



**Literature in Society:
Drama**

AME_4_LSD

**Faculty of Arts and
Human Sciences**

2011-12

LEVEL 4 (YEAR 1)

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1.0 MODULE DETAILS

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| Module Title: | Literature in Society: Drama |
| Module Level: | 1 |
| Module Reference Number: | |
| Credit Value: | 15 CAT points |
| Student Study Hours: | 150 |
| Contact Hours: | 36 |
| Private Study Hours: | 114 |
| Pre-requisite Learning: | None |
| Course(s): | English, English Studies, Drama and Performance, English and Creative Writing |
| Year and Semester | 2008-9, 2 |
| Module Coordinator: | Dr. Alex McSweeney |
| MC Contact Details (Tel, Email, Room) | mcsweena@lsbu.ac.uk |
| Subject Area: | English, Creative and Performing Arts |
| Summary of Assessment Method: | 2 x 1,500-word essays |

2.0 SHORT DESCRIPTION

This module is the second part of Introduction to Drama and the Stage 1 and 2, introductory survey courses that establish common ground between students with a range of backgrounds in drama and underpins progression through the degree.

Introduction to Drama and the Stage 2 addresses a wide range of recent dramatic literature produced across four continents, allowing students to make connections and draw distinctions between plays written and staged in very different cultural contexts. Students will explore concepts such as postcolonial theory, performance theory, and the relationship between the stage and political struggle.

3.0 AIMS OF THE MODULE

The aims of this module are:

- to provide an introduction to the analysis of dramatic texts
- to introduce students to examples of twentieth century drama from different cultures
- to investigate the relationships between drama, performance and culture
- to investigate the relationship between dramatic text and performance through video and, where possible, stage productions

- to introduce students to a selection of recent theoretical work on dramatic literature.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

4.1 KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

At the end of the module, students will be able to:

- show a familiarity with a range of plays
- compare and contrast plays from different cultures
- demonstrate an analytical engagement with dramatic literature
- demonstrate a basic understanding of recent critical approaches to dramatic literature.

4.2 TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Students will have the opportunity to develop:

- interactive skills through seminar and workshop activities
- oral communication skills through seminar discussion
- public reading/speaking skills through presentations and dramatic reading.

5.0 INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE UNIT

5.1 OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN CONTENT

Students will examine *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1973), by Athol Fugard; *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975), by Wole Soyinka; *Death and the Maiden* (1990), by Ariel Dorfman; *Top Girls* (1982), by Caryl Churchill; *The Rez Sisters* (1986), by Tomson Highway; and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (1984), by August Wilson. We will make use of a variety of critical methodologies, including postcolonial theory and performance theory; in particular, we will investigate dramatic responses to colonial, racial, and sexual oppression, and the uses of drama as an agent of social change.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF TYPES OF CLASSES

Each session will consist of a 1-hour lecture and a 3-hour seminar.

5.3 IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT SELF-MANAGED LEARNING TIME

A certain amount of information will be conveyed weekly in lecture format. Students, however, are expected to read and think about the primary texts and assigned secondary reading in advance of the class, and come prepared to discuss in seminars the topics set out in the weekly teaching programme. Study time outside of class should be spent reading the plays and secondary literature detailed in paragraph 8.

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 person by quoting the reference to the original. Your work will be penalised if you do this. Your attention is drawn to the LIS Help Sheet 04, available on the LISA website (<http://www.lisa.lsbu.ac.uk/helpsheets/hs04.pdf>). This is a very helpful introductory guide for students on the subject of plagiarism, and it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with it.

6.0 THE PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

28/09/11 - Week 1: Introduction

The unit's aims and outcomes will be explained; we will then discuss some aspects of postcolonial theory and its attendant critical themes and problems.

05/10/11 & 12/10/11 - Weeks 2 & 3: Death and the King's Horseman

After a brief survey of the theatre of colonial and postcolonial Africa, we will focus upon the subversion of colonialist power-structures and assumptions in *Death and the King's Horseman*. We will then explore the play's use of Yoruba myth and ritual, relating it to Soyinka's *Myth, Literature and the African World*. We will also touch on the staged version of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

19/10/11 & 26/10/11 - Weeks 4 & 5: Death and the Maiden

We will view Polanski's film in Week 4. There is no seminar scheduled for Week 4. In Week 5, we will consider how Dorfman's play problematises questions of justice, memory and history, and briefly consider how it is adapted from a theatrical to a cinematic medium.

02/11/11 - Week 6: Sizwe Bansi is Dead

We will consider the place of the stage in apartheid South Africa and examine the challenge to segregation posed by workshop drama. We will focus upon *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, in particular its treatment of themes of oppression, identity, and resistance.

