

Syllabus – British Drama and Literature

1. Course Code	ENGL 2405	2. Course Title	Drama
3. Number of Credits	3	4. Instructor/s	Dr Gemma Miller
5. Term	Fall or Spring	6. Instructor Email	hamletohellomacbeth@gmail.com
7. Program			
8. Delivery Site(s)	AES Study Centre		
9. Available to / Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-requisites: eligibility to study at Junior level • Co-requisites: none 		

10. Academic Policies and Regulations

It is the student's responsibility to ensure they are familiar with all the information contained in this syllabus as failure to do this may impact on their overall grade. Students are expected to follow their university guidelines for information on:

- Academic Integrity
- Reference Guide
- Excess Word Count Penalties
- University Generic Marking Criteria and Grading Scale
- Late Work Penalties: unless you have an extension, any work submitted past the assessment deadline will be subject to a penalty as per university regulations
- Mitigating Circumstances: please refer to the latest University guidance if for any legitimate reason you are unable to meet the assessment deadline.
- For complaints and academic appeals, please see the [AES Complaints Policy](#)

Generative AI

Any use of unacknowledged content generated by artificial intelligence within a summative assessment as though it is their own work will be considered an academic violation. They will be asked to re-do the assessment in a controlled environment with the faculty member present.

11. Expected Student Learning Activity and Contact Hours (Term Dates)

16 Weeks Course

Scheduled hours	Placement Hours	Independent Guided study
42	0	93

12. Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes, seminars, and site visits as an essential component of the learning experience. Attendance is mandatory, and unexcused absences or repeated lateness may have an adverse impact on the final grade.

In cases where an absence is unavoidable and qualifies as excused under the University's attendance policy, students must notify the instructor in advance and provide appropriate documentation where required.

13. Course Description

This course will ask students to consider the role theatre fulfils in contemporary society today by reading and seeing multiple productions across a wide range of London's extensive and varied theatre scene. There will be visits to see theatre productions in London's largest funded theatre, The Royal National Theatre; in commercial theatres in London's West End; and in off West End/not-for-profit theatres.

Among themes we will be exploring are the relationship between the commercial and the subsidised theatre; the classics in the 21st century; marketing and budgeting theatre; genre and adaptations; diversity in the theatre; new writing; musical theatre; and audience behaviour/demographics.

14. Objectives

Learning is facilitated through:

- In-class sessions including lectures, group discussions, activities and workshops.
- Live theatre trips and excursions.
- Tutor support (via email, WhatsApp, or office hours).

Formative assessment will include informal feedback on class discussions, draft play reviews, and presentation preparation.

15. Methods of Learning and Teaching and Formative Assessment

Learning is facilitated through in-class sessions and tutor support. The course will make use of comprehensive online resources, including e-books, selected text excerpts, academic papers, relevant online journals, audiovisual materials, web links, and tutor assistance. Face-to-face teaching sessions are provided for all students.

16. Course Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of a range of British theatre practices and traditions.
2. Apply critical and analytical approaches to theatrical performance and dramatic literature.
3. Present informed perspectives on plays and productions in oral and written formats.
4. Analyse and interpret live theatre performances using appropriate critical vocabulary.
5. Integrate secondary sources into critical writing with proper academic referencing.
6. Reflect on the role of theatre in contemporary culture and society.

17. Assessment and Reassessment Components and Weighting

17a. Assessment

Component	Weighting %	Learning outcome(s) assessed	Assessment Category
1 Play Review 1 (750 words) Instructions for Writing 750-Word Play Reviews The play review is a short critical piece on any of the plays we will be watching. Each review must	15%	1-5	Coursework

be about a different play. The play review should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the play's themes, context, and background, and an ability to articulate an informed critical analysis of the particular production we are seeing. I will provide feedback on draft play reviews if these are sent to me at least 24 hours before the deadline.

Rubric for Grading Play Reviews:

1. The opening effectively creates *interest*. Include a title that encapsulates your critical position.
2. It avoids *plot* summary.
3. It fits within the guidelines for *length* (750 words).
4. It names both the *director* and the *playwright*.
5. It names at least one *key character* and mentions at least one *actor by name*.
6. It demonstrates an awareness of the play's original context.
7. It provides a strong personal critical perspective (critical is not necessarily the same as disparaging).
8. It mentions some *specific production elements* as evidence for that assessment.
9. It employs *precise vocabulary* and *vivid descriptions*.
10. It finishes emphatically.
11. The writing is clear, concise, and essentially *error-free*.
12. The review contains at least 1 *secondary source* (interview, class handout, theatre review etc) and a works cited.
13. The review uses "I" in preference to "we". As a general principle, try to avoid speaking for anyone's experience (other than your own) without their express consent.

