

**H2 THEATRE STUDIES AND DRAMA
TEACHING SYLLABUS
(Syllabus 9726)**

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I. AIMS

This syllabus in Theatre Studies and Drama aims to

- develop students' knowledge and understanding of, and critical thinking about, theatre and drama in a variety of historical and cultural settings
- stimulate creative exploration of ideas and the expression of these ideas through dramatic forms and theatre conventions
- foster enjoyment of theatre and drama and so develop the affective, cognitive and aesthetic domains of learning as well as personal and collaborative skills

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students should be able to

- understand play texts in relation to dramatic theory and historical context
- analyse and interpret texts from the viewpoint of theatre production
- analyse and record in a cogent and organised way the processes of practical work and evaluate the success of practical projects undertaken
- plan, research and present individual and group projects
- develop practical skills related to the theory and practice of theatre arts including the visual, kinaesthetic and symbol systems of drama and theatre to communicate meaning
- integrate and synthesise skills, knowledge and processes into realising a performance or presentation
- critically reflect on the production process and development of work

III. CORE SKILLS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

A course in TSD should equip a TSD student with the following skills and learning outcomes:

- Analytical skills
 - The ability to analyse a play text in relation to its social context and performance conditions
 - The ability to examine a text for its thematic meaning, larger symbolic meaning and cultural significance
- Interpretive skills
 - The ability to understand play texts in relation to dramatic theory, and historical and cultural backgrounds
 - The ability to respond to and transform a dramatic text into performance
 - The ability to perform a dramatic role or create a dramatic sequence in a particular way that conveys understanding of the playwright's ideas and awareness of audience

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- Evaluative skills
 - The ability to analyse the different ways in which plays might be interpreted by different directors, designers, performers and audiences
 - The ability to critically appreciate and assess the literary and dramatic qualities of plays and other performance scripts
- Writing skills
 - The ability to produce a cogent and reasoned argument for a particular reading of the play text
 - The ability to write creatively and critically for self-expression and to communicate meaning according to purpose, audience, context and culture
- Creative, devising and improvisation skills
 - The ability to interpret and illuminate play scripts and other theatrical texts imaginatively
 - The ability to explore and experiment with a variety of ideas and recognise rejection as part of the whole creative process
 - The ability to solve practical problems of performance through a variety of approaches
 - The ability to develop ideas generated during workshops into theatrical concepts
- Communication skills
 - The ability to articulate and express ideas in a cogent and meaningful way
 - The ability to use language, gestures, movement and emotion to convey meaning
 - The ability to use or modify dramatic and theatre conventions to convey ideas
- Collaborative skills
 - An awareness and understanding of the dynamics of working together
 - The ability to make group decisions
 - The ability to share ideas, and to give and accept criticism
- Performance skills
 - The ability to use acting devices explored in the course
 - The ability to improvise to create character, mood and sense of style
 - The ability to use a variety of theatrical styles
 - The ability to use the body and the voice as a means of communicating feelings of varying intensity

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- The ability to use, explore and develop the acting methods inspired by theatre practitioners
- Problem-solving skills
 - The ability to solve practical problems of performance through a variety of approaches
 - The ability to negotiate and resolve conflict and disagreement during the creative process
- Design skills
 - The ability to understand, interpret and translate a dramatic idea/vision into a design concept
 - The ability to express a design concept through material and other tangible means (e.g. costume, set, sound, lighting, make-up)
- Directorial skills
 - The ability to interpret a play text including its themes, characters, style, mood, structure and context
 - The ability to identify various stages of development from rehearsal to performance
 - The ability to use relevant technical or theoretical devices to enhance a presentation
- Research skills
 - The ability to conduct library research into specific historical and social contexts of play texts
 - The ability to acquire knowledge and skills in an experiential way from performers in a professional setting

