

University of Glasgow

Glasgow, Scotland

At a Glance

The University of Glasgow was founded in the 1400s and the campus is an impressive cluster of spired buildings and cloistered greens encircled by the Kelvingrove Park. The theater department here is small and considers itself a “community of artists” working with each other and top faculty to create theater. The perfect student for Glasgow is one “who wants to do practice (performing, devising, or directing) but wants a grounding in theory and theater history.”

Glasgow is a friendly and small theater department in the heart of an ancient college. Similar to Trinity and Royal Holloway, The University of Glasgow boasts an impressive art collection and feels like a real “campus” of cloisters and turrets. The department is unassuming though academically rigorous: friendly and relaxed compared to London-based schools.

For the lucky student who is able to stay in Scotland over the summer, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (a highly acclaimed international theater festival that goes on over 4 weeks in summer) offers a myriad of opportunities to see contemporary new work, and many University of Glasgow drama students take advantage of the opportunity to work/volunteer/perform at the festival. Fringe is also less than one hour by train from Glasgow.

Academics

The student body in the Drama Department is a productive and positive mix of Scottish and European nationals working at a high intellectual level. One of the drama professors at Glasgow noted that “performance at Glasgow is a means of thinking through questions”. And to that point there is a large emphasis on devising and performance both on and off campus in one of the many small performance venues in Glasgow. UCI students can expect to be directly guided by faculty toward these performance opportunities in the city as well as on campus. There is a

vibrant gallery scene in Glasgow and theater, visual art, and performance actively interweave in gallery performance.

In a new, special articulation agreement, one UCI Honors Drama student per year will be able to take a graduate level course in Contemporary Devising Practices, (which runs September to December). This course entails examining all aspects of the creation of new work (from scripting, to physical theater usages, to site-specific work), alongside the study of contemporary devising history and theory. This intensive course is taught jointly by 4 faculty members, and ends with individual performances. Below are some example classes that can be taken for credit towards the UCI major


Classes at University of Glasgow	Classes at UCI
Contemporary Devising Practices	Drama 135
Various Honors Courses*	Drama 129

*Vary year to year, but will include courses such as "Beckett in Performance, "Queer Exceptions" and "Women in Drama and the English Renaissance Period" All honors classes have a performance component as well as a high academic standard of reading, critical and cultural analysis, and essay writing.

Example Course Descriptions:

Contemporary Devising Practices

Contemporary Devising Practices is a 20 credit course offered as part of the MLitt in Theatre Practices, but is also available to dramaturgy students on the MLitt in Playwriting and Dramaturgy. It is delivered in Semester One of the academic year. The course assumes a basic grounding and practical experience in contemporary devised theater and performance. We will establish a contextual, theoretical and historical framing for devised work before and as we embark on a number of workshop/laboratory sessions. The course serves also as the first



opportunity for the cohort of Theatre Practices students to work together through practice and experimentation. As such it has the purpose of building up skills in collaboration and ensemble practice. Workshop/laboratory sessions will be led by members of the Theater Studies team and each will focus on particular elements of the devising process. Workshop sessions will cover the following ground:

- Bodies, physicality and movement
- Devising with the Other-than-Human
- Intermediality and Performance: Urban Soundscapes
- Text and devising practices

All sessions will require students to engage in creative practical work and in some cases explore movement, physicality and action as a fundamental language of theater making. All movement work will be within the physical range of the students present and no-one will be asked to undertake technically difficult or dangerous actions. Whilst the course is conceived pedagogically as a practical laboratory and workshop, students will be expected to engage reflectively, theoretically and critically with the work they are making throughout. A central tenet of the philosophy of the course is ‘thinking through practice’, or sometimes articulated as ‘praxis’.

Course Aims:

- Develop students’ existing understanding of devised performance practices in the contemporary period;
- Examine and interrogate selected theoretical and critical underpinnings of contemporary devised performance;
- Identify and analyse different tropes of contemporary devised performance;
- Develop students’ skills in the compositional and performance practice(s) of contemporary devised performance;
- Develop students’ skills into various research methodologies appropriate for further understanding of devised theater practices.

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate a critical knowledge and understanding of the theoretical frameworks which inform contemporary devised theater practices;

- Demonstrate practice based dramaturgical skills in the making of devised performance;
- Demonstrate a range of knowledge of different modalities of devised theater;
- Demonstrate an ability to move critically and reflectively between practical and theoretical analysis of devised theater practices; and
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake informed critical research on devised performance practices and their associations with other art forms.

