

Drama

Module Directory

2018-19

For reference only

Please see the full directory online:

<http://bit.ly/sedmoduledirectory>



Image: Drama graduate Moa Johansson

FIRST YEAR MODULES

London/Culture/Performance

DRA114 / Level 4 / 15 Credits

London/Culture/Performance is an introductory core module for all Drama students. It has three key aims: 1. To equip you with skills for analysing performance (as distinct from written text) (keyword: performance); 2. To facilitate your critical and productive engagement with London and the vast cultural resources and history it has to offer (keyword: London); 3. To introduce you to some current issues in cultural politics and critical ways of approaching them (keyword: culture). These skills are fundamental to the university-level study of Drama in London and will serve you throughout your Drama degree and beyond. Module activities will include: fieldwork at various sites around London; attendance at and critical response to performances and events; seminar-based discussion; seminar preparation that is not supervised by staff, including independent fieldwork and research; seminar presentations; and critical writing. You will be expected to participate constructively in seminars, to come to class fully prepared, and to complete all fieldwork exercises. This module provides an excellent opportunity for you to explore the performance resources available in London and to develop your skills in using, understanding and responding critically to them.

Cultural Histories of Theatre

DRA115 / Level 4 / 15 Credits

This module provides students with a historical and theoretical grounding in some of the key issues in modern and contemporary theatre. Through a series of talks, seminars, screenings and theatre visits, students will encounter significant theatre works and practices in their historical and cultural contexts. Encounters with theatre practice will be accompanied by readings of relevant historical and critical texts so that students can begin to think and write about the role of theatre in a number of different cultural situations. Particular attention will be paid to theatre which enables students to engage with such topics as modernity, cultural difference, formal experimentation and political engagement. Material to be covered might include, for example, Brecht and the culture of the Weimar Republic; Amiri Baraka, Black Power and the Black Revolutionary Theatre; radical performance and mass culture in 1960s Japan.

Making Theatre

DRA116 / Level 4 / 30 Credits

In this module students work in companies led by a tutor to explore the performance-making strategies of a select practitioner, company and/or practice. You explore those strategies through research that is both text-based (reading, viewing, etc.) and practice-based. You will develop select key practical skills as required to work in the mode of the practitioner, company and/or practice studied. Adopting and critically adapting the performance-making strategies studied, each student company makes a performance for presentation.

Practices

DRA117 / Level 4 / 0 Credits

Practices supports you in the transition to university-level study in Drama through a series of induction events, seminars and workshops. The module introduces information and practices central to negotiating the first year (and beyond) successfully including, for example: navigating QMUL's online learning environment; time management; accessing support; digital resources and research; reading critically; writing and editing; referencing and good academic practice; making the most of feedback; preparing for student-led practice; technical skills including space management, light, sound and voice; work placements in the arts; and documenting performance practice. The module draws directly on issues, content, skills and assessments from other modules at Level 4, especially compulsory modules for all joint and single honours students. The module also benefits from the involvement of PASS mentors. The module is assessed on a pass/fail basis, based on satisfactory attendance (i.e. meets School requirements to remain registered on the module) and completion of developmental tasks.

Performance Texts in Practice

DRA118 / Level 4 / 30 Credits

This practical module introduces you to a variety of plays and other writings for performance, and helps you develop critical strategies for engaging with these texts through performance. In addition to honing skills in performance and dramaturgy, you will also enhance your capacity to analyse texts and performance events. Learning is based on practical explorations of the processes and techniques for adapting and transforming material into performance, supported by group discussions of critical readings, screenings, and live performances. Exploration of dramatic and performance texts will result in developing design directions and performance conventions. You will learn the fundamentals of production design, using contemporary techniques. The module is taught through staff-led discussions, workshops, and student-led practice sessions. Assessment is based on a group performance project, a presentation, and an essay.