IV. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

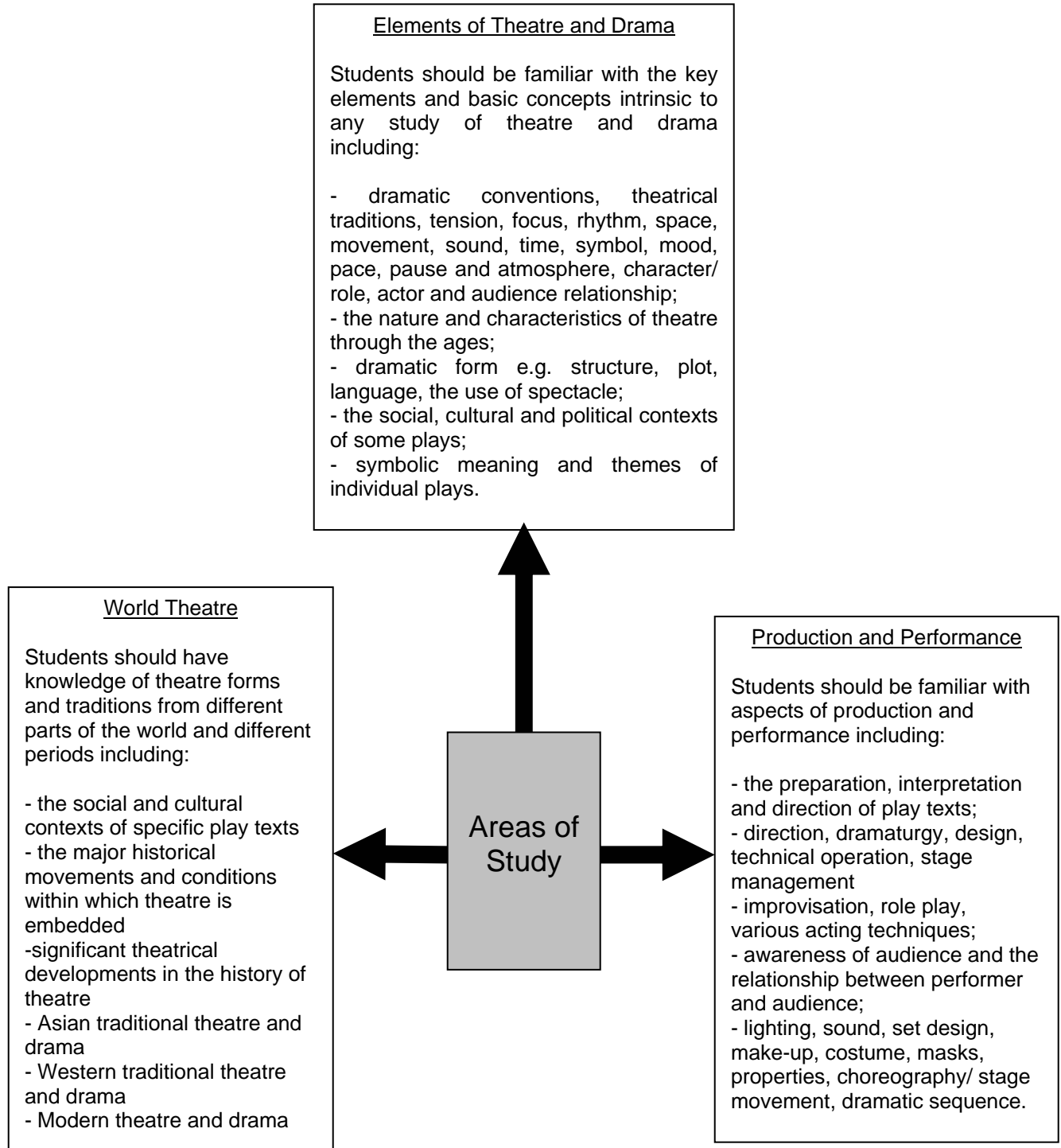
The study and practice of theatre and drama is dependent on the teacher-practitioners' ability to fashion a suitable learning environment. The ideal theatre class should learn and develop within a physical classroom and studio environment that is stimulating and inviting. A classroom culture that encourages exploration, experimentation and independent learning should be encouraged. There should also be a climate of co-operation and acceptance of ideas that supports and validates students' contribution and work in progress. Opportunities for experiential learning and practice should be provided in frequent workshops. Students could also be encouraged to forge links with other theatre groups and resource personnel so as to benefit from a rich diet of diverse theatre experiences.

As TSD is a subject open to interpretation in performance, teachers must also be able to manage potential sensitivities that may arise in the teaching of TSD. While theatre offers possibilities in pushing ideological and artistic boundaries,

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balance and maturity must be maintained. Students must be given proper guidance in their artistic experiments.

