



WJEC GCE AS/ Advanced Drama and Theatre Studies

As a student on this course, you will demonstrate consistently excellent dramatic techniques (acting or technical production skills) in all aspects of performance. You will make appropriate decisions in the timing and application of all performance attributes, showing mastery of the nature and methods of dramatic presentation. You must grasp the opportunities offered, to show that you can interpret texts from a range of periods and styles sympathetically and imaginatively.

Your written work will be thorough and academic in approach. You must possess a wide-ranging knowledge of texts in relationship to their historical context. This can only come about through extensive independent, wider reading and a disciplined approach to independent study. You must show insight and original personal quality in your arguments presented, into which you must weave dense textual illustration at all times. It's all in the text!

You have to demonstrate a cogent and critical analysis of the rationale and processes in developing practical and written work, and be able to evaluate outcomes against original aims. You will be expected to show clear understanding of the ways in which texts might be presented for theatre, from all aspects of directorial preparation.

More about each unit:

DR1 Unit 1

Performance Workshop 20%

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|--|-----|
| a) Acting or Technical Production Skills | 15% |
| b) Process Journal | 5% |

Internally assessed in **November**

You will be assessed *either* on your acting *or* technical production skills.

More about a):

Your performance will include:

- i) **one scene from a set text**
- ii) **one devised scene based on the thematic content of the scene from the above text**

The devised scene should provide opportunity to create characters that are *contrasting* but equally demanding, in terms of performance, to those selected from the set scene. You must script your devised scene.

You will study the whole of **the set text**, its historical and social context and select an appropriate scene for performance

Acting group must be between 2-4 candidates. Total performance time is ten minutes per candidate for both scripted and devised scenes (So 3 candidates = 30 minutes in total)

Acting in a scene from a text

You will be marked on:

- Identification with the character
- Use of voice, speech and sound
- Movement, gesture and behavioural skills, using body, space and physical relationships
- Listening and responding skills, interaction with others and contributing with the group to the rest of the performance
- Power to engage and hold the audience

Marks /50

Acting in a devised scene relating to the set text

You will be marked on all the above

- plus another potential 10 marks are available, for your contribution to the devising process.

Marks /60

Technical Option

You must offer ONE of the following

- Stage design
- Lighting
- Sound
- Costume
- Make-up or mask

If candidates choose the technical option and then continue to Advanced, they must choose the same option and the same skill (Plus one other technical skill) for Dr5.

Technical production skills will involve two generic qualities a) interpretation of text reflected in the design elements on stage and b) relationship and relevance of design to the use of space by the actors

More about b:

The Process Journal

You must keep a diary of all work whilst devising in order to achieve top marks for this piece of work. After the practical exam in November, you then write up your diary into a journal of 1,300-1,500 words. This is then submitted in January for 5% of the Unit 1 mark.

The journal monitors your **involvement** with the practical work and the **development** of the practical work.

It must be 1,300-1,500 words in an A4 File. In addition to the word limit, you may also include illustrations, photos, and diagrams and add your working diary as an addendum. You must include references and a bibliography. The journal must be balanced in three sections:

RATIONALE /10

- Reasons for choice of set text
- Reason for choice of scene
- Reasons for choice of devised scene content
- Making connections between the two scenes
- Initial ideas for staging

DEVELOPMENT /10

- Development of set text scene. Individual role
- Development of set text scene, group interaction
- Development of devised scene, individual role
- Development of devised scene, group interaction
- Evaluation of difficulties encountered and problem solving linked with staging

PERFORMANCE /10

- Evaluation of set text scene
- Evaluation of devised scene
- Evaluation of whole project (both the set text scene and devised scene)
- Support materials, References to personal documentation through a diary, illustrative inputs (photos, drawings, diagrams etc.) and Bibliography.

The journal is internally marked and externally moderated. Marks /30

DR2 Unit 2

Directorial Analysis(1 unseen text) 15%

You must learn how to produce a 'prompt' or 'production' copy of a text.