Popular Theatre and Performance

DRA119 / Level 4 / 15 Credits

This module examines a wide range of theatrical contexts, histories and forms, in order to investigate the meanings of the term 'popular'. The module might cover, for example, the theatre of Ancient Greece, Medieval guild drama, Commedia dell'Arte, Elizabethan commercial theatre, melodrama, blackface minstrelsy, folk theatre and ritual, Chinese Opera, Kabuki theatre, Broadway musicals, applied theatre, immersive theatre, commercial entertainment, the avant-garde and 'unpopular' theatre forms. Interrogating the concept of the 'popular' requires that you acknowledge how the socio-economic conditions in which particular theatre forms emerged have contributed to how social hierarchies can be formed and imagined at the theatre. The module aims to help you to contextualise your study of contemporary theatre practices within a range of historical legacies and traditions, and to help you feel confident about working with a range of historical objects, documents and forms of evidence.

Interventions

DRA120 / Level 4 / 15 Credits

Interventions is a practice-based course that examines the intersection between aesthetics and activism, in the social and political contexts shared by Live Art, Applied Theatre and Site-Specific Performance. In addition to being provided with practical skills, students will also be introduced to work by a range of performance practitioners. Students will explore the politics and pleasures involved in performance practices that provoke, argue, or advocate for social change. This course maintains that performance is used to intervene in a variety of social, political and environmental contexts, which may include the street, commercial centres, health or social care systems, educational institutions, online and virtual environments and so on. As such, these performance interventions expose and challenge conventions and perceptions of everyday life. The course will require attendance at a series of workshops, as well as visits to appropriate sites or locations.

SECOND YEAR MODULES

Performing Shakespeare

DRA205 / Level 5 / 30 Credits

How to perform Shakespeare has been one of the most enduring and ideologically fraught struggles in modern British theatre production. This module builds on the historiographical and cultural studies work of year one, providing a practical laboratory in which you will learn and explore modes of performance that will illuminate the theatrical work in performance while preserving its historical strangeness. Drawing variously on our contemporary understanding of the conditions of English Renaissance production and on performance techniques associated with experimental theatre artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, you will work on text from Shakespeare plays, making use of, for example, rhetorical gesture, improvisation, flirting and showing off, talking to the audience, audio feeds, part-scripts, textual muddles, obscenity and cross-dressing. The emphasis will be on finding viable and intellectually rigorous modes of performance that challenge the dominant 'naturalistic' modes that operate in most British theatre production.

Theatre Writings

DRA218 / Level 5 / 30 Credits

This module is intended to develop your writing for and about the stage. Each week you will be set creative writing tasks that will help you develop your own skills in writing. Over the semester, you will build up a portfolio of creative pieces and be required to analyse the work of other students. In addition, we will be looking at plays in performance and on the page, and we will practice effective ways of writing about theatre as well as for it.

Making Contemporary Theatre

DRA220 / Level 5 / 30 Credits

This module examines processes, techniques and modes of expression used by contemporary theatre-makers to create a variety of forms. We examine how the performance-making processes of significant practitioners function analytically, creatively, and practically. We consider how practitioners strategically deploy methodologies, conventions and techniques to produce particular outcomes. We consider how process is informed by content, genre, mode of representation, theatrical convention, and ideological and cultural context. We learn methods of workshopping and performing that can create stimulating and engaging theatre. Theatre-makers examined may include DV8 Physical Theatre, the Wooster Group, Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Robert Lepage's Ex Machina, Societas Raffaello Sanzio, Complicite, Grid Iron, and Station House Opera.

Naturalism

DRA223 / Level 5 / 15 Credits

Naturalism seems to be the theatre that all fashionable modern theatre people love to hate. This module aims to reconnect with the original dynamic energy of naturalist theatre, and to trace a century-long fascination with the art of making it look and feel real. We will look at new discoveries and explorations of nineteenth century science, and at radical moves in painting and literature, as a way of framing our exploration of naturalist drama itself. We will find out why it was so offensive to see a version of your own living room on stage and how theatre started to bring all the sordid realities of everyday life on stage. Seminars will involve extensive study of naturalist plays, from Ibsen and Strindberg, via Franz Xavier Kroetz to Richard Maxwell, film screenings and critical and historical texts that place the phenomenon of naturalism in historical and aesthetic context.

Group Practical Project

DRA242 / Level 5 / 30 Credits

To expose students to key scholarly and practical skills relevant to the study and making of theatre and performance: to enable students to make informed choices about the development of those skills relevant to their individual overall programme of study on this degree; to develop students' understanding of themselves as scholar-artists; to offer students an opportunity to undertake and present a substantial practical project in a role of their choosing; to offer students the opportunity to work on a practice-based project within the creative restrictions of a research question devised by Drama staff; to offer students the opportunity to work on a professional-quality performance event festival.