2	Play Review 2 (750 words) See above for instructions and grading rubric	15%	1-5	Coursework
3	Multiple Choice Test 1 The tests will be on the plays we have studied/watched and material covered during the class.	15%	1-4	Examination
4	Multiple Choice Test 2 The tests will be on the plays we have studied/watched and material covered during the class.	15%	1-4	Examination
5	In-Class Presentation	20%	2-6	Presentation

Instructions for Presentations

The presentation can address any of the issues discussed in class or introduce new topics within the field of modern drama. It can be a personal reflection on your experiences or a more research-based presentation. You might, for instance, want to introduce or review a play, address an aspect of theatre production or design, or present on an individual theatre, director, writer or other practitioner. The presentation should be at least 15 minutes in length and should include slides with images, clips (as appropriate) and information. The presentation should include an interactive element such as discussion questions, a quiz, a task, scene reading, game etc. If your presentation is on a play we have studied it must not be one you have discussed in a play review. Presentations will be given in class on 20/27 Feb.

Suggested Topics:

- Why I love [title of play/musical]
- The history of Broadway or The West End
- Theatre flops: What went wrong?
- The story of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre
- The art of costume design: From sketch to stage
- How stage lighting changes the story
- Famous stage mishaps: When everything went wrong
- Famous musical theatre songs and their stories
- Theatre superstitions
- The role of live music in theatre (e.g., musicals, Shakespeare with music)
- My journey in theatre
- The origin of "curtain call" and other stage terms
- How did face paint evolve into stage makeup?
- The weirdest Tony Award acceptance speeches
- Famous movie actors who started in theatre
- Why do some films get turned into musicals? (*Mean Girls, Shrek, Frozen*, etc.)
- The longest-running shows and why audiences love them

Rubric for Grading Presentations:

1. The topic has been well *researched*.
2. The presentation includes strong *visuals*.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The speaker speaks <i>clearly</i> and enthusiastically. 4. The material is well <i>organized</i>. 5. The presentation includes an <i>interactive</i> element (quiz, discussion questions, task, game etc) 6. The presentation fits within the guidelines for <i>length</i> (15 mins). 7. The presentation includes a <i>works cited</i> (make sure these are verified sources) 			
<p>Class Participation</p> <p>Students will be expected to contribute to class discussions, offer views on productions, engage in group activities and ask informed questions following presentations. Attendance at theatre performances is mandatory and will be considered in the participation grading.</p>	20%	1-6	Engagement

17b. Reassessment

Resubmission of above.

18. Key References / Readings
Core Reading:

- Selected plays and related reading (to be provided)

Suggested Secondary Sources:

- Carlson, M. *Theories of the Theatre*.
- Bennett, S. *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*.
- Freshwater, H. *Theatre & Audience*.
- Online resources and theatre reviews (to be shared electronically).

Key Topics:

- Subsidised theatre and funding
- Musical theatre traditions
- Stagecraft (lighting, set, costume)
- Politics of casting and representation
- Adaptations and re-imaginings
- Theatrical canon and criticism
- Audience demographics
- The economics of theatre

19. Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Assignment	Theatre/Trip
1	Introduction to the course West End vs Broadway The Challenges to the Industry		

2	Greek Tragedies Today Adapting for the Theatre		
3	Case Study: Constellations Intro to Here There Are Blueberries		
4	Feedback on Here There Are Blueberries Special Effects in Theatre		Wed February 4 2026, 7.30pm, Here There Are Blueberries, Theatre Royal Stratford East, 90 mins no interval
5	Writing Play Reviews The RSC and Repertory Theatre		
6	Intro to Alan Ayckbourn and Woman in Mind	Presentations Multiple Choice Test 1	
7	Feedback on Woman in Mind	Presentations Play Review 1	Thurs February 26 2026, 7.30pm, Woman in Mind, Duke of York's, running time tba
8	MID-TERM BREAK		
9	Intro to Manic Street Creature Case Study: The Kiln Theatre Missing Voices Monologue		
10	Feedback on Manic Street Creature Andrew Lloyd Webber The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Dramatic Monologues		Mon March 16 2026, 7.30pm, Manic Street Creature, Kiln Theatre, 75 mins no interval. Post-show q&a
11	Intro to Into The Woods Stephen Sondheim		
12	Feedback on Into The Woods Shakespeare Then and Now		Mon March 30 2026, 7.30pm, Into The Woods, Bridge Theatre, running time tba
13	Intro to Les Liaisons Dangereuses The National Theatre		
14	Feedback on Les Liaisons Dangereuses The V&A Theatre and Performance Exhibition		Tue April 14 2025, 7pm, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, NT Lyttelton, running time tba
15	London Theatre Review Olivier and Tony Awards Reflection and Review	Multiple Choice Test 2 Play Review 2	

20. Course Leader

Dr Gemma Miller

21. Approved by

Dr. Leslie J Zweigman

22. Date of Approval

September 2025