V. AREAS OF STUDY



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A. GROUP PERFORMANCE

The essentially collaborative nature of drama and theatre underlines the importance of designing a course in which students are given the opportunity of working and learning together as a group. They should understand the dynamics of collaborating and making decisions as part of an ensemble. Each member of the group should be seen as a valuable resource so that the sharing of ideas as well as the giving and accepting of constructive criticism is encouraged. Students need to understand the importance of rehearsals in terms of their impact on the development of production processes. They must also cooperate at all stages from planning to performance, seeing how best to position individual strengths to the advantage of the whole group. The TSD course should equip students with the ability to solve practical problems of performance through a variety of approaches. Together, students experiment with ideas and theories, theatrical styles, acting methods, and design and technical elements in order to shape and symbolically represent meaning. Teachers will monitor and assess students on their individual contribution to the group over the period of time in which the group performance is developed, via close observation, group meetings, and individual conferences.

B. INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

As part of the TSD course, each student will choose an area of specialisation or individual skill based on interest and talent. Students work on developing and honing their individual skill by devising a performance or demonstration to showcase it. Some skill areas which students might like to focus on are acting, set design, and dramatic sequence. A student may also choose a skill not listed in the teaching and examination syllabuses. However, prior approval must be sought from the examination board before this is done. In developing their skill and preparing for their presentation, students might find it useful to keep a working journal in which they record the creative process, their thoughts and ideas. The journal may be used as a resource for the Critical Commentary which all students have to submit.

REPertoire: ACTING

By the end of the 2-year TSD course, students should be able to:

Theory

1. interpret scenes from a play using performance styles and theatrical conventions to dramatic effect
2. understand different acting styles and conventions as well as aspects of characterisation (e.g. motivation, psychological complexity, behaviour)
3. understand the importance of voice production (e.g. projection, audibility, clarity, tone, pitch, pace) and aspects of speech (e.g. accent, dialect) as a means of communication
4. understand how movement relates to character, physical control, energy, timing, and use of acting space
5. understand the use of gesture, focus, stillness and silence in performance and in the realisation of character

Practical

6. use acting skills, including improvisation techniques, to interpret and perform scripted and non-scripted material
7. use acting skills to adopt, develop and sustain a variety of characters and roles
8. communicate with the audience through the appropriate use of voice and movement to realise character
9. convey character vis-à-vis other characters on stage
10. use gesture, focus, stillness and silence in performance and in the realisation of character

DEvised DRAMA: DRAMATIC SEQUENCE

By the end of the 2-year TSD course, students should be able to:

Theory

1. understand the styles, conventions and different effects of theatrical presentation
2. understand dramatic structure and the elements of stylistic and thematic coherence in relation to any piece of theatre
3. understand how theatre is realised through various performance elements (e.g. acting, voice, movement) and technical elements (e.g. sound, lighting, set design)

Practical

4. conceptualise, articulate and perform a coherent theatrical presentation
5. communicate with the audience

REPERTOIRE OR DEvised DRAMA: STAGE MOVEMENT

By the end of the 2-year TSD course, students should be able to:

Theory

1. understand stage movement in relation to dramatic texts and theatrical events
2. understand stage movement in relation to aspects of drama and performance such as character, mood and setting
3. understand different qualities of movement (e.g. emotional, social, functional and ritualistic)
4. understand the importance of specific movement skills (e.g. fencing, stage fighting, dance)
5. understand stage movement pertaining to different theatrical styles, dramatic conventions and historical period (e.g. mime, Chinese opera, modern theatre)

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Practical

6. demonstrate stage movements in terms of physical control, energy, spatial awareness and dynamics of the performance
7. demonstrate specific movement skills (e.g. fencing, stage fighting, dance) and show a range of movements
8. use stage movements to engage the audience and establish a clear intention and appropriate relationship

DEvised DRAMA: PUPPETRY

By the end of the 2-year TSD course, students should be able to:

Theory

1. understand the purpose, theatrical effectiveness and dramatic potential of puppets in relation to a chosen dramatic text or an identified theatrical event
2. understand the historical and cultural contexts in which puppets are used
3. relate the use of puppets to aspects of performance like character, setting and costume
4. understand construction techniques and materials related to the creation of puppets

Practical Work

5. create original designs for puppets appropriate to genre, convention, historical period or cultural context
6. consider all aspects of the presentation of the puppet in relation to costume, setting, lighting, sound etc.
7. select the appropriate materials for puppets, showing as well an awareness of budget and safety factors

DESIGN: SET DESIGN

By the end of the 2-year TSD course, students should be able to:

Theory

1. understand set design in relation to a chosen dramatic text or an identified theatrical event
2. understand the effects of form and styles of theatrical presentation in relation to mood, theme, cultural context and historical period
3. understand construction techniques related to set design
4. relate set design to other aspects of theatre craft, e.g. lighting, costumes, sound or props
5. show an awareness of stage shape and the problems of sight-lines for the audience
6. understand the role of the set designer in relation to the total production team