Beckett in Performance

Introduction and Context:

Samuel Beckett was one of the most radical writers and makers of theater in the twentieth century. His work revolutionized our understanding of the nature, form and potential of literature and theater and his impact and influence has extended well beyond drama into the visual arts, music, dance, film, contemporary performance and live art. Beckett's work for the stage, film and television spans nearly 40 years from *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame* and *Happy Days* through to extraordinary experiments such as *Play*, *Footfalls*, *Ohio Impromptu*, *Not I* and *Breath*. As a creator of theater and performance Beckett worked as a visual artist, choreographer, scenographer as well as a writer. Within some of the most daring formal experiments for the stage and screen, Beckett's work engages with the most profound questions around what it is to be human, to be political, to refuse easy answers, to resist, suffusing comedy with tragedy and how to survive in an often bleak and challenging world. The course will consider Beckett in the wider context of the social, political and cultural era which frames his life and work so as to better understand why and how he made art. We will look at the early plays for theater and also his shorter pieces composed towards the end of his life. We will examine Beckett's relationship with music, film, visual art and contemporary performance and how his various pieces engage with audiences. We will consider the challenges – in practice – for actors of Beckett's work and how some of his plays might be staged and presented for live performance. We will collectively practice and enjoy the experience – to paraphrase Beckett – of failing again, but failing better.

Course Aims:

- To examine the range of Beckett's work for performance, from early plays to work for film and television.


- To examine through theory and practice the dramaturgical and compositional practices employed by Beckett across his work for performance.
- To explore through practice and experimentation the challenges facing theater practitioners when preparing Beckett's work for live performance.
- To investigate critical writing on Beckett in order to understand more fully his strategies for making live theater.
- To investigate and trace the cultural, social and political contexts which frame Beckett's writing for theater, film and television.
- To examine the contemporary impact of Beckett's work across the landscape of theater and on other art forms such as film, live art, music and dance.

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate a critical knowledge and understanding of the contextual debates and discourses surrounding Beckett's work for theater, film and television.
- Demonstrate a critical knowledge and understanding of how Beckett's work for performance was composed, performed and communicated to audiences.
- Demonstrate competence and appropriate skill in rehearsing and performing a Beckett play (or extract thereof).
- Demonstrate an embodied understanding of key features of how Beckett's work may be realized through live or mediated performance.
- Demonstrate an ability to write critically and analytically around Beckett's strategies for making theater and work for film and television.

Assessment:

1. Performance in pairs or small groups (50% of available marks and to last between 20-30 minutes). Students will be required to perform one (or possibly two) of Beckett's plays for live theater, film or television (or an extract from one of these). Students will (normally) work in pairs and be marked equally. They will also be required to produce a short (approx. 500 words) 'program essay' which contextualizes the Beckett play(s) performed and which identifies and explains the dramaturgical and interpretive choices made. This 'program essay' will not be marked separately but will inflect the students' overall mark for the project. Further guidance and criteria will be produced within the course.

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2. Research trail (50% of available marks) (Equivalent of 3000 words). Students will produce a document which is a structured research trail organized around one or more questions, agreed with the tutor. It is an opportunity to investigate and collect information – or to signpost where such information might be found – around the chosen question and theme. The research trail also allows opportunities for the student to offer critical reflection on the material being presented or signed. Further guidance and criteria will be produced within the course

Teaching and Learning:

The course will be taught through practice and theory and delivered through a combination of workshops, tutorials, seminars and tutor and student-led presentations. You will be expected to engage in critically informed practice throughout the course, and should be prepared to work physically/practically as well as discursively. You will be expected to prepare work (both reading and practical) outside of the sessions so that you may present this during taught sessions to other members of the group. Everyone will be required to engage with both practical and theoretical work and will be expected to develop a generous, but critical language, in response to the practical work of your peers. A full course document will be distributed at the first session.

Reading and Research:

What follows is some preliminary reading (and viewing) from a fuller list I will provide when the course begins. If you can, please read some of these over the summer. You should buy: Samuel Beckett: Collected Shorter Plays, Faber and Faber, 2006. £14.99

Beckett on Film, 2001. (DVD - 2 copies in our library). Each boxed set contains 19 of Beckett's plays – long and short. This will be a hugely useful resource for you but these films do not necessarily represent the 'best' or the definitive representations of Beckett's work on video or film. Watch as many of these as you can in advance of the course.

The Complete Dramatic Works. Samuel Beckett, 2006.

