

B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title	: English Drama Performance
Course Code	: ENG3277
Recommended Study Year	: 3 rd or 4 th Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture tutorial mode
Class Contact Hours	: 2-hour lecture per week 1-hour tutorial per week
Category	: Discipline Elective (Contemporary Literary Strand)
Prerequisite(s)	: Nil
Co-requisite(s)	: Nil
Exclusion(s)	: Nil
Exemption Requirement(s)	: Nil

Brief Course Description

This practical course in English language production explores techniques of presentation and vocal delivery in drama, verse speaking, oral storytelling and other kinds of performance. Whilst clearly oriented towards students with an interest in learning performative language, it is equally relevant to those wishing to enhance skills such as diction, articulation and vocal projection for non-specialised language purposes. The course is constructed as a process-product experience for participants. They will devise and adapt, rehearse and refine chosen texts for performance in a collaborative context. Emphasis will be placed on important delivery skills such as vocal inflection, paralanguage and body language as well as appropriate and accurate pronunciation. The use of various media, including video and audio-recording in addition to live performance will be exploited. The final product will be a live performance on campus as an assessment piece at the end of the course, but participation in the annual English Drama Production in April will be strongly encouraged.

Aims

1. To develop oral fluency and an awareness of the paralinguistic and prosodic features of English speech and the relationship between sound and meaning;
2. To enhance text memorisation and delivery skills;
3. To display a basic understanding of genre and discourse features of language arts;
4. To demonstrate an appreciation of the subtleties and creative possibilities of written English in spoken performance;
5. To develop critical awareness of spoken English in aesthetic and performative contexts;
6. To interpret character, attitude and intention through intonation, inflection and general vocal technique and accompanying non-verbal signifiers;
7. To develop a practical understanding and appreciation of the codes, conventions and signifying systems involved in language in performance;
8. To foster collaborative and individual performance-related skills for linguistic and aesthetic benefit.

Learning Outcomes

After completion of the course students will be expected to be able to:

1. Enact short performances in English with a reasonable degree of fluency and linguistic accuracy so that the performance(s) are clear and intelligible to an audience of their peers;
2. Reflect and evaluate critically on aspects of own and other performance with reference to both planning and preparation processes and product/outcome, communicating the reflection and evaluation clearly and in an informed manner in both speech and writing;
3. Write an academic analysis and discussion on English drama performance based on personal experience of performances within the group activities as well as outside drama performances witnessed, applying and synthesising constructs and skills gained from the course and individual aesthetic judgment;
4. Collaborate creatively and purposefully with peer group members in devising, rehearsing and producing a range of performances pieces in a shared and exploratory learning environment.

Measurement of learning outcomes. This will be achieved through self-evaluation and self-assessment means, as well as through instructor assessment on the collaborative and cumulative tasks leading up to the final performance. The final essay will allow for assessment of global knowledge and understanding of aims and outcomes of the course.

Indicative Contents

1. Appreciation and evaluation of texts, modified or otherwise, with a view to performance;
2. Scripted, semi-scripted, adapted and devised performance texts;
3. Drama, verse-speaking and oral recitation techniques with appropriate examples;
4. Genre and discourse features. Genres: e.g. comedy, romance, etc.;
5. Linguistic features and vocal delivery;
6. Collaborative development, refining and rehearsing;
7. Audio/video-recording of rehearsal and of live performance.

Teaching Method

The methodology of the course is essentially collaborative and experiential, with the lecturer acting as facilitator for the developmental work of producing a performance based on appropriate texts. Students will be encouraged to integrate performance and linguistic theories into the context of their work. Seminars and discussion tutorials will, therefore, complement the practical group workshops. Introductory lectures will establish the course parameters. The one-hour sessions will be used for classroom work, whether lecture or seminar mode, and the two-hour sessions will all be used for practical work-shopping, rehearsing and performing.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Students' progress towards the learning outcomes outlined above will be measured by continuous assessments of their engagement with workshops, individual and group readings devised work and presentations. Speaking/ presenting/ performing tasks will be of a group nature while written tasks will be individual.

No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcome
1.	Performance-presentation	1
2.	Product - .i.e. the performance	1, 2, 4
3.	Production Diary	2, 3
4.	Term Paper	2, 3

Assessment

There is no end-of-course exam. However, the assessment will involve four pieces of individually and collectively graded course-work:

1. The Performance-presentation. This will be a short piece, approximately 15 minutes in length, designed as both an oral presentation and a mini-performance. Participants will work in pairs and present a short dramatic situation either scripted, semi-scripted or improvised. They will perform in English but will pay particular attention to harmonizing their body language and movement with the spoken language required by the situation. The situation will be presented twice, from two different perspectives or with two different outcomes. A short commentary by the presenters will elucidate the aims and evaluate the outcomes of the mini-performance to the audience of classmates. Grades will be identical so that close collaboration will be fostered between the performing pairs. (Outcomes 1, 4) **15%**
2. The Product - .i.e. the performance. The product can be a short play, or a scene from a longer play -original, abridged or adapted – to be performed in the final week of the course. The group size will vary according to the number of actors required in the selected scene. Assessment will be on a 50/50 basis, evaluating both process and product. The student's role and contribution will be assessed as the product, and her/his commitment and involvement on a regular basis during the preparation period in the second half of the term will be taken into account. (Outcomes 1, 2, 4) **30%**
3. The Production Diary. All students should submit a record of their experiences in the various stages of selecting material, rehearsing and performing scenes to a live audience. Reflective evaluation on concepts introduced in the course text-book (Benedetti), on the outcome of the oral presentation and on collaborative and individual exercises should be included. The individual diaries will reflect the nature of a particular student's contribution, e.g. acting; stage management, properties and costumes; design, etc. The diary should be approximately 3,000 words in length. Reflective, evaluative and critical comment will ideally supplement the factual and descriptive content to provide a balanced and stimulating piece of writing. A six-hundred word written review of another group's

performance (not your own) will be included in the diary. Remember: ongoing weekly entries will make the task more worthwhile and less onerous. The diaries will be collected and read at three-week intervals. (Outcomes 2, 3) **30%**

4. The Term Paper. Using the course text book for reference and suitably acknowledged reference (i.e. not for plagiarism!!), you will be expected to submit a term paper by the second week of December on the nature of performing and creating a performance and how the theoretical ideas compare with your own experience. You will be expected to develop a critical argument and support your points with appropriate examples. References to performances you have witnessed will enhance the quality of the paper. Topic titles will be elaborated in the assignment sheet which will be distributed in the early weeks of the term to facilitate early preparation. (Outcomes 2, 3) **25%**

Required Readings

Benedetti, J. *Stanislavski and the Actor*. London: Methuen Drama, 1998.

(Note: This set text will be useful for both practical and theoretical aspects of the course.)

Recommended Readings

Keir Elam. 1980. *The Semiotics and Theatre and Drama*. London and NY: Methuen.

David Henry Hwang. 1989. *M.Butterfly*. Penguin USA.

John Miles-Brown. 1990 *Acting: A Drama Studio Source Book*. London: Peter Owen.

M. Shackleton (Ed.). 1985. *Double Act*. Ten One-Act plays. London: Edward Arnold.

Helen E. Sharman. 2004. *Directing Amateur Theatre*. A. & C. Black: London.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.