

WRITING & DIRECTING

TRIMESTER 1 - Bachelor & Diploma units

INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE STUDIES

→ Theory

This unit is the first of two that introduce students to a synchronic world view of theatre studies. It offers an overview of theatre and drama in many world cultures and periods together with case studies that demonstrate the various methods, historiographical theories and interpretive approaches used by contemporary theatre historians. Students will consider the range of theatre's origins in ritual performance and theatre through religious and civic drama, to early theatre in court, temple, marketplace, oral and writing cultures before 1700, to theatre and performance in print cultures up to 1900.

ACTING FOUNDATIONS

→ Performance

This unit introduces students to the foundations of acting. The unit is delivered in a studio environment, where students will be introduced to the idea of the body being the actor's instrument as they explore fundamental relaxation, movement, and vocal techniques. Students encounter different approaches to acting practice, and have the opportunity to discover what works for them and develop awareness of spontaneity and cooperation. Students are also introduced to scene analysis, culminating in solo and ensemble.

TRIMESTER 2 - Bachelor & Diploma units

INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE STUDIES 2

→ Theory

This unit offers an overview of theatre and drama in many world cultures and periods together with case studies that demonstrate the various methods, historiographical theories and interpretive approaches used by contemporary theatre historians. The unit applies a breadth of geographical coverage for exploring the inter-relation of theatre with social and cultural history using historical methodology. Students will examine the more recent range of influences on contemporary theatre.

ENSEMBLE PRODUCTION

→ Performance & Production - double units

This unit brings students together to work on a collaborative performance under the guidance of the class tutor/lecturer. The student cohort will work on a text-based piece of theatre or a devised performance. Students will implement the learning they have achieved to date in an experiential exploration of practice and the practical application of theory. Students will self-allocate to specific roles as actor, writer, director, or stage manager. The unit will also encourage self-reflection and constructively critical analysis of the work produced.

INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE MAKING

→ Production

This unit introduces students to the basics of theatre making. Divided into three modules, the unit gives students an overview of writing for performance, technical theatre, and directing. In the writing module, students learn fundamental principles of plot, characterisation, structure, and dialogue. In the technical theatre module, students are introduced to the basics of lighting, sound, and stage management. Students learn practical skills of rigging, plotting, and desk operation. In addition, students are introduced to conceptual and aesthetic principles of technical theatre. In the directing module, students are given an overview of the basics of directing, including how to approach the text, conceptualise a production, and work with actors.

CRITICAL THINKING

→ Industry Awareness

This subject introduces students to critical thinking and communications skills and empowers students to apply these skills to their studies. Critical thinking can involve making judgments and evaluations to distinguish fact from opinion, making informed judgments, assessing the validity of a theory, and application of theories to practical situation. Students will strengthen their critical thinking skills through exploring modes of analysis, problem solving, reflection, evaluation, and creation. Students will be presented with artistic works and industry issues, which they will critically evaluate, embracing both analytic and synthetic thinking processes.

CRITICAL SURVEY

→ Industry Awareness

In this unit, students are presented with a broad survey of the creative industries, and are engaged to critically examine industry roles, practices, and structures. Presentations by industry professionals provide a broad overview of the creative industries environment. These presentations cover various roles and facets within the creative industries, and guest speakers will connect with students to share their experiences, as well as to reflect on the industry at large. This comprehensive industry overview is intended to assist students in their professional development and to provide them with the necessary understanding to aid them in obtaining a position as a professional in the creative industries.

TRIMESTER 3 - Bachelor only units

TWENTIETH CENTURY PRACTICE

→ Theory

This unit presents an overview of selected twentieth century directors and their influences on acting methodologies and performance practice. Beginning with an overview of Stanislavski and The Method, this unit will introduce students to the theories and practice of various practitioners who have been influential in shaping contemporary performance. The unit will comprise scholarly examination and practice-based exploration.

WRITING STUDIO 1

→ Writing

This unit builds on the skills attained in the Diploma of Performing Arts to provide students the opportunity to produce a complete short script. Students will learn further elements of characterisation, dialogue, plot and structure and will study specific genres of plays to gain understanding of the contextual issues of playwriting. Students will also learn techniques of dramaturgy and script editing. Through regular table reads, students can develop confidence in giving and receiving feedback about their work. Visiting industry lecturers will supplement the unit learning by providing masterclasses on their own practice.

TRIMESTER 4 - Bachelor only units

AUSTRALIAN THEATRE

→ Theory

This unit aims to contextualise for students the history of Australian theatre, the political and cultural issues surrounding it and a considered examination of selected theatrical works. Students will analyse the development of Australian theatre and the movement for a national voice, contextualised by the performance tradition of the First Nations custodians of country. Students will examine current issues regarding culture and women in theatrical representation and contemporary arguments regarding authenticity, adaptation, and appropriation.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

→ Acting Studio - double units

The student cohort will divide to work on a text-based piece of theatre or a devised performance. Students will implement the learning they have done to date in an experiential exploration of practice and the practical application of theory. Students within each degree will self-allocate roles appropriate to their degree and be mentored in their work by the professional practitioners. The unit will also encourage self-reflection and constructively critical analysis of the work produced.

