



## **Boston University Study Abroad**

London

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#### **Experiencing London Theatre in the Postwar World**

**CFA TH 440 (Core course)**

#### **Course Description**

This course offers an aesthetic and historical understanding of contemporary London theatre, as well as the interpretation of controversies in postwar British theatre history, plus knowledge of evaluative tools — including journalistic skills — for the analysis of current shows. It will enable students to understand contemporary British theatre in London; to engage critically with a broad survey of the major historical developments in British drama over the past 70 years; to relate drama to major changes in British society; to examine the work of important British playwrights and directors in detail; to critically analyse British theatre aesthetics through written work and discussion; and to understand the role of the Arts Council and state subsidy of the performing arts. The ultimate aim is to increase awareness of British theatre today, especially in London, and give an insight into how it is organised and why it has developed in its present form. Students will prepare for class by reading set texts and set plays, and this knowledge will be consolidated through class discussion of contemporary London theatre and postwar British theatre history, and of primary historical sources, plus presentations by the instructor and use of video materials. The four-hour teaching sessions will be supplemented by four theatre visits to current London shows: the purpose of each theatre visit will be to write a journalistic review of the performance, and to discuss it in class. At the end of the semester, students will deliver a ten-minute class presentation and write an eight-page, double-spaced academic paper.

#### **Hub Outcomes (Course Objectives)**

1) Philosophical, Aesthetic and Historical Interpretation: Aesthetic Exploration.

##### Course Objective 1

Students will demonstrate their knowledge and appreciation of notable works of postwar and contemporary British theatre, including the cultural contexts in which those works were created, and be able to identify their ongoing significance and relevance to current theatre practice.

(Aesthetic Outcome 1)

##### Course Objective 2

Students will demonstrate the reasoning skills and vocabulary necessary to interpret postwar and contemporary British theatre, understanding its various genres and the skills needed for a successful performance. (Aesthetic Outcome 2)

##### Course Objective 3

Students will produce journalistic reviews of current theatre productions, thus demonstrating an understanding of the formal, historical, social, cultural, and aesthetic characteristics of contemporary British theatre. (Aesthetic Outcome 3)

2) Philosophical, Aesthetic and Historical Interpretation: Historical Consciousness.

##### Course Objective 1

Students will create historical narratives, evaluate interpretations based on historical evidence, and construct historical arguments about postwar British Theatre. (Historical Outcome 1)

##### Course Objective 2

Students will demonstrate an ability to interpret primary source material (including play texts, production photographs, original reviews, newspaper articles, video recordings, diary entries, memoirs, etc.) about postwar British theatre, using a range of interpretative skills (such as textual

analysis and semiotic interpretation) and situating the material in its historical and cultural context. (Historical Outcome 2)

### Course Objective 3

Students will demonstrate knowledge of religious traditions, intellectual paradigms, forms of political organization, or socio-economic forces — including for example the censorship of 1950s theatre and the growth in feminist playwrights in the 1970s — and explain how these factors have affected postwar British theatre and changed over time. (Historical Outcome 3)

### Additional Course Objectives

On completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contemporary theatre in London;
- Engage critically with the major historical developments in postwar British theatre;
- Relate drama to broad changes in British society;
- Practice critical analysis of individual plays, and relate them to broader trends;
- Assess the aesthetic strengths and weaknesses of today's London theatre;
- Write professional journalistic reviews of current theatre shows;
- Be prepared for the breadth of opportunities open to them in the field of Theatre Arts in London.

### Other Outcomes

- This course is part of the BU Study Abroad London Internship Programme, and the BU College of Fine Arts School of Theatre and its specialised programmes.
- It aims to enhance life skills, such as independent working, self-motivated study, personal self-confidence and good time keeping.

### Grading

The following Boston University table explains the grading system that is used by most faculty members on Boston University's Study Abroad London Programmes.