In the exam, you will be asked to prepare a 'prompt' copy, as a director, in response to a short, unseen scene from a post-1900 play. The scene will be briefly set in context and appropriate information will be provided about the play as a whole, to help you with your staging ideas.

You will produce directorial ideas for:

- **Stage plan / design /20**

- i) ground plan ii)audience position iii)type of set/décor iv)furniture/props v) costume

- **Character Movement /10**

- i)position of characters in the scene ii)entrances iii) exits iv) character movement v) pace / style of movement

- **Sound and Lighting /10**

- i) colour of light ii) strength of light iii) types of light iv) types of sound v) volume

- **Vocal Interpretation /10**

- i)pitch/tone ii) rhythm iii)accent iv) pace v) voice as reflection of character

This unit is externally marked in May/June

Written Paper 1 hour 30 minutes

DR3 Unit 3

Text Analysis 15% 2 Texts

You must learn to analyse two texts. Questions will require you to read a short section of each play and analyse the scene's content with regard to:

i) character motivation and action

ii) atmosphere and staging potential

You will always have two questions on each text.

The following aspects will be expected to be covered:

i)Character motivation and action /15

- Main character's role in the scene
- Relationship with other characters
- Place of the scene in the play as a whole
- Particular elements and episodes in the scene

ii) Atmosphere and staging potential /15

- Acting area
- Set
- Costumes
- Lighting/sound
- Character movement

How to study

Texts are broadly divided into historical / stylistic genres. Over the two years you must study a range of texts, which include:

Greek

Elizabethan/Jacobean

Renaissance

Restoration

Early Realism and Naturalism

Modern European

Post-War British

Modern American

Find out as much as you can about each period of history and the theatrical influences of the period. Keep studious notes on each period for revision purposes.

Set Texts to be covered at AS

Unit 1 Practical Set Text-	A Midsummer Night's Dream- SB / JAR
	Antigone – DRW / LL
Unit 3 A Doll's House	Early Realism – both sets
Unit 3 Zoo Story	American Drama – both sets

Texts to be covered at A2

Unit 5 Your choice of Pre and Post 1900 Texts, in response to a set theme.	
Unit 6 Hamlet by Shakespeare	Elizabethan
Unit 6 Oh What A Lovely War by Theatre Workshop	Post -War British

The following areas of study are vital if you are to support your learning. Keep detailed notes for revision purposes, to support and supplement the curriculum. **A Grade students actively seek breadth and depth of knowledge.**

Compulsory Reading

Devising by Lamden

Drama and Theatre Studies by Sally Mackey and Simon Cooper

From Page to Stage by Shiach

Drama and Theatre Arts by Banks

True or False by Mamet

Modern British Drama by Innes

Phaidon support material on Set, Costume and Lighting and Sound

Games for Actors and Non-Actors by Boal

Impro by Johnstone

The Director and The Stage by Braun

Suggested Support Reading for Set Texts

To help A Midsummer Night's Dream

- Other comedies by Shakespeare- especially Twelfth Night
- The Empty Space by Peter Brook
- Playing Shakespeare – John Barton
- Advice to the Players – Peter Hall
- New Casebook Series on The Dream

To help A Doll's House

- Works by Strindberg such as, Miss Julie, The Father(1887) – the plays take a very different perspective on class and gender issues.
- Strindberg denied, ineffectually, that Ibsen influenced him. Ibsen writes truly great plays - focussing on a sense of imprisonment for a woman. Try reading Hedda Gabler, Ghosts(1881) and The Masterbuilder(1883)
- The Maids by Genet (1946) – feminism and class struggle in expressionist style rather than naturalism. A piece of absurdism....so also helpful for Zoo Story
- The Three Sisters – Chekhov – will help you see similar situation of women at turn of century in Russia

To help Zoo Story

- Any other plays by Albee
- Any plays by Pinter- influences Albee
- Waiting for Godot- directly influence Albee
- Any plays by Beckett
- Theatre of the Absurd – research into this genre
- Any American Drama by O'Neill, Williams, Miller or Mamet

Extended Independent Study

There are several things you should do to support your study.

