

# Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance

## About the department

Top-rated for teaching and research, Royal Holloway has one of the largest and most influential Drama, Theatre and Dance departments in the world. Our academic staff cover a huge range of theatre and performance studies with particular strengths in contemporary British theatre, international and intercultural performance, theatre history, dance and physical theatre, and contemporary performance practices. Our state-of-the-art spaces provide exemplary facilities for study and practice. Proximity to London gives us unrivalled access to theatres, productions and practitioners. Students grapple with the big questions: about ourselves and our cultures, about how we make meaning and tell stories, and about ourselves in relation to other cultures, other times, and other forms of expression. Our students challenge themselves and learn a range of new skills while developing sophisticated critical frameworks. In the process they interrogate the work of others and create, perform and curate their own stories, their own dramas.

## Entry requirements

**Study Abroad and International Exchange Students:** The modules listed below are open to all Study Abroad and International Exchange students.

**Erasmus Students:** The Department only accepts applications from Erasmus students from Trinity College, Dublin. Please note, owing to space limitations, Erasmus students from other institutions are not permitted to apply for Drama and Theatre modules.

Previous academic study of Drama, Theatre or a related subject and/or modules and practical theatre experience is essential for entry onto all courses. In addition:

- Second and third year Drama modules are suitable for students with a strong interest and academic background in the subject.
- Most often, visiting students are placed in second or third year Drama modules but in some circumstances, a student with little academic experience of the study of Drama may be offered a first year module.
- Practical experience in theatre or a related discipline will be taken into account when assessing an applicant's suitability for modules.

Each module is either 15 or 30 UK Credits and starts in either the Autumn Term (September) or the Spring Term (January).

*The information contained in the module outlines on the following pages is correct at the time of publication but may be subject to change as part of our policy of continuous improvement and development.*



[royalholloway.ac.uk/drama-theatre-and-dance](https://royalholloway.ac.uk/drama-theatre-and-dance)



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## Module options for visiting students

Module code	Module name	15 or 30 UK Credits	Start date	Module description/pre-requisites
DT1300	<i>Theatre &amp; Culture 1</i>	30 UK credits	<i>Sept. for term 1 only</i>	<p>This module asks what the relationship is between performance and culture. It considers how theatre and performance reflect, interrogate, and shape cultures and societies. It investigates how practitioners, past and present, have used different modes of performance to engage with such sites of debate and practice such as homes and prisons, streets and squares, towns and cities, the urban and the rural, nations, borders and states, the local and the global. It may consider the intersections between theatre and performance and related disciplines and cultural practices such as geography, politics, landscape, literature, education, and law. The course will engage with a range of insights into these encounters drawn from theorists, commentators, and practitioners and gives students an opportunity to test these ideas critically, through such methods as reading, discussion, debate, community engagement, presentations, and essay writing.</p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
DT1400	<i>Theatre &amp; Ideas 1</i>	30 UK credits	<i>January for term 2 only</i>	<p>On this module students explore how ideas from adjacent disciplines can illuminate our critical and creative engagement with theatre and performance, and in turn how the theatre can inform and interrogate other areas of life. The module presents a range of philosophical questions and problems (concerning, for example, ethical behaviour and action; the histories and politics of gendered performance; the social effects of capitalism; the legacies of colonialism and racism; and the capacities of language and translation). Students engage with these with reference to key critical traditions (including Platonic philosophy, Marxism, theories of gender, critical race theory and post colonialism), exploring their adequacy and value for understanding theatre and performance. Students will extend their vocabulary for engaging with theatre and performance via close reading and discussion of critical traditions with which theatre is in dialogue. Students will hone verbal and written communication skills and will be invited to capture and interrogate their ideas through intellectually engaged embodied practice.</p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>



## Module options for visiting students

DT2101	<i>Theatre &amp; Performance-Making Playwriting</i>	30 UK credits	Sept. for full year	This module will give students an opportunity to immerse themselves in the art and craft of playwriting. Students will develop a portfolio of collaborative and solo writing for performance while also discussing and interrogating the work of published playwrights alongside those of their peers. In the first term, we will explore fundamental dramaturgical principles like structure, scenes, dialogue, subtext, and character. In the second term, we will focus on developing the students' own work through workshop and seminar discussion. Students will work in groups on a collaborative play, which will receive a rehearsed reading, while also working on a short individually written piece. <b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b>
DT2202	<i>Greek Tragedy</i>	30 UK credits	Sept. for term 1 only	It has been stated by ancient and contemporary writers that Athenian audiences "looked to tragedy" to learn about their society. The main preoccupation of this course is an investigation of how exactly one learns in this "analogical, allegorical, and indirect" way (Cartledge 20) and how this might inform staging Greek tragedy today. To get an understanding of Athenian social context we will play the Reacting to the Past role-immersion game, <i>The Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 BCE</i> —which investigates the theory and performance of democracy in antiquity. We play this game alongside examining Greek tragedies, to get a better sense of how the performance tradition engaged with social issues in Athens. Indicative plays include <i>Antigone</i> , <i>Bacchae</i> , <i>Suppliants</i> , <i>Alcestis</i> , and <i>Women of Troy</i> . In performance students will be encouraged to consider how to create a Greek tragic performance in a way which similarly audiences are similarly invited to contemplate social issues in an analogical, allegorical, indirect manner. <b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b>
DT2215	<i>Theatre &amp; the Environment</i>	30 UK credits	Sept. for term 1 only	This module engages with plays, films and performance practices which focus on relations between humans and the natural world. The course will combine wide-ranging discussions of ecology and environmentalism – in historical and recent plays and performances – with contemporary debates in relation to theatre practices. The course will also seek to engage with: the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs); RHUL's and the Caryl Churchill Theatre's green credentials. In the first half of the course, students will explore a range of plays which stage the natural world including Shakespeare's <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> and <i>The Tempest</i> ; Euripides' <i>The Bacchae</i> ; Büchner's <i>Woyzeck</i> ; Caryl Churchill's <i>Escaped Alone</i> . We will also look at a series of films highlighting environmental concerns including Studio Ghibli's <i>Nausicaa</i> (Hayao Miyazaki 1984) and <i>Spirited Away</i> (Hayao Miyazaki 2001) plus Disney's <i>Frozen II</i> (Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee, 2019). Students will research how environmentalism can impact both theatre and film and how feasible net carbon zero performances are. Students will explore environmentalism critically (in discussion and essay writing) as well as creatively - the second half of the course culminates in a workshop performance relating to environmental concerns. Some classes involve walking through unpaved areas of campus and appropriate footwear should be worn. <b><u>Syllabus</u></b>



## Module options for visiting students

DT2306	<i>Theatre &amp; Culture 2: Dancing Bodies, Global Culture</i>	30 UK credits	January for term 2 only	<p>In this module, students will begin with their own embodied understanding of culture. What does it mean for your body to dance now? What is the context where, when and how you dance? Once we make this relevant, this module will then go on to examine different contexts for dance production and learn how to discuss them within current discourses in dance scholarship. To explore the cultural production and consumption of dance, we will use theories grounded in cultural studies – e.g., Marxism, post-modernism, feminism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, gender and sexuality, psychoanalysis—to help understand their implications on dance and dancing bodies. We will focus much of our attention on popular dance, global popular culture, and dance on screen. . The overall aim of the module is to investigate the relationship between dance practices and the social, political and economic context in which they emerge and to present students with ways to creatively engage with cultural studies when they devise performances. Core aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce relevant cultural studies paradigms and demonstrate how they engage with theatre, dance studies and dance practice internationally</li> <li>• To examine embodied practices and their relationships to politics, economics and the social context from which they emerge</li> <li>• To recognize concepts, issues, theories and debates centred around cultural studies and its relationship to drama and dance</li> </ul> <p><b>Syllabus Information</b></p>
DT2307	<i>Theatre &amp; Culture 2: Archive Workshop</i>	30 UK credits	January for term 2 only	<p>Archives contain the raw materials of history: diaries, papers, photographs, records, memoirs. They are where we keep the material remains of the past; things left over or left behind - the evidence of how people lived, what they did and what their passions were. Some collections are accidental: papers, properties, possessions and photographs left behind. Some are deliberate, drawn together over a life-time by someone with a passion for theatre history, magic tricks, or photographs of a particular place. Some contain the records of an institution, such as Royal Holloway, or the original 19C census forms taken down in handwriting by officers walking from door to door and speaking on the doorstep to families who lived there.</p> <p>This module invites students to engage with the rich historical and cultural resources of archives to ask questions about history, memory and the past: how do we encounter these items, and make sense of them? What can they tell us about lives in the past and the value of objects; about whose cultures are represented, and whose might be missing? What makes a 'Collection'? How might we interpret, record, preserve and make accessible these rich and fascinating objects? How can we use them as a stimulus and provocation for making performance? Continued next page...</p>



## Module options for visiting students

<i>DT2307 continued</i>				<p>Working mainly with materials held in the College archives (with the guidance and support of College archivist Annabel Valentine) we will engage with our unique holdings in performance history, including the Roy Waters Collection, the archives of Gay Sweatshop Theatre Company, and the Half Moon archive. Research will also focus on the history of Royal Holloway College, and the pioneering women involved in its early days. The module will critically examine questions of the documentation of ephemeral cultural forms, practical issues of conservation, interpretation and access, and students will devise original performances in response to selected materials. Students will be able to view, discuss and offer interpretations of original artefacts from the theatre and performance past, and it is anticipated that we will visit one or more other archive collections (e.g.: National Archives (Kew); Black Cultural Archives (Brixton), V&amp;A Theatre and Performance Archives) in order to contextualise and inform our study.</p> <p><b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
<i>DT2308</i>	<i>Theatre &amp; Culture 2: Performing Feminisms</i>	<i>30 UK credits</i>	<i>January (term 2 only)</i>	<p>This module will examine dance, theatre, performance and visual arts practices that are located within a feminist re-imagining of the body. Through a series of case studies drawn across geographic, historical and cultural contexts, students will engage with the varied histories, techniques and creative processes of a feminist praxis. This module puts diverse art forms that investigate activism, gender equality and feminist politics in dynamic conversation. We will consider different cultures of feminism, modes of feminist practice, and what it means to be a feminist spectator. We will cover a wide range of cultural, textual and performative genres including plays, dance and physical theatre performances, films, graphic novels, and music videos. Questioning the politics and ethics of sex and gender representation, we will also interrogate the limits of historical feminist movements and imagine, theoretically and performatively, new feminist futures. <b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>
<i>DT2416</i>	<i>Theatre &amp; Ideas: The Idea of Memory</i>	<i>15 UK credits</i>	<i>Septemb er (Term 1 only)</i>	<p>This module puts diverse art forms that investigate memory in dynamic conversation in order to ask urgent questions about what and how we remember. Starting with the disruption to the purpose, value, and nature of art in the aftermath of the cataclysmic events of the Holocaust, we will move through the twentieth century to the present day to consider different cultures of memory, memorialisation, trauma, and witnessing through the lens of theatre, performance and performativity. There will be an engagement on indigenous artistic practitioners and curators from the Global South with a focus on colonial histories. We will cover a wide range of cultural textual and performative genres such as first-hand testimony, plays, films, graphic novels, and public monuments, as well as history and memorial museums in order to question and analyse the politics and ethics of representation. <b><u>Syllabus Information</u></b></p>



## Module options for visiting students

DT3118	<i>Theatre &amp; Power</i>	30 UK credits	<i>Sept. for term 1 only</i>	<p>This module explores the theatricality of power and the performance of protest. Both power and resistance have historically used tropes of theatre and performance to symbolise, summarise and communicate message or aims. But is the similarity of form the whole story? This module unpicks the structures of performance, public theatricality and street dramaturgy to explore what is at work in these encounters and ritual forms: are they, perhaps, built out of these practices, rather than simply reflections of them? What is happening when police face down protestors in public streets? What does it mean when a monarch is crowned, or a President is inaugurated? How is power transferred or embodied through ritual and symbolic practices that are both representational and real? And how might theatre and performance vocabularies help us to understand these? This module draws together theories of power, kingship, sovereignty and law, with case studies drawn from international and historical contexts, and contemporary manifestations of protest and creative resistance. We will examine questions of space, representation, legitimacy and spectatorship, and attempt to redefine what is customarily understood by the term 'political theatre'.</p> <p>Indicative content may include: Extinction Rebellion; the Black Lives Matter movement; the French and Haitian revolutions of the late 18C; the performance of legal ritual and legitimacy; Parliamentary processes and traditions; public executions, spectacle and terror; 'popular' commemoration such as Remembrance Sunday and the Hillsborough Justice campaign; the staging of 'official public memory vs. the 'unofficial' memorialisation of, for example, the victims of state violence. <a href="#"><u>Syllabus Information</u></a></p>
DT3133	<i>Applied Theatre: Conflict and Care</i>	30 UK credits	<i>Sept. for term 1 only</i>	<p>Conflict and care inform everyday life, from family relationships to war veterans' rehabilitation. In this module you will develop an understanding of the relationship between applied theatre and conflict transformation. We will engage with a variety of creative approaches exploring war and conflict-ridden events and experiences on a global scale in order to examine the interplay between conflict, care and applied theatre practice. By discussing how practitioners respond and adapt their practices to various global contexts you will develop nuanced considerations of social justice, accountability and the ethics of care, and gain skills to examine the cultural, political and social dimensions of applied theatre practice. You will be encouraged to develop a creative strategy to address a conflict manifestation that interests you. <a href="#"><u>Syllabus Information</u></a></p>