Practical Work

7. create an original set design or re-create a period set for a theatrical performance, taking into account scene changes
8. design and present scaled diagrams as well as construct a set model
9. demonstrate how theatrical space is used in relation to both performers and audience
10. demonstrate a practical approach to set design showing an awareness of budget and safety factors

DESIGN: MASK DESIGN

By the end of the 2-year TSD course, candidates should be able to:

Theory

1. understand the purpose, theatrical effectiveness and dramatic potential of masks in relation to a chosen dramatic text or an identified theatrical event
2. demonstrate a knowledge of masks in relation to genre, convention, historical period or cultural context
3. understand the appropriateness of colour and design of masks in relation to character
4. understand construction techniques and materials related to masks

Practical Work

8. create an original design for a mask or re-create masks specific to genre, convention, historical period or cultural context
9. consider all aspects of the presentation of the mask in relation to costume, setting, lighting, make-up etc.
10. select the appropriate materials and colours for mask design
11. demonstrate a practical approach to mask design showing an awareness of budget and safety factors

DESIGN: MAKE-UP AND COSTUME DESIGN

By the end of the 2-year TSD course, candidates should be able to:

Theory

1. understand the theatrical effectiveness of make-up and costume as part of holistic visual design
2. understand the purpose and use of make-up and costume within an identified dramatic text or theatrical event

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3. understand make-up and costume particular to certain cultural contexts, historical periods and theatrical styles
4. understand the effects of lighting and setting on make-up and costume design
5. understand the role of the make-up and costume designer in relation to the total production team

Practical Work

6. create an original design for make-up and costume or re-create make-up and costumes specific to genre, cultural context and historical period
7. select appropriate materials and colours for make-up and costume design
8. relate a knowledge of stage make-up and costume materials to the specifics of the design concept, including budget and safety considerations

DESIGN: SOUND DESIGN

By the end of the 2-year TSD course, candidates should be able to:

Theory

1. understand the theatrical effectiveness of sound
2. understand and select sound for a chosen performance area, relating it to the mood and atmosphere of the chosen dramatic text or theatrical event
3. understand the options open to a sound designer
4. understand the relationship between sound and other aspects of performance (e.g. character, stage movement, lighting)
5. understand the role of the sound designer in relation to the total production team

Practical Work

6. demonstrate a knowledge of sound effects using a sound board or different objects
7. demonstrate the sound design as a theatrical event

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8. present a detailed sound cue sheet
9. create a short theatrical scenario (devised scene) which would enable the sound designer to offer a full and comprehensive delivery in sound design
10. demonstrate a knowledge of safety regulations

DESIGN: LIGHTING DESIGN

By the end of the 2-year TSD course, candidates should be able to:

Theory

1. understand the theatrical effectiveness of lighting
2. understand and select lighting for a chosen performance area, relating it to the mood and atmosphere of the chosen dramatic text or theatrical event
3. understand the options open to a lighting designer
4. understand the impact of lighting on colours, costumes, actors, make-up and set design
5. understand the role of the lighting designer in relation to the total production team

Practical Work

6. demonstrate a knowledge of lights, colour filters, switchboards, dimmers, functions and effects of different lanterns e.g. spots/ fresnels
7. demonstrate the lighting design as a theatrical event
8. present a detailed lighting cue sheet
9. create a short theatrical scenario (devised scene) which would enable the lighting designer to offer a full and comprehensive delivery in lighting design
10. relate a knowledge of functions and effects of different lights to the specifics of the design concept, including safety and other practical considerations

VI. ASSESSMENT

Assessment of TSD at H2 level should comprise both *formative* and *summative* forms of assessment.

Summative assessment: In the course of their study, students will be formally assessed at appropriate stages on what they have learnt in tests and examinations. Testing both theory and performance, summative assessment charts students' ongoing process in the subject so as to give them a clearer idea of their positions relative to final learning outcomes. Summative assessment also allows teachers to provide remediation if necessary.

Formative assessment: This should be carried out to supplement formal tests and examinations. Formative assessment is flexible and may include a variety of tasks to allow for a more comprehensive assessment of students' abilities and needs. Through informal formative assessment like written monthly assignments and class presentations, teachers can monitor students on a regular basis. Through portfolios, working journals and other forms of formative assessment which take place over a period of time, students also get the opportunity to review and evaluate their work.

VII. USEFUL REFERENCES

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