

MA Theatre Studies

Awarding Institution:

Teaching Institution:

The University of Reading

The University of Reading

Faculty of Arts and

Humanities

For students entering in 2003

Programme length: 12

months f/t (24 months p/t)

Programme Director : Jim Hillier

Date of specification: September 2003

Board of Studies: Film, Theatre and Television

Accreditation: not applicable

Summary of programme aims

The MA programme in Theatre Studies aims to enable students

- to build on their undergraduate studies, deepening their knowledge and theoretical understanding of some central issues in Theatre Studies;
- to enhance existing skills in the close analysis of theatre performance and drama, and broaden their knowledge and understanding of the subject and its methods;
- to develop their abilities in critically evaluating primary and secondary source material;
- to develop their research skills and prepare them, where appropriate, for research degrees.

Transferable skills

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to research, communication of complex material (both written and oral), information handling, time management, problem-solving, self-directed learning and use of information technology. The MA in Theatre Studies will in addition help students develop skills such as: synthesising information from a range of sources, providing a coherent overview of and analysing and critically evaluating competing theories and interpretations; planning and producing a substantial piece of research (and in some cases critical practice) under supervision; presentational skills; a range of research skills.

Programme content

The MA in Theatre Studies combines taught modules with independent research (or, for suitably qualified students, critical practice combining critical and creative work). In the first (Autumn) term, students follow two core taught modules, Performance Analysis and Alternative Forms in Theatre. In the second (Spring) term, students follow two Case Studies. All students follow a module in Research Methods over both terms. During the Summer Term students develop their dissertation (or practical project with documentation), under supervision, and attend dissertation seminars.

MA (Theatre Studies) (180 credits):

| Mod Code | Module Title | Credits | Level |
|---|--|---------|-------|
| <i>Compulsory Core modules</i> | | | |
| FTMPA | Performance Analysis in Theatre | 30 | M |
| FTMAT | Alternative Forms in Theatre and Performance | 30 | M |
| <i>And either</i> | | | |
| FTMDI | Research Methods & Dissertation | 60 | M |
| <i>Or</i> | | | |
| FTMDC | Research Methods & Dissertation with Critical Practice | 60 | M |
| <i>Case Studies</i> | | | |
| <i>Select <u>two</u> of the following, which are subject to availability in any given year.</i> | | | |
| FTMEM | The Epic Model in Modern British Theatre | 30 | M |
| FTMNA | North American Experimental Theatre | 30 | M |
| FTMBT | British Television Drama | 30 | M |
| FTMBP | The Body and Performance | 30 | M |
| FTMER | Sex, Gender and Anxiety in English Renaissance Theatre | 30 | M |
| FTMEE | Eastern European Theatre | 30 | M |
| FTMGS | Gender, Sexuality and the Stage | 30 | M |
| FTMCD | Crossdressing and the Politics of Theatricality | 30 | M |

Postgraduate Diploma (Theatre Studies) (120 credits):

Students who complete the two compulsory core modules (30 credits each) and *either* the dissertation (60 credits) *or* two case studies (30 credits each) are eligible for the Postgraduate Diploma.

Postgraduate Certificate (Theatre Studies) (60 credits):

Students who complete *either* the two compulsory core modules (30 credits each) *or* one core module and one case study (30 credits each) are eligible for the Postgraduate Certificate.

Part-time/Modular arrangements

Students taking the MA over 24 months take the core taught module Performance Analysis in the first term and one Case Study in the second, beginning to plan their dissertation during term 3, then the core Alternative Forms in Theatre in term 5, a second Case Study in term 6, completing their dissertation in term 6.

Part-time arrangements for Certificate and Diploma will be made as and when necessary.

Progression requirements

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

| <u>Mark</u> | <u>Interpretation</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 70 – 100% | Distinction |
| 60 – 69% | Merit |
| 50 – 59% | Good standard (Pass) |

Failing categories:

| | |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| 40 – 49% | Work below threshold standard |
| 0 – 39% | Unsatisfactory Work |

For Masters Degrees

To pass the degree of Master students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation. In addition the total credit value of all

modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 70 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be awarded a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be awarded a Merit.

For Postgraduate Diplomas

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

For Postgraduate Certificate

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.*

*The provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate applied himself or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

Summary of teaching and assessment

The programme is taught by a mixture of seminars, with student presentations and structured discussion, workshops, individual tutorials, research training.

Assessment for MA (Theatre Studies)

Two essays are based on the Autumn term's work, and two on the Spring term's work; work on the Dissertation is begun in the Spring term and completed in the Summer term. Students with appropriate prior practical experience may undertake the Dissertation with Critical Practice, a practical project with accompanying dissertation/documentation, instead of the Dissertation.

Core and Case Study modules are assessed by coursework essays. The pass mark for all modules is 50%. Failed coursework must be resubmitted by 1 September. A failed dissertation must be resubmitted within one year.

- 4 x 5,000 word essays at 30 credits each
- 1 x 15,000 word dissertation (or equivalent dissertation with critical practice) at 60 credits

Postgraduate Diploma (Theatre Studies)

- 2 x 5,000 words essays at 30 credits each
- 1 x 15,000 word dissertation (or equivalent dissertation with critical practice) at 60 credits

or

- 4 x 5,000 word essays at 30 credits each

Postgraduate Certificate (Theatre Studies)

- 2 x 5,000 word essays at 30 credits each

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained at least a 2:1 degree in Drama/Theatre Studies or a related discipline, or equivalent.