Grade	Honour Points	Usual %
A	4.0	93-100
A-	3.7	89-92
B+	3.3	85-88
B	3.0	81-84
B-	2.7	77-80
C+	2.3	73-76
C	2.0	69-72
C-	1.7	65-68
D	1.0	60-64
F	0.0	Unmarked

### Grading Criteria

**'Incomplete'** or **I** grades are not permitted because of the obvious difficulty in making up missed work once the student has left the country. All work must be completed on time. We also do not allow **'Audits'** (AU), **'Withdrawals'** (W), or **'Pass/Fail'** (P) grades.

The grades reflect the quality of the work. Lecturers and students should use the following criteria for an understanding of what each grade means.

**A** This exceptional grade is assigned only to work that has persistently outstanding quality in both substance and presentation. The student must demonstrate a sustained capacity for

independent thought and extensive study, producing rigorous and convincing analyses in well-ordered prose.

**A-** Awarded to work that is clearly focused and analytical, and based on wide reading. The student must cover all the principal points of a question and systematically develop a persuasive overall thesis, allowing for one or two venial omissions or inapt expressions.

**B+, B, B-** This range of grades indicates that the student has shown some evidence of original thought and intellectual initiative. The student has cited sources beyond the class materials, and shown a degree of originality in perception and/or approach to the subject. The work will show thoughtful management of material, and a good grasp of the issues. The differences between a B+, a straight B and a B- may reflect poor presentation of the material, or mistakes in punctuation, spelling and grammar.

**C+, C, C-** Work in this grade range is satisfactory, but uninspiring. If the work is simply a recitation of the class materials or discussions, and shows no sign of genuine intellectual engagement with the issues, it cannot deserve a higher grade. Should an essay fail to provide a clear answer to the question as set, or argue a position coherently, the grade will fall within this range.

Quality of presentation can lift such work into the upper levels of this grade range. Work of this quality which is poorly presented, and riddled with errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, will fall into the lower end of the range. To earn a C grade, the work must demonstrate that the student is familiar with the primary course material, be written well enough to be readily understood, be relevant to the assignment, and, of course, be the student's own work except where properly cited.

**D** A marginal pass can be given where some but not all the elements of the course have been completed satisfactorily.

**F** The failing grade indicates the work is seriously flawed in one or more ways:

- Obvious lack of familiarity with the material
- So poorly written as to defy understanding
- So brief and insubstantial that it fails to properly address the subject
- Material presented is not relevant to the assignment
- Demonstrates evidence of plagiarism (see following section in Academic Conduct Code)

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism. This can be accessed via Blackboard Learn: <http://learn.bu.edu>

*\* Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absences.*

## **Attendance Policies**

### **Classes**

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, seminar, and field trip in order to fulfill the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme.

*Authorised Absence:*

Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorized Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness for more than one day. In this situation students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor's note as soon as possible). The Authorised Absence Approval Request Form is available from:

<http://www.bu.edu/london/report-absence/>

**Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence**

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- **Illness (first day of sickness):** If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must phone the BU London Student Affairs Office (who will in turn contact the student's lecturer).
- **Illness (multiple days):** If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must call into to the BU London Student Affairs Office each day the student is ill. Students must also provide the Student Affairs office with a completed Authorised Absence Approval Form and a sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class.
- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)
- Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

**The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.**

*Unauthorised Absence:*

Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a **4% grade penalty** to their final grade for the course whose class was missed.

This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

**Religious Holidays**

Boston University's Office of the University Registrar states:

'The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.'

**Special Accommodations**

Each student will need to contact the Disability & Access Services to request accommodations for the semester they are abroad. Students are advised by BU-DAS not to expect the same accommodations as they receive on campus.

BU London can only uphold special accommodations if we have received the appropriate documentation from the BU-DAS. We cannot accept letters from other universities/centres.

All disabilities need to be known to the DAS in Boston if they are to be used as a reason for requiring a change in conditions, i.e. reduced internship hours or special accommodations for the internship schedule.

**Lateness**

Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Associate Director for Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have his/her final grade penalised.