1994)

D. Maskell, *Racine: A Theatrical Reading* (Oxford University Press, 1991)

M. Tumell, *Jean Racine Dramatist*

Wedekind

Best, Alan (1975) *Frank Wedekind*, London: Wolff.

Boa, Elizabeth (1987) *The Sexual Circus: Wedekind's Theatre of Subversion*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Bond, Edward (1980) [trans. & ed.] *Spring Awakening*, London: Methuen.

Fishman, Sterling (1970) 'Suicide, Sex, and the Discovery of the German Adolescent', *History of Education Quarterly*, 10: 2, pp. 170-188.

Forsyth, Julian & Margaret (2010) [trans. & ed.] *Spring Awakening*, London: Nick Hern Books.

Ham, Jennifer (2007) 'Unlearning the Lesson: Wedekind, Nietzsche, and Educational Reform at the Turn of the Century', *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 40: 1, pp. 49-63.

Skrine, Peter N. (1989) *Hauptmann, Wedekind and Schnitzler*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Styan, J. L. (1981) *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice 3: Expressionism and Epic Theatre*, Cambridge: C. U. P.

Styan, J. L. (1982) *Directors in Perspective: Max Reinhardt*, Cambridge: C. U. P.

Wolf, Stacy (2011) 'Gender and Sexuality', in Raymond Knapp, Mitchell Morris and Stacy Wolf [eds] *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical*, Oxford: O. U. P., pp. 210-24.

Lorca

Gwynne Edwards, *Lorca: The Theatre beneath the Sand* (Boyars, 1995)

Paul Julian Smith, *The Theatre of Garcia Lorca: Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Ian Gibson, *Federico Garcia Lorca: A Life* (Faber, 1989)

Beth Miller (ed.), *Women in Hispanic Literature: Icons and Fallen Idols* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983)

Rupert C. Allen, *Psyche and Symbol in the Theater of Federico Garcia Lorca* (University of Texas Press, 1974)

Gwynne Edwards, 'Yerma on Stage', *Anales de la Literatura Espanola Contemporanea*, vol. 24, no. 3 (1999): 433-451

Felicity Rosslyn, 'Lorca and Greek Tragedy', *Cambridge Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 3 (2000): 215-236

Subject specific skills

-Demonstrate a broad understanding of several major trends in European theatre and of the work of historically-significant playwrights

-Articulate a sense of the expressive possibilities of different dramatic languages: for example, poetic rhetoric, naturalistic dialogue, the choric voice, subtext, *mise en scene*, movement

- Demonstrate some familiarity with key theoretical debates, including Aristotle, Stanislavski and Brecht
- Develop skills in reading dramatic texts

Transferable skills

- Develop argumentative skills in academic essays
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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	18 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	18 sessions of 1 hour 30 minutes (9%)
Other activity	4 hours 30 minutes (1%)
Private study	250 hours 30 minutes (83%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

Reading & research.

Other activity description

Revision sessions.

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
Assessed essay	50%	
1 x 3,500-word essay		
Level 5 essays will be selected from a list of questions circulated by the module tutor.		

	Weighting	Study time
Assessed Essay OR Creative Project with 1800 word essay	50%	
EITHER 1 x 3,500-word essay OR 1 x creative project with supporting essay of 1,800 words		
Level 5 essays will be selected from a list of questions circulated by the module tutor.		

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback

Availability

Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-Q300 Undergraduate English Literature
- Year 2 of UENA-QP36 Undergraduate English Literature and Creative Writing
- Year 2 of UTHA-QW34 Undergraduate English and Theatre Studies

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-Q300 Undergraduate English Literature
- Year 2 of UENA-QP36 Undergraduate English Literature and Creative Writing
- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History
- Year 2 of UTHA-QW34 Undergraduate English and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of UFIA-QW25 Undergraduate Film and Literature
- Year 2 of UPHA-VQ52 Undergraduate Philosophy, Literature and Classics

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 2 of UCXA-QQ37 Undergraduate Classics and English

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature