Course Overview:

London is for many the theatre capital of the world, celebrated for its rich history, unique achievements and on-going innovations. This course introduces students to the vibrant nature of theatrical production in London from Shakespeare to the West End, including its plays, politics, places and practitioners. Students will combine relevant readings and in-class discussions with practical explorations of live performances in and around the city.

This class will meet one day a week over the course of 14 weeks, but will also meet the same evening for up to 10 stylistically diverse performances. Students will be exposed to the infinite variety of British theatres from seventeenth-century playhouses to contemporary fringe venues, and performances from musical theatre to spoken word to site-specific. Please note that specific subjects and performances may change slightly based upon available productions during the time of the course.

The course will include tours of Shakespeare’s Globe and the National Theatre of Great Britain. Class lectures will be enhanced by distinguished guest speakers including actors, directors, designers, technicians, administrators or commentators active in the London theatre. Students will also have the opportunity to discover for themselves the skills necessary for British theatre production from acting to producing.

Students will ultimately develop a critical appreciation of British theatre through a rigorous combination of verbal and written analysis. Class participation in seminars, discussions and exercises is expected and required. Students’ willingness to participate and enthusiasm in doing so will have a bearing upon the final grade for the course. Please see Assessment Structure for further details.

WORD OF WARNING

Some of the material to be used and/or viewed in this class can be considered violent and/or sexual and may be found offensive on a wide variety of grounds. It is not my deliberate intention to offend anyone but I cannot exclude from this class the use and discussion of material that may be thought offensive and/or opposed to the teachings of the Church. If you are unwilling to take part in such discussions, witness performances, or work with such materials, then please drop this class immediately. Your continued attendance in class will be interpreted as acceptance of the fact that university education often requires confrontation with ideas and/or materials one disapproves of on ethical and religious grounds. Discussing such issues, witnessing such productions, and working with such materials does not in any way mean approving of them.
## Learning objectives

- to learn relevant histories, forms and practices of British performance
- to develop critical skills in regard to given playtexts and productions
- to record and to respond to experiences through written analyses and ongoing in-class discussions
- to communicate knowledge and experience clearly to yourself and to others in classroom and extracurricular settings
- to set and meet personal goals in relation to classwork

## Assessment structure:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Component</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Class participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Written Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Research Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Quizzes</td>
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### Class Participation

Students’ willingness to participate and enthusiasm is important to the nature and design of this course and to your development as a critical thinker.

### Written Assignments

Students will be asked to write two theatre reviews of productions seen during the course in relation to specific aspects of British theatre history and/or performance concepts.

### Research Project

Students will submit a summative research project equivalent to approximately 2000 words on an aspect of British theatre history and/or performance concepts mutually agreed upon by student and professor.

### Quizzes

Students can expect at least two in-class quizzes related to playtexts, productions, or British theatre history during the course.

## Required resources

- *The Arts in Britain* by Roy Strong
- *Theatre Studies: The Basics* by Robert Leach
- Handouts and readings as assigned
- Required attendance at 8-10 performances and events

## Classroom policies

Standard London Undergraduate Program attendance policies apply.

In addition, this course is designed to build progressively through the semester. Each class session builds upon the previous session. Class absences will interrupt your process.

The Notre Dame Academic Code of Honor Pledge is observed in this course: “As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate...”
in or tolerate academic dishonesty.” Please review information regarding the academic code at [http://nd.edu/~hnrcode/docs/handbook.htm](http://nd.edu/~hnrcode/docs/handbook.htm).

### Course fees

Student accounts will be charged up to £45 for performances, required field trips and/or travel for this course.

### Class schedule

THE INFORMATION BELOW REFLECTS THE PREVIOUS YEAR’S CLASS MATERIAL AND IS PROVIDED AS EXAMPLE ONLY. FULL DETAILS OF THE AUTUMN 2015 COURSE LECTURES, EVENTS AND SPEAKERS WILL BE CONFIRMED IN THE MONTHS AHEAD AND PROVIDED BY THE START OF THE TERM.

NOTE: The form and content of each class session may change prior to the start of or during the term based upon the availability of people or productions, or own trajectory as we navigate our collective interests. The schedule below is a guide, not a straitjacket.