Action Design

DRA245 / Level 5 / 30 Credits

This module provides a practical and theoretical introduction to the seven areas of technical production for the theatre: Lighting, Sound, Design, Workshop, Costume, Technical Drawing and Stage Management. Through this practical introduction you will develop a theoretical understanding of the Design systems of Josef Svoboda, Jaroslav Malina and Jan Dusek and develop an appreciation and active practical response to the term 'scenografie' and the Action Design Movement. Not open to Associate Students.

Cultural Politics and Performance

DRA259 / Level 5 / 15 Credits

Cultural Politics and Performance builds on thinking and theatre-going in the first year, in order to introduce you to key philosophical and ethical debates about the nature and purpose of the theatre event in relation to its cultural contexts. The module will focus on the politics of representation within a range of geographical and historical contexts, asking questions about the nature and purpose of representation within ethical and political frameworks, and examining how artists themselves have used formal innovations to interrogate the ideological implications of their own practices. The module will enable you to engage with a range of key theoretical methods and approaches. It will build on your introduction to semiotics and ideology by focusing on questions of identity and power; it will also develop your historical thinking and research skills. Theories, debates and contexts examined might include queer theory, anti-theatricality, post-colonialism, feminism, post-structuralism, the post-dramatic, cultural materialism etc. You will also be exposed to a range of theatre forms in order to examine the tripartite relationship between socio-historical contexts, formal and aesthetic innovation in the theatre, and the political implications of performance.

London Performance Now

DRA261 / Level 5 / 15 Credits

London is one of Europe's most exciting theatrical cities with a range of productions on offer at any given time. This module will examine a range of live productions to explore strategies for reading live performance that recognize the importance of where performances take place. As a group we will visit the National Theatre, the Barbican, and the Royal Court as well as 'fringe' or alternative venues in examining how we read the performance event. Students will be expected to engage with critical reviews of performances, examine the role of press and marketing and explore the targeting of specific productions to particular audience groups.

Performing Personae

DRA262 / Level 5 / 30 Credits

Performing Identities explores a wide spectrum of performing/acting, from the performance of self to the performance of various types of other. It includes investigations into and the creation of personae, alter egos, characters (already existing and newly made), avatars, impersonations, disguises, archetypes, faux celebrities, monikers, for example. We will also look at phenomenas of channelling, possession and mediumship (i.e. being taken over by another). The central questions guiding our investigations are: Who are you when you are performing? and Who are you when you are on stage or in front of an audience? We will work with technical aspects of presence, points of concentration and psychological gesture in order to find practical mechanisms for performing along the identity spectrum.

Race and Racism in Performance

DRA263 / Level 5 / 15 Credits

This module explores how race is performed in theatre, art, and popular culture. Of particular interest are performances that trouble how we think or talk about race, especially as it intersects with other identity categories like gender, class, sexuality and disability. Why are race and structural racism such difficult topics to discuss, especially in the context of performance? What does it mean to label a performance racist, and how can we as artists develop anti-racist performance practices? The topics this seminar covers could include histories of blackface minstrelsy, debates over 'colour-blind' casting, the politics of cultural appropriation in pop culture for example.

Costume Dramas

DRA264 / Level 5 / 15 Credits

This module explores the ways in which British culture has reproduced, appropriated and performed the past through costume and clothing. The 'performance' of the title includes historical plays and plays about history, novel adaptations on film and television and the performance of the self through 'retro' fashion. The module takes the visual cultures of costume and fashion as the starting point for an analysis of the ideological and historically situated meanings we make of the past. It is taught through seminars, video screenings, fieldwork (one piece of which may take place outside London) and at least one theatre visit.

Performing Illness and Disability

DRA267 / Level 5 / 15 Credits

This module investigates the representation of illness and disability in performance. It focuses primarily on contemporary performance and live art practices by artists with illnesses or disability but is contextualised by the history of disability performance, e.g. in the Victorian freak shows. You will be introduced to ways of understanding discourses of disability and illness, and the ways in which they become manifest in performance. The module enables you to discuss issues of representation, lived experience and agency as they relate to disabled and unwell bodies in performance.

Voice, Gender, Performance

DRA268 / Level 5 / 15 Credits

How do people use their voices, and what does this reveal or conceal about their gendered identities? How do gendered voices intersect with other aspects of identity, such as region, class, nation and race? Drawing on theoretical material from a range of disciplinary fields, including cultural philosophy, sociolinguistics, film studies, and psychology, this module will consider the voicing of gender in a variety of different physical spaces and discursive spheres - from the playground to Parliament - and through a range of media, including theatre, internet, TV, film and music.

FINAL YEAR MODULES

Culture, Performance and Globalisation

DRA304 / Level 6 / 15 Credits

This module will consider the practice and problematic of performance in and between different cultures, particularly in relation to the apparently pan-cultural phenomenon of 'globalisation'. Students will be introduced to, and will discuss key issues from discourses which seek to critique cross- and inter- cultural artistic practice (specifically those of post-colonialism and globalisation). They will seek to situate issues concerning culture within the practice of performance, whether this is from the perspective of the spectator, or the performer him/herself. The module will examine and formulate theory in relation to play texts, historical accounts of performance, video recordings and live performances.

Feeling It: Emotion and Sensation in the Theatre

DRA307 / Level 6 / 15 Credits

Who feels what in which theatre? From theories of catharsis in tragic theatre to the predicament of the spectator in postmodern performance, this module takes a critical, historical and theoretical look at how emotion and sensation have been experienced in the theatre. The module will draw on theoretical and historical texts, from Aristotle and Saint Augustine, through Diderot, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, via Darwin and Freud to Deleuze and Lyotard, to consider what it might mean to feel real feelings and sense real sensations on stage and off. These theoretical texts will be examined in relation to historical accounts and contemporary experiences of performances. We will also consider the ways in which a theatre that engages those senses other than sight might be both vital and strangely overlooked in a study of theatre that is dominated by the visual experience and its reading of signs. Each seminar will be themed around an emotional or sensational experience, for example: horror, pain, joy, grief, boredom, helpless laughter, hysteria, lust, schizophrenia, despair, love.

Performance Composition

DRA310 / Level 6 / 30 Credits

Independent performers are responsible for the entirety of their work. This includes conceiving the idea, writing the text, composing the score and/or choreography, designing the visuals, securing equipment, mastering the technology, locating the venue, producing and marketing the event and finally performing the piece. This module will provide practical skills and experience in each of these aspects of independent performance. You will create a performance piece of at least ten minutes in length which will be performed in at least two of the Performance Nights. The piece will then be critiqued and rewritten for a final performance in weeks 10 and 11 of the module. As well as producing, performing and publicising the work, the class will be required to set up and run the performance space for the Performance Nights that will be held once a week throughout the first semester.

Shakespeare after Shakespeare

DRA316 / Level 6 / 15 Credits

This module examines how Shakespeare has been adapted and appropriated in a variety of performance contexts. We will address and debate issues such as cultural and textual authority, authorship, gender, sexuality, national identity, ethnicity, adaptation and appropriation. Possible topics, contexts and texts through which these issues will be addressed may include, but are not limited to: authorship; decolonisation, postcolonial and settler cultures; queering Shakespeare; feminist performance; heritage and tourism; festivals; translation; popular culture; education. We will engage critically with Shakespeare's play texts, performances 'after Shakespeare' and critical writing.

Madness and Theatricality

DRA323 / Level 6 / 30 Credits

This module explores madness and mental illness in recent and historical performance. It asks questions about how a society's constructions of madness are reflected in and produced by performance, and about the versions of subjectivity or selfhood that emerge when we play mad. The module is taught through practice-based case studies of ancient Greek, English Renaissance and twentieth/twenty-first century European texts and performances. It examines the versions of madness and mental illness produced in historical performance, and the ways in which these have been reinterpreted and rewritten to reflect current constructions and concerns of and about madness. It explores recent constructions of madness and its 'treatment' on stage.