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

Film, Theatre and Television Department MA students receive a Handbook, which gives details of the Programme, guidance on study skills such as note-taking and essay writing, and information about staff, facilities, and sources of specialised help within the University, such as the Study Skills Advisor and the Counselling Service. Academic feedback and guidance is given through detailed written comments, and academic and personal support is provided through the personal tutor system. The Department has a range of film/video viewing rooms and specialist studio and theatre spaces for practical drama, together with extensive technical facilities for small scale production in theatre and film/video, including digital video equipment. It also houses an extensive collection of films and television programmes. The Library, which has buildings on both the Whiteknights and Bulmershe campuses, has an extensive collection of printed materials as well as electronic databases. The Bulmershe Library holds one of the country's leading academic collections of film and modern theatre material. Specialist subject librarians are available to give students advice and guidance to library resources.

Career prospects

Over the years, students who have followed this programme have taken up a wide range of careers. Graduates have found that the specific as well as the transferable skills developed by the programme enable them to enter many fields of work including theatre, education, publishing, journalism, the media, management, administration, public relations and advertising, as well as many jobs with no subject-specific relationship. Some go on to further study at PhD level and obtain academic and academic-related jobs. A Reading MA in Theatre Studies provides graduates with a range of communication, analytical, practical and social skills that will serve them in good stead in the world of work.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

N/A

Educational aims of the programme

The central aim of the programme is to build on students' undergraduate studies, deepening their knowledge and theoretical understanding of some central issues in Theatre Studies. It aims to enhance existing skills in close analysis of theatre performance and broaden knowledge and understanding of the subject and its methods and to develop their abilities in critically evaluating primary and secondary source material, as well as to develop research skills and prepare students, where appropriate, for research degrees. It aims to produce students who can express this understanding in speech and writing (and in some instances also through practical work).

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A range of critical and theoretical approaches to Theatre Studies.2. Current debates in the discipline.3. Methods of textual analysis appropriate to theatre.4. Selected special areas in the field of theatre.5. Ways in which social, cultural and historical contexts inform theatre texts.6. In certain cases, how critical and theoretical perspectives can inform practical work in theatre. | <p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of 1-5 are gained through seminars, and student presentations, and through supervision and feedback on coursework essays and dissertation and associated reading and research. 6 is based on group and/or individual practical work with accompanying documentation, under staff supervision (for those with prior experience of theatre production). Core modules offer an introduction to critical and theoretical perspectives on the analysis of theatre performance(1-3). Case studies extend the work on textual analysis and put such work in context (3, 4, 5).</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Knowledge and understanding are tested through a combination of coursework essays and dissertation or, for those with prior knowledge of theatre production, individual practical work with accompanying documentation.</p> |
|---|---|

Skills and other attributes

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|---|--|
| <p>B. Intellectual skills</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Capacity for independent textual analysis and research in a sophisticated and theoretically aware manner.2. Ability to synthesise information from a range of sources and provide a coherent overview of competing theories, positions and interpretations.3. Ability to reflect on one's own ideas and those of others4. Apply conceptual frameworks and methods of analysis to new contexts and material.5. Ability to plan and produce a substantial piece of research under supervision.6. In some cases, ability to integrate critical thinking with creative work. | <p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Intellectual skills are acquired through independent reading and viewing (1, 2), preparation for and discussion in seminars and essay writing (1, 2, 3, 4), essay feedback (2, 3, 4), supervised dissertation or practical work and documentation (5 and 6).</p> <p>Assessment</p> <p>1 – 3 are assessed both formatively and summatively in coursework essays. 1- 4 are assessed formatively through seminar discussion and essay feedback. 5 and 6 are assessed formatively and summatively through supervised work on dissertation or practical work with documentation.</p> |
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C. Practical skills

1. The ability to criticise and formulate interpretations of theatre texts.
2. An ability to engage in critical argument using relevant theoretical approaches
3. Research skills
4. A knowledge of appropriate conventions in the presentation of written work
5. An ability to relate the study of theatre to cultural and social issues
6. In some cases, an ability to express critical understanding through exploratory practice in theatre and to critically evaluate work produced

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

1 – 5 are developed in seminars, coursework essays and essay feedback. 6 is developed through practical work and feedback on practice and associated documentation.

Assessment

1 - 5 are assessed through formative and summative coursework. essays. 6 is assessed both formatively and summatively through practical work and accompanying documentation.

D. Transferable skills

1. Effective communication in speech and writing
2. Critical analysis and coherent arguments
3. Critical evaluation of evidence and argument
4. The ability to find and use relevant information resources
5. Time-management skills and the ability to manage personal workloads.
6. A creative approach to problem-solving
7. Giving oral presentations.
8. Undertaking self-directed, independent work.
9. Using IT and other scholarly resources.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Transferable skills are developed through seminar discussions , seminar presentations the preparation and writing of written essay assignments, feedback on written work, research for and writing the dissertation. 5, 6 and 8 are also developed in those cases where students with prior experience undertake a practical project with documentation rather than a dissertation.

Assessment

1 – 5 and 10 are formatively and summatively assessed through written coursework essays , seminar presentations and dissertation (or practical project with documentation).

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in module and programme handbooks.