TRIMESTER 5 - Bachelor only units

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY INFLUENCES

→ Theory

This unit will offer students an overview of some of the social and philosophical movements of the twentieth century and how they have influenced the work of contemporary theatre practitioners. Weaving together cultural and performance theories, the unit highlights the synergies between politics, culture and performance practice. The unit addresses its various topics through a combination of traditional academic analysis and practice-led explorations via material thinking. Students will evaluate key theories and theorists through selected readings, analysis of performance case studies and student-led practical exploration of the application of certain theories to practice.

DIRECTING STUDIO 1

→ Directing

This unit examines in detail the various elements comprising the director's role. It provides students with an overview of the relationship between directing and dramaturgy, the need for collaboration, technical preparation, and, through specific scene and genre study, equips students to direct a variety of plays and other forms of performance. Through the course of the unit, guest industry lecturers will come into the class to provide professional insight into how a director works, and lead students in practical exercises to develop their understanding of and proficiency in directing.

CREATIVE ARTS, SOCIAL IMPACT & THE COMMUNITY

→ Industry Awareness

This unit provides students with the opportunity to investigate the relationship between theatre, community, social inclusion and social cohesion. Through case studies, practical workshops and student-led learning, this unit will consider theories and practices of applied theatre to address the ethics and protocols of performing with and for various diverse and often marginalised community members. This unit will focus on four types of applied theatre that may include Agit-prop and forum theatre, verbatim theatre, children's theatre, prison theatre, LGBTI theatre, theatre by people with disability, culturally diverse theatre, and theatre in education.

CREATIVE ARTS PRACTICES

→ Industry Awareness - elective

Through performance analysis and workshops led by professional practitioners, this unit offers students the opportunity to examine various recent productions with key creative personnel, which could include directors, writers, producers, stage managers, designers, technicians, and/or actors. Throughout the unit, students will observe live or recorded performance, analysis of marketing material, educational material (where applicable), critical responses through reviews and social media, and seminars and workshops led by performance practitioners. Students will analyse the processes whereby these performances were created and participate in practical, experiential learning using various elements that comprised the production.

WRITING STUDIO 2

→ Writing

This unit introduces students to writing for the screen. Building on the skills learnt in earlier units in structure, plot and characterisation, students will now learn how to conceptualise their ideas for a short screen-based script. Students will learn the relationship between script, directorial vision and cinematography, how to work to the technical constraints of screen production, how to format a script for the screen and how to pitch an idea to producers. Visiting industry practitioners will join the unit to take masterclasses in writing and pitching for the screen. Throughout the unit, students will write their own short screen-based script.

TRIMESTER 5 (continued) - Bachelor only units

DIRECTING STUDIO 2

→ Directing

This unit provides students with the skills needed to direct a short screen project and exposes them to the craft and practicalities of more complex screen production. Industry professionals will work with students to develop knowledge of screen directing techniques to explore their own aesthetic vision for screen production. This unit considers production organisation and scheduling and provides insight into career development for directors in the screen industry. Students will shoot a short screen project based on the scripts they have produced in Writing Studio 2.

TRIMESTER 6 - Bachelor only units

PERFORMANCE INNOVATION

→ Theory

This unit provides students with a broad study of theories of performance, an understanding of the conceptual and material thinking underpinning historical and contemporary forms of avant-garde performance and case studies of various works and practitioners who have been influential in their innovation in performance practice. Students will learn about the frames, possibilities and limitations of performance and will gain an understanding of shifting definitions of live and recorded performance.

CAPSTONE PRODUCTION

→ Acting Studio - double units

The student cohort will divide to work on a text-based piece of theatre written by students in the BPA (Writing and Directing) or a devised performance. Performances will be staged in a professional venue, giving students the opportunity to work with industry standard equipment and resources and learn best practice from the professional environment.

GROUP PROJECT

→ Industry Awareness - elective

In this unit, students work across degree programs and areas of specialisation to plan and execute a collaborative project. The unit is designed as preparation for the placement subject to be undertaken in the following stage. Students will work with a mentor who will provide guidance and advice as students propose, plan and execute their project. Weekly sessions will act as production meetings where mentor and students discuss and shape the project plans providing students with an opportunity to bring together knowledge and skills from other units and their respective courses and majors.

INDUSTRY PLACEMENT OR PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

→ Industry Awareness

Students will be involved in the day-to-day activities of a chosen workplace where they will have the opportunity to apply some of the theoretical knowledge and practical skills that they have developed during the course. Students will be connected to a range of industry organisations and professionals. They will review their industry placement as they observe, develop, analyse and critically assess skills and knowledge acquired during this placement, and reflect on the implications for future career goals and directions, or complete a portfolio developed throughout the course.