Written Research Project

DRA329 / Level 6 / 30 Credits

This module guides you through the process of choosing a research topic, researching that topic, framing appropriate research questions and structuring an argument for an 8,000 word research project in the expanded field of Drama, Theatre and/or Performance Studies. You will develop your project through a programme of seminars and a writing retreat, addressing areas of research methodology and presentation such as: research ethics; planning and executing research, including book/journal-based, electronic, archival and interview-based research; selecting research methodologies; approaches to critical writing; giving a research presentation. You will also develop your topic individually with your seminar leader and with your supervisor, as well your fellow students in seminars. The module takes place in Semester 2, but a preliminary meeting will take place in Semester 1. You will submit a proposal in Semester 1 and your supervisor will be assigned late in Semester 1/before Semester 2. Only open to students enrolled on Drama single and joint honours degree programmes. Not open to Associate Students.

Performance, Sexuality, Identity

DRA332 / Level 6 / 15 Credits

This module analyses relationships between performance, sexuality and identity and how performance might be deployed in the service of specific political and cultural agendas. Through a consideration of a range of companies, performers, playwrights, organisations, photographers, filmmakers, for example, and critical writing, the module will consider a variety of topics which may include, but are not limited to: theories and histories of sexuality; marriage and civil partnerships; gay and lesbian theatre; television; HIV and AIDS; activism; club performance. In the course of this work we will consider how sexual identities intersect with other identity-forming discourses, especially gender and race/ethnicity.

Performance and Community

DRA337 / Level 6 / 15 Credits

This module will introduce students to ideas about how cultural interventions are being used in areas of social development in local, national and international contexts. We will examine how performance has been used to address issues which may include education, health, sexuality, gender, race, disability and social exclusion. The course will consider case studies of theatre work in action, theoretical frames to examine them and current debates which inform and impact upon the field.

Applied Performance

DRA339 / Level 6 / 30 Credits

This module investigates the field of Applied and Socially Engaged Performance through reflective practice in collaboration with selected community partners to examine possibilities and challenges in the field, including: project planning and development; ethics; using performance for advocacy and activism; documentation and evaluation. It is important to note that additional meetings, workshops and events are key to full participation in the module; these commitments will be negotiated with partner groups as they arise.

Just for Tourists: Travel, Event, Performance

DRA340 / Level 6 / 15 Credits

Performance has become a means by which experiences are mediated for tourists (theme parks, museums, and the service industry for example), just as the practice of tourism has become increasingly performative. Just for Tourists examines the considerable cross-overs between studies in theatre and in tourism. From gap years to augmented reality games, touristic practices often involve experiments in the presentation to self to others, and the 'trying out' of different 'ways of being'. This module will set such contemporary concerns within an historical continuum which includes religious pilgrimages, and the Grand Tour as well as comparative studies in critical theory of tourism.

Performance and Celebrity

DRA341 / Level 6 / 15 Credits

This module examines 'celebrity' and the 'performance of celebrity'. It positions an array of celebrities (actors, politicians, musicians, sports-people) within their individual political, social, historical and cultural contexts allowing them to be read as 'media texts' through which to think through and around issues of commodification, globalization stardom, narcissism, iconography, philanthropy, cultural appropriation, media consumption and media production. The module refracts these issues through a variety of theoretical and ideological lenses (feminism, Marxism, cultural materialism, post-colonialism), encouraging close analysis of the way in which celebrity constructions of race, gender, nation, sexuality and power function in the public's imagination. The module focuses on the development and

imperatives of 21st century fame, opening with historical-case studies of manifestations of celebrity and culminating in contemporary case studies.

Practice-based Research Project

DRA344 / Level 6 / 30 Credits

This module facilitates the production of an independently developed and finished piece of research through performance. Each student will formulate a research question that will develop through both independent work and tutor mentoring. This work will then be developed into a finished presentation in a festival of student work in the exam semester. This will be an opportunity for students to develop ideas and practices that have emerged in their Drama studies within the context of a single research question and presentation. Students will present their ideas and techniques within a series of works-in-progress leading to a fully realised presentation. The module will consider key aspects of research - questions, contexts and methods - through skills-based workshops. Students will be exposed to a wide range of approaches and methods through the study of performance documentation and workshops with various artists. While the emphasis will be on individual process, the class group will serve a vital role for feedback, critique, and ongoing discussion into the various facets of practice-based research (and practice as research). Through these collective and independent engagements students will gain a sense of what it might be like to be a part of a larger community of professional researchers and makers of performance.