A Companion to Samuel Beckett. SE Gontarski (ed), 2010.



Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett. Ronan McDonald, 2006.

Complete Critical Guide to Samuel Beckett. David Pattie, 2000.

Beckett in Performance. Jonathan Kalb, 1991.

Theatre of the Absurd. Martin Esslin, 1974.

Beckett on Screen: the television plays. Jonathan Bignell, 2009.

Women and Drama in the English Renaissance Period

Introduction:

This course explores women's relation to the dramatic writing of sixteenth and seventeenth century England, examining how females were defined and constructed by male playwrights, and how such representations change when penned by a woman. Accordingly, the course looks at a range of drama by male and female, canonical and non-canonical playwrights, in order to demonstrate the generic diversity of drama in this period. Consideration will be made of the cultural and political contexts from which the plays of the time have sprung in the light of modern critical approaches. Textual analysis of the texts studied is balanced by a commitment to considerations of performance, as is especially facilitated through both the examination of the phenomenon of the boy actor performing female roles and the introduction of students to the court masque.

Course Aims:

- Explore sixteenth and seventeenth-century dramatic literature and its relation to women within the cultural context in which both are produced (and consumed);
- Develop a greater awareness of early modern theater history and to broaden understanding of performance, playing spaces and contemporary practices that
- Affect scholarly interpretation of Tudor and Stuart theatrical works;
- Inculcate an increased awareness of how dramatic literature contributes to broader cultural and political contexts, and thereby to promote an increased ability to make

connections between social and cultural concerns and their presentation in early modern dramatic writings;

- Enhance confidence and ability to discourse, both orally and in writing, on Tudor and Stuart dramatic writings with independent critical and informed judgment.

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate understanding of how women are defined and constructed by male playwrights in the early modern period, and how such representations change when penned by a female;
- Discuss the socio-cultural contexts from which the plays of the English Renaissance sprung in light of modern critical approaches;
- Demonstrate awareness of the different performance spaces and contemporary theater practices that helped to shape the dramatic writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries;
- Discourse (both orally and in writing) critically and analytically in a manner that demonstrates knowledge and understanding of an aspect of English Renaissance drama that relates to the issue of gender and the social position of women;
- Explain how playwrights of the period use their drama to explore and comment on broader cultural and political concerns prevalent in early modern English society.

Seminar Schedule:

Representations of Women

Week 1 Introduction to course, and The Saint/Whore Split: John Marston's The Dutch Courtesan and Shakespeare's Othello

Week 2 Single Women: William Rowley, Thomas Dekker and John Ford's The Witch of Edmonton and Shakespeare's Measure for Measure

Week 3 "Women" on the Early Modern Stage: Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's The Roaring Girl and Shakespeare's Twelfth Night

Week 4 Masquing and Female Performance: Ben Jonson's The Masque of Blackness and The Masque of Queens

Drama by Women

Week 5 Closet Drama I: Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam*

Week 6 Closet Drama II: Mary Wroth's *Love's Victory*

Week 7 The Civil War and Women's Drama: Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley's *The Concealed Fancies*

Week 8 Living by the Female Pen: Aphra Behn's *The Rover*

Week 9 Showings of Role-Plays/devised pieces and Course Conclusions

Week 10 Individual tutorials (to discuss drafts of essay)


Set Texts:

- Behn, Aphra. *The Rover and Other Plays*. Ed. Jane Spencer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Cerasano, S. P., and Marion Wynne-Davies, eds. *Renaissance Drama by Women: Texts and Documents*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996. (For Cary, Cavendish and Bracknell, and Wroth).
- Marston, John. *The Dutch Courtesan*. Ed. David Crane. London: A & C Black, 1997.
- Middleton, Thomas, and Thomas Dekker. *The Roaring Girl*. Ed. Elizabeth Cook. London: A & C Black, 1997.
- *The Norton Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. London and New York: W.W. Norton, 1997.
- Rowley, William, Thomas Dekker and John Ford. *The Witch of Edmonton*. Ed. Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.

Course Requirements:

For students to complete this course successfully, the following minimum requirements must be met:

- Satisfactory attendance at class – that is, attendance at least 90% of classes.

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- Satisfactory preparation for classes – prescribed reading; appropriate research and presentation, etc.

Assessment:

This Honors option is assessed by one 3500 word essay (weighted at 75%) and coursework (weighted at 25%). The coursework will consist of one 10 minute oral presentation (10%) and one 10 minute role-play exercise (15%).