**Class 1: 26 August**
Overview of the Aims of the Course
Statement of Students’ Ambitions and Objectives
The Origins and Purposes of Theatre

Assigned Reading:
*Theatre Studies*, Chapter 8, The Audience, pp. 181-195

**Class 2: 2 September**
Introduction to London/British theatre
Seminar and Discussion: The Role of the Audience

Assigned readings:
*Arts in Britain*, Chapter 15, All the World’s a Stage, pp. 182-196
Handout on Elizabethan Theatregoing

**Class 3: 9 September**
Tour of Renaissance Theatre Sites

Performance:
*The Comedy of Errors* by William Shakespeare, Shakespeare’s Globe, 7.30pm

Written assignment:
Performance Review #1

Assigned reading:
*Theatre Studies*, Chapter 5, Acting, pp. 105-130
Assigned viewing:
Shakespeare in Love, film directed by John Madden

**Class 4: 16 September**
Discussion: The Comedy of Errors in Performance
Seminar and Discussion: The Role of the Actor
Connection: Guest Professional Actor

Performance:
Shakespeare in Love adapted by Lee Hall, Noel Coward Theatre, 7.30pm

Assigned readings:
Theatre Studies, Chapter 4, Theatre and History, pp. 74-104
Arts in Britain, Chapter 21, Pomp and Circumstance, pp. 281-299

**Class 5: 23 September**
Due: Performance Review #1
Discussion: Shakespeare in Love in Performance
Seminar and Discussion: Theatre and History

Written assignment:
Performance Review #2

Assigned reading:
Theatre Studies, Chapter 2, The Text, p. 21-40

Performance:
To Be Determined

**Class 6: 30 September**
Seminar and Discussion: How Plays Work
Seminar and Discussion: The Role of the Playwright
Connection: Guest Professional Playwright

Performance:
Little Revolution by Alecky Blythe, Almedia Theatre, 7.30pm

Assigned reading:
Arts in Britain, Chapter 24, Babylon, pp. 330-365
Handout on Evaluating Performance

**Class 7: 7 October**
Discussion: Little Revolution in Performance
Seminar and Discussion: Evaluating Performance

Assigned reading:
Theatre Studies, Chapter 6, Directing, pp. 132-159
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 8: 14 October</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Due: Performance Review #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar and Discussion: The Role of the Director</td>
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<td>Tour of the National Theatre of Great Britain</td>
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Assigned readings:
- *Theatre Studies*, Chapter 7, Scenography, pp. 161-179
- *Arts in Britain*, Chapter 27, Sensibility, pp. 404-415
- *Arts in Britain*, Chapter 30, Revolution, Reaction and Romance, pp. 445-479

**TERM BREAK**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Class 9: 28 October</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar and Discussion: The Role of the Production Designer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection: Guest Professional Designer</td>
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<td>Proposal Due: Research Project</td>
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Performance:
*James I: The Key Will Keep The Lock* by Rona Munro, National Theatre, 7.30pm

Written assignment:
Performance Review #3

Assigned reading:
*Theatre Studies*, Chapter 3, Dramatic Form, pp. 42-73

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<th>Class 10: 4 November</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion: <em>James I: The Key Will Keep the Lock</em> in Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar and Discussion: Dramatic Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar and Discussion: Theatre and Music</td>
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Performance:
*The Marriage of Figaro*, English National Opera, 7.00pm

Assigned readings:
Handout on Theatre and Dance
*Arts in Britain*, Chapter 33, Land of Hope and Glory, pp. 525-566

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<th>Class 11: 11 November</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion: <em>The Marriage of Figaro</em> in Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar and Discussion: Theatre and Dance</td>
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</tbody>
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Performance:
Jasmin Vardimon Company, Sadlers Wells, 7.30pm

Assigned readings:
*Arts in Britain*, Chapter 34, Fragmentation, pp. 567-601
Handout on Theatre Criticism

**Class 12: 18 November**
Discussion: Jasmin Vardimon Company in Performance
Seminar and Discussion: The Role of the Critic
Connection: Guest Professional Critic

Performance:
*The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov, Young Vic, 7.30pm

Assigned readings:
*Arts in Britain*, Chapter 35, Consensus Arts, pp. 602-630
Handout on Producing Theatre

**Class 13: 25 November**
Due: Performance Review #3
Discussion: *The Cherry Orchard* in Performance
Seminar and Discussion: The Business of Theatre
Connection: Guest Professional Theatre Producer

Performance:
To Be Determined

**Class 14: 2 December**
Course Summary and Reflections
Tour of Theatre History Exhibit at Victoria and Albert Museum

Performance:
*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Drury Lane, 7.30pm

**Final Exam: 9 December**
Due: Research Project