Livelihoods

DRA346 / Level 6 / 0 Credits

Livelihoods provides students with opportunities to consider and make action plans for the transition from university to working life. In this module, you will research and explore the current cultural landscape including volunteering and freelance work, the opportunities it offers you and the opportunities you can create yourselves as new entrants into the world of work. There will be a range of activities including: visiting speakers, networking events, independent research, group workshop tasks and the development of individual livelihood 'Flight Plan'. Livelihoods encourages you to draw upon the thinking you have done on your degree about the values, ideologies and practices of the cultural industries and to use that thinking to make empowered choices about work and livelihood. In addition to attending the introductory meeting, you will sign up for a minimum of five sessions from a menu of 2-hour workshops held weekly in Semester 1. The module is assessed on a pass/fail basis, based on the completion of an individual livelihood Flight Plan. You will receive feedback on your Flight Plan from adviser in Semester 2

Verbatim, Testimonial and Tribunal

DRA350 / Level 6 / 30 Credits

This practice-based module explores the traditions and practices of verbatim, testimonial, documentary and tribunal forms of theatre. Raising complex issues such as what it means to 'have a voice' in theatre, notions of authenticity and realness, and of representation and rights, it explores the shaping and framing of material from various sources, including interviews, media, archives and documents. Students will explore the role of the practitioner, make your own piece of theatre, and give reflective responses to the work of others.

Performance in the Gallery

DRA355 / Level 6 / 30 Credits

This module looks at performance in relation to visual art. It examines what it means to develop performance work within a gallery context and how the 'white cube' functions as different from but related to the 'black box' of the theatre. We will work practically to explore the possibilities of performance art as a form emerging from the histories of the visual arts. Students will be taught through practical workshops in order to experiment with form and the potentials of the gallery as a place of performance. The module will address practices such as durational performance and endurance art, action art, performance photography, performance to camera, installation-performance.

Making Site-Specific Performance

DRA356 / Level 6 / 30 Credits

Performance often takes place outside conventional theatre venues. How do such changes of site affect the processes and practices of performance making? This module invites students to develop performance projects intended to be staged in unconventional sites (e.g., site-specific performances, performances in reclaimed or unusual locations, or gallery and museum performances). In doing so, they will explore the role of site in shaping performance practice and gain practical experience of creating work in ways that are increasingly prominent in professional theatre and performance in the United Kingdom and abroad today.

Choreographic Performance

DRA358 / Level 6 / 30 Credits

'Choreography' has come to describe the arrangement and movement of bodies, objects and ideas more widely, although it has historically been attached to the organisation and presentation of dance. Dance is a crucial means by which choreographic thinking might be articulated and can be found in theatrical, gallery and public performances. In this module, we will examine how these diverse practices might enable a variety of means of thinking through and about movement. No prior training or experience in dance is necessary.

Performance Art from the 1970s to the Present

DRA359 / Level 6 / 15 Credits

In this module, you will study case studies in the recent history of performance art, from 1970 to the present. You will be introduced to significant as well as overlooked performance artists, and will engage with their work, by studying audiovisual documentation, scores, oral histories/interviews and artists' writings, as well as significant scholarship and criticism in the field. In-depth analysis of individual case studies will provide fresh perspectives on key themes for the study of performance art, including but not limited to sexuality and gender, race and ethnicity, the blurring of art and life, extremity, duration, protest, and social engagement. You will also engage with contemporary performance art in London, including through visits to live performances, as well as to archives and institutions relevant to performance art, for example the Live Art Development Agency, Tate Archives, Whitechapel Gallery, or the British Library Sound Archive.

Show Business: Theatre and Capitalism

DRA360 / Level 6 / 15 Credits

What kind of business is show business? This module explores the relationship between theatre and capitalism. It examines key economic problems as they arise in the theatre (e.g. "star" performers, box office, theatre as entertainment, theatre as a "creative industry," theatre and real estate). It also considers how performance offers a distinctive lens through which to think about broader practices and relations (e.g. neoliberalism, globalisation, urban development) that have become central to our everyday lives.