



LONDON SOUTH BANK  
UNIVERSITY

# unit guide

Drama into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

PES-2-240

Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences

2007/8

**become what you want to be**

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## 4.2 Transferable Skills

You will have the opportunity to develop skills in:

- close reading and critical response to texts;
- constructing and articulating an argument both orally and in written work;
- research and appropriate use of information.
- Interactive skills through seminar and workshop activities
- Oral communication skills through seminar participation.

## 5.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

Assessment is by two 2,000-word essays (each worth 50% of the overall mark). The first essay will be due in December (date to be notified), and the second will be due in January 2008. Topics will be distributed during the semester. The pass mark for the unit is 40%. The pass mark for each element is 30%. In order to pass the unit, students must attain a mark of over 30% for each element.

**Reminder re plagiarism – the act of plagiarism is to pass off as your own work, the ideas or thoughts of someone else, without giving credit to that other person by quoting the reference to the original. Your work will be penalized if you do this. Your attention is drawn to the LIS Help Sheet 04, available on the LISA website - this is a very helpful introductory guide for students on the subject of plagiarism, and it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with it.**

## 6.0 INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE UNIT

### 6.1 Overview of the Main Content

This unit builds on and develops work in drama initiated in Year 1. We examine the major dramatic innovations which emerged on the Western stage between the years 1880 and 1940. Students will be asked to consider the manner in which the Western theatre in this period was both reflecting and mediating contemporary political and cultural concerns. We study 5 plays from the period in detail. Among the themes to which we pay particular attention are the viability of tragedy in the modern world; power structures on stage and in society; and the problematic relationship between theatre and 'the real'.

### 6.2 Overview of Types of Classes

A one-hour lecture followed by a two-hour seminar.

Background information and suggestions of various critical approaches to the texts will be provided during the lecture. The main exploration and development of those ideas should take place in seminar discussion. You should already have completed the

may have upon a text, both as literature and transposing a work from page to stage.

**Week 4**      **Chekov's *Three Sisters***

**Lecture:** Further discussion of Chekov's drama with a focus on the time in which he lived, his work with Stanislavsky and how this affects the dramatic representation of his plays. Seminar will focus on designated scenes from the play with some textual analysis and some workshop presentation of scenes.

**Week 5**      **INDEPENDENT VIEWING OF O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* at the National Theatre**

There is no lecture or seminar this week. Instead, students must arrange to go and view a performance of Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* in the Olivier Theatre at the National Theatre on the South Bank. There are several performances you can choose from beginning Friday, 19 October: 19 October, 20 October (matinee and evening), 22 October, 29 October, 31 October (last performance). Tickets are available at student standby rates and the Travelex rate of £10, but you must book quickly (or queue on the day) to get these rates. You can ring the box office 0207-452-3400, or book online :nationaltheatre.org.uk. It is your responsibility to arrange to see the play in preparation for studying it in Week 6.

**Week 6**      ***The Emperor Jones* by Eugene O'Neill (1921)**

**There is no lecture this week, but there is a workshop/seminar in the normal seminar slots.**

**Seminar:** We will consider this controversial play (a white writer's representation of black experience) in the context of struggle and socio-political unrest in 1920s America from which the Harlem Renaissance emerged. We will discuss in detail this particular staging of the play in relation to the term "expressionism", and in relation to how the sense of struggle is inscribed upon the role of Brutus Jones as well as on the body of the actor.

**Week 7**      **Individual or small group tutorials re assessment**

**Week 8**      **T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935)**

**Lecture:** This lecture will consider Eliot's play as an innovation in verse drama. Eliot's own theoretical positioning will serve critically to position the drama. The seminar will look in detail at some scenes of the play and discuss the staging of verse tragedy on the modern stage.

**Week 9**      **T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral***

**Lecture:** This lecture continues to discuss Eliot's play in terms of how he

## 8.2 Optional Materials

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON ESSAY-WRITING, LITERARY THEORY AND GRAMMAR**

Carey, Gary and Snodgrass, Mary Ellen 1999. *A Multicultural Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co.

Fabb, N and Durant, A. 1993. *How to Write Essays, Dissertations and Theses in Literary Studies*, London: Longman

Foley, Mark and Hall, Diane 2003. *Longman Advanced Learners' Grammar*. Harlow: Longman, 2003

Hawthorn, J. 1998. *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*, London: Arnold

#### **ARIES: Assisted Revision in English Style**

<http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/SESL/STELLA/ARIES/>

ARIES is a self-access learning programme for students who want to improve their punctuation and spelling. These are accompanied by self-correcting interactive exercises and tests, so that you can monitor your progress.

#### **The Internet Grammar of English**

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/>

The freely available Internet Grammar is aimed at university undergraduates with a good command of English but little knowledge of grammar. It contains a comprehensive online grammar with searchable index and glossary as well as a range of exercises.

### **RECOMMENDED READING**

### **BACKGROUND READING**

- Grey, R. 1976. *Brecht the Dramatist*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Innes, Christopher ed. 2000. *A Sourcebook on Naturalist Theatre*, London, Routledge
- Kenner, Hugh 1965. *The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot*, London, Methuen
- McFarlane, James ed. 1994. *The Cambridge Companion to Ibsen*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Morris, Pam 2003. *Realism*, London, Routledge
- Northam, John 1973. *Ibsen: A Critical Study*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Pitcher, Harvey 1973. *The Chekhov Play: A New Interpretation*, London, Chatto and Windus
- Rayfield, Donald 1999. *Understanding Chekhov: A Critical Study of Chekhov's Prose and Drama*, Bristol, Bristol Classical
- Smith, Paul Julian. *The Theatre of Garcia Lorca: Text, Performance, Psychoanalysis*, Cambridge University Press
- Spender, Stephen 1975. *Eliot*, London, Fontana
- Steiner, George 1961. *The Death of Tragedy*, London, Faber and Faber
- Styan, J. L. 1971. *Chekhov in Performance: A Commentary on the Major Plays*, London, Cambridge University Press
- Styan, J. L. 1981. *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice*, 3 vols, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
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- Williams, Raymond 1968. *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht*, London, Chatto; repr. London, Hogarth Press, 1987