1. Keep a diary of all practical work at all times. You must reflect and review on a process. Without a diary you are lost.
2. Cut out / Download and keep theatre reviews from National and Local papers. Find things you wish to see.
3. Keep a diary of all theatrical events been in or seen. Keep programmes and flyers and pictures.
4. Read publications: The Stage, Theatre Review Magazine, Time Out, Newspapers, The Culture sections and Arts sections of Sunday papers
5. Do CULTURE! Go to the theatre, opera, ballet, gigs, art galleries, fashion shows, museums, stand-up comedy – write responses in your diary.
6. Keep a STIMULUS SCRAPBOOK : you must glean inspiration from every resource- song lyrics, poetry, dance, opera, chords on a guitar, novels, biographies, news articles, history books, art, sculpture, fashion pages, architectural sketchings, photographs, music, landscapes.

7. Listen to Radio 4 or Radio 5 – you have to be up to date with topical current events. Theatre reflects its age and holds the mirror up to nature. Playwrights write about the life we live. Shut yourself off from society at your peril.

Excellent extension texts

Other People's Shoes by Harriet Walter

The Actor and The Target – Declan Donnellan- Nick Hern Books

On Directing edited by Mary Luckhurst- Faber and Faber

Through the Body – Dymphna Callery – Nick Hern Books

Is Shakespeare still our contemporary? Edited by John Elsom- Routledge

The Actors' Thesaurus – Calderone Nick Hern Books

Useful Theatre Contacts for students

Battersea Arts Centre / BAC 5 mins walk from Clapham Junction. Pay what you can nights – fantastic devised drama. Program changes regularly. Great Bar and Café. Sunday shows.

Royal Court Theatre – 10p to stand. The home of new writing in Sloane Square, right by tube station. Fantastic new scripts at cheap prices.

Warehouse Theatre, Croydon- 2 mins walk from East Croydon Station in Dingwall Road(First right out of station_. Performance on Sundays too.

National Theatre – student stand by 30mins before shows. Platform lectures at 6pm with famous artists/designers/directors. Fantastic bookshop and cafes. Near Waterloo or over bridge from Embankment tube.

Fringe Venues in London (Listed in Time Out magazine) – usually above pubs (!) – great theatre by independent companies. Can be hit and miss, but you'll see some amazing stuff.

Guildford, Yvonne Arnaud- Main House plus Studio Theatre

Brighton, Gardner Arts Theatre on University Campus

Crawley, The Hawth, Studio work – great for international dance companies

The Place – Fantastic Dance

The Barbican, London – alternative fringe stuff. Lots of European Theatre.

Things your parents can do to help

- Fund you with enough money for tickets!
- Subscribe to a daily paper / Time Out / Theatre Review magazine / The Stage- good present idea for Birthday too!
- Give you permission to go to a) Edinburgh Festival in August- amazing stuff for inspiration
- Trust you on the underground in London.
- Take you to theatre, dance, and opera – get them to join in.
- Bookmark theatre pages on home computer

- Buy Theatre Books for Xmas and Birthday presents
- Watch Artsworld on satellite channel
- Be tolerant about late nights – theatre students have to go to see live events. Whilst some great stuff happens locally, a lot of wonderful work goes on in London and that means late nights and late notice. Be NICE to them.

Resources

Web Sites

School Library

Drama Dept. Library

Dorking Performing Arts Library

National Theatre Bookshop

Croydon Library – Drama Section

Text Books in Department

Videos

Audiocassettes

DVD's

Radio

Practitioners

You must have an excellent knowledge of the following practitioners. These people have changed the face of theatre. You must understand the influence of:

Stanislavsky

Craig

Piscator

Brecht

Meyerhold

Artaud

Grotowski

Boal

Brook

You will be expected to carry out **painstaking independent research** into these practitioners and keep substantial notes on their achievements.

“Drama is a performing art. The essence of drama is live performance in front of an audience. Theatre has an immediacy a ‘here and now’ impact that can create a unique bond between performer and audience, a shared experience, which, at its best. Is utterly compelling and absorbing.”