09/11/11 - Week 6

One week of the course will be devoted to individual tutorials. The dates of this week are subject to change.

16/11/11 & 23/11/11 - Weeks 8 & 9: *Top Girls*

In week eight we will situate Churchill's play in relation to feminist critiques of literature, drama and history. In week nine we will move on to examine how its theatrical techniques can be viewed as a challenge to patriarchal ways of representing reality and the female subject.

30/11/11 - Week 10: *The Rez Sisters*

We will consider Highway's treatment of First Nations culture, language and myth in *The Rez Sisters*, focusing also on how these intersect with issues of gender and sexual identity.

07/12/11 - Week 11: *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*

We will discuss whether it may be fruitful to consider the history and experiences of African Americans in the light of postcolonial theory as outlined in weeks one to four, before focusing on Wilson's play and, in particular, his treatment of the relationship between music and cultural identity.

14/12/11 - Week 12: Revision

This week's lecture will draw together some of the underlying themes of the course, in particular the relationships between theatre, identity, and resistance.

7.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIT

The assessment will consist of two components, each worth **50%** of your total mark.

- One 1,500 word essay to be submitted on Friday 11th November 2011
- One 2 hour unseen exam on Wednesday 18th January 2012

The essay questions will be posted on Blackboard four weeks before the submission date (14/10/11). The pass mark for the Module is **40%**. The pass mark for each element is **30%**. In order to pass the Module students must attain a mark of over 30% for each element.

8.0 LEARNING RESOURCES

8.1 CORE MATERIALS

Churchill, Caryl 1991. *Top Girls*, London, Methuen
Dorfman, Ariel 1991. *Death and the Maiden*, London, Nick Hern
Fugard, Athol 2002. *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, in Jeyifo, Biodun ed., *Modern African Drama*, New York, Norton
Highway, Tomson 1988. *The Rez Sisters*, Saskatoon, Fifth House
Soyinka, Wole 2002. *Death and the King's Horseman*, in Jeyifo, Biodun ed., *Modern African Drama*, New York, Norton
Wilson, August. *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, edition to be confirmed

8.2 OPTIONAL MATERIALS

Most of the texts below can be found in the Perry library. This list is not exhaustive and suggestions for further reading will be given in lectures.

Achebe, Chinua 1986. *Things Fall Apart*, Oxford, Heinemann.

Aguilera, Pilar & Fredes, Ricardo. eds. 2006. *Chile: the other September 11: an anthology of reflections on the 1973 coup*. Melbourne: Ocean Press.

Ashcroft, Bill et al. 1989. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory & Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, London, Routledge

Ashcroft, Bill et al. 1998. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*, London, Routledge

- Aston, Elaine 1995. *An Introduction to Feminism and Theatre*, London, Routledge
- Aston, Elaine & Diamond, Elin; Eds. 2009. *The Cambridge companion to Caryl Churchill*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 1999. *The Location of Culture*, London, Routledge
- Bigsby, Christopher. Ed. 2007. *The Cambridge companion to August Williams*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Boyle, Catherine M. 1992. *Chilean Theatre, 1973-1985: Marginality, Power, Selfhood*, London and Toronto, Associated University Presses
- Crow, Brian & Chris Banfield 1996. *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theatre*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Fieldhouse, D.K. 1982. *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century*, Basingstoke, Macmillan
- Francis, Daniel 1993. *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture*, Vancouver, Arsenal Pulp Press
- Gilbert, Helen and Joanne Tomkins 1996. *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*, London, Routledge
- Hay, Samuel A. 1996. *African American Theatre: A Historical and Critical Analysis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Innes, Christopher 1992. *Modern British Drama 1890-1990*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Loomba, Ania 1998. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, London and New York, Routledge
- Madsen, D. ed. 1999. *Post-Colonial Literatures: Expanding the Canon*, London, Pluto
- McClennen, Sophia A. 2010. *Ariel Dorfmann: an aesthetics of hope*. Durham (N.C.); London: Duke University Press.
- McLeod, John 2000. *Beginning Postcolonialism*, Manchester, Manchester University Press
- Msiska, Mpalive-Hangson. 2007. *Postcolonial identity in Wole Soyinka*. Amsterdam: Rodolpi
- Rabillard, Sheila ed. 1998. *Essays on Caryl Churchill: Contemporary Representations*, Winnipeg, Blizzard Publishing

Snodgrass, Mary Ellen. 2004. *August Wilson: a literary companion*. Jefferson, N.C., McFarland & Co.

Wertheim, Albert. 2000. *The dramatic art of Athol Fugard: from South Africa to the world*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Other Learning Resources

Video, visits to current performances.