

COURSE PACK

DRAMA 100/100G TAKING THE STAGE: PERFORMANCE & PRESENTATION SKILLS

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Welcome to the course.

In “Taking the Stage” you will develop skills in theatrical performance that are transferable to a wide-range of disciplines including: effective oral communication and developing presentations with impact, stage presence, the ability to work collaboratively within a group, and creative problem solving. We will focus on three main areas: public speaking; acting and inhabiting a character; and devised group performance.

Learning Outcomes

Our course aims are:

- To enhance your appreciation of effective public speaking
- To improve your confidence in public performance
- To develop your understanding of vocal and physical skills that underlie effective performance
- To provide you with the skills to work effectively in a team
- To develop your potential to make dynamic creative presentations

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- Use the vocal and physical skills you have learned to deliver an effective oral presentation (LO1)
- Apply acting techniques to develop stage presence and listening skills (LO2)
- Apply improvisation and devising techniques in the development of dynamic and creative group presentations (LO3)
- Apply ideas and approaches learned in the course to deliver an effective oral presentation that incorporates dynamic audio visual elements (LO4)

Topics Covered

Theory and practice will be divided between the lectures and workshops. The weekly one-hour lecture will draw on a lively range of examples to analyse the dynamics of effective speech and

performance. Lectures are complemented by the two-hour practical workshop in the Drama Studio, where you will explore different exercises and develop your skills 'on the floor'.

The paper is divided into three modules:

1. Public speaking
2. Acting
3. Devising

Public speaking

Public speaking requires the ability of the speaker to capture the attention of audience members in order to convey a message and convince them of the merits of your argument. You will learn to identify the characteristics of effective public speaking and deliver an oral address informed by an understanding of successful presentation skills. Class work will focus on vocal delivery, physicality and storytelling.

Acting

Working in pairs, students will apply the basic presentation skills they learned in the first module to working with others. Acting requires concentrated listening and effective teamwork. In this module students will develop the core interpersonal skills that underlie the practice of acting. Classwork will focus on the creative dimensions of acting including theatre games, and will prepare them for the final section of the course and major in-class presentation.

Devising

The final module of the course builds upon the skills developed in speaking and acting and applies them to the creation of a 5-minute original devised theatre performance. Responding to current topical issues, students will work in groups using theatrical skills to devise a short work that communicates a creative response to the given theme. This final module will integrate the creative communication skills learnt across the course and apply them to developing an effective group performance.

Method of teaching and contact hours

Teaching will be primarily through weekly lectures and workshops, supplemented by independent reading, group rehearsals, and viewing of performing recordings.

Weekly lectures: 12 hours (1 x 1-hour lecture per week)
Compulsory weekly workshops: 24 hours (1 x 2-hour workshop per week)
Independent reading and viewing: 2 hours per week
Assessment one: 12.5 hours (including rehearsal)
Assessment two: 12.5 hours
Assessment three: 15 hours (including rehearsal)
Assessment four: 25 hours (including rehearsal)
Assessment five: 25 hours

Assessment

The course will be assessed by way of:

1. Rhetorical analysis of speech: 10% (LO1)
2. Short oral presentation: 10% (LO1)
3. Acting Scene 20% (LO2)
4. Original devised group performance: 30% (LO3)
5. Recorded Audio and Slide presentation: 30% (LO4)

Rhetorical analysis of speech: 10% (LO1)

Due by 4pm, Thursday 10th August

In this first short assignment you will provide a 750 word analysis of the rhetorical structure and persuasive power of a given speech (selected speeches will be provided as a video link). You will be asked to consider the speech's content and delivery.

The purpose of the assignment is to get you thinking about the foundational elements of successful oral communication, in preparation for your own speech in assignment 2.

You will be required to hand in a paper copy of your analysis at the Arts 1 Reception, as well as upload an electronic version to Turnitin through Canvas.

Criteria:

- How effectively you are able to identify the structural and rhetorical elements of the speech that make it successful (or unsuccessful)
- How effectively you are able to identify the performance elements of the speech that make it successful (or unsuccessful), for example, intonation, body language
- Presentation of short analysis (structure, grammar, thesis etc.)

Speech presentation: This Matters 10% (LO1)

You will prepare and deliver a short 3-minute speech in week four of the weekly workshops. The topic of your speech is "This Matters". This is your opportunity to take the stage and convince your fellow students of the importance of a topic of your choice.

These will be presented during your usual Workshop time in Week 4

Criteria:

- Effectiveness of use of your use of voice, body language and eye contact to engage the audience
- Professionalism of the presentation, including preparedness
- How effectively you are able to succinctly communicate the key points of interest related to your topic
- Originality of approach to the topic and delivery

Acting: Dramatic scene 20% (LO2)

You will work in pairs to rehearse and perform a dramatic scene, that you will select from a range of provided scripts.

The purpose of the assignment is to develop your physical and vocal skills by applying them to a script and character. By acting opposite a scene partner, you will also demonstrate your skills in listening and responding. Additionally, you may also choose to incorporate audio-visual elements such as costume, props and music into your presentation.

These will be presented during your usual Workshop time in Week 8

Criteria:

- How effectively you convey the meaning of the given scene
- Ability to convey the character and their objectives
- Professionalism of the presentation
- Overall impact of the scene

Devised Group Performance: 30% (LO3)

You will work in groups of between 4-6 students to devise an original short performance, 5-7 minutes, based on a current topical theme (to be approved by James). The presentation may contain dramatic and/or documentary elements.

The purpose of the group-devised assignment is to allow you to develop your ability to work effectively in a team, and to develop creative original presentation outcomes.

The 30% will be divided between a group mark (20%) and an individual mark (10%).

These will be presented during your usual Workshop time in Week 12.

Criteria:

- How effectively the dialectics of the chosen topical theme are explored and communicated
- How effectively the creative choices made increase the impact of the presentation
- Professionalism of the presentation
- Originality of approach to the topic and the clarity of its purpose
- Your individual contribution as a collaborator to the success of the group's performance

Recorded Audio and Slide Presentation: 30% (LO4)

For your final assignment, you will record and submit an audio and slide presentation that builds upon assignment 2. You will create a 5-minute spoken presentation and accompanying slide presentation that demonstrates your knowledge of an aspect of the course.

For those interested in audio production, you will have the opportunity to use a University recording studio in order to deliver this (as spaces allow). You may also choose to do this independently (instructions will be provided). The resulting AV file will then be submitted to Canvas.

The purpose of the final assignment is to consolidate the skills you have learnt throughout the course, and to put these towards creating an impactful presentation.

For your presentation, you may choose from the following topics:

- How to give an effective presentation
- The importance of storytelling
- Acting: How to approach a role
- Devised Theatre: A how-to guide

This is due by midnight on Wednesday 1 November.

Criteria:

- Strength and clarity of the content and communication of the topic
- Effectiveness of the storytelling
- Integration of spoken and visual elements
- Vocal skills
- Originality and overall impact