English Literature

Critical Practice Handbook

2014-15
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INTRODUCTION

These courses have been designed to intensify your awareness of the critical tools central to the study of English Literature. In your Pre-Honours years, you were given a brief introduction to formal and critical discourses in the first semester, and over the rest of those two years you were provided with an overall sense of the historical development of literary forms and genres. Collectively, the Critical Practice (CP) courses build upon that training. The practical skills and range of knowledge acquired over the year will equip you with a command of the precise critical terminology necessary for Honours level study in both third and fourth years.

CP Criticism introduces a range of debates surrounding the role of the critic and the functions and methods of literary criticism, from antiquity to the present. By the end of the course, you will be able to trace the historical and conceptual development of the field of literary studies and will have an understanding of the shifts and similarities between and among competing critical modes. Studying how other critics analyse texts will enable you to situate your own beliefs and practices and increase your awareness of the way in which different social and cultural contexts affect the nature of language and meaning.

The other three CP courses – Prose, Poetry, and Performance – will expand your sensitivity to specific generic conventions and extend your knowledge of associated critical vocabulary. This, in turn, will hone your skills in the close reading, description, and analysis of a variety of texts. In the Performance course in particular you will be encouraged to reflect upon the meaning and effect of texts in relation to their staging, exploring a range of different aspects and styles of theatre.

All these courses are taught primarily by weekly lectures, supported by workshops where appropriate. If you have any specific queries about the courses you may consult the Course Organiser; additionally, you may consult full time members of staff in their office hours. While the CP courses do, of course, count for credit toward your degree in their own right, the skills acquired in them are also designed to be transferable. In particular, the critical terminology acquired should be used to inform your analysis of the texts you study in the rest of your Honours courses, including your Dissertation (where appropriate).
GENERAL INFORMATION

CREDIT WEIGHTING

All Critical Practice courses are worth 10 credits.

COURSE ORGANISERS

Critical Practice: Criticism – Dr Aaron Kelly

Critical Practice: Poetry – Dr Alan Gillis

Critical Practice: Prose – Dr David Farrier

Critical Practice: Performance – Professor Randall Stevenson

COURSE ADMINISTRATORS

Third Year: Ms June Haigh

Fourth Year: Ms Anne Mason

LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS FOR CP CRITICISM AND CP PERFORMANCE

As these exercises are a Degree Examination, there is no procedure for the granting of extensions. Your work must be submitted by the due date. Late submissions count as defaulting on a Degree Examination, and will normally be marked as zero.

If you are unwell or experience acute personal difficulties whilst undertaking the assignment, you should contact your Personal Tutor, School Student Support Officers and the Chairman of the Board of Examiners as a matter of urgency. You should also obtain a medical certificate covering the relevant part of the assessment period as soon as possible. Your Personal Tutor or the Student Support Officers will be able to advise you whether you should make use of the University’s Special Circumstances provision, and how to do so.

Computer problems are in no circumstances an acceptable reason for delayed or incomplete submission.
CRITICAL PRACTICE: CRITICISM

RATIONALE

This course will introduce students to a range of conceptions of the task of the critic and debates about the functions and methods of literary criticism. It aims to provide students with both an appropriate vocabulary and broad conceptual and historical schemata to help them situate, develop and challenge their own beliefs and practice as critics.

TEACHING METHODS

Students will attend a weekly lecture, and one 2 hour workshop at the start of the course. (Workshops will be held in Weeks 2-4. Sign-up for workshops takes place via the course Learn section.) The lectures will introduce students to the history of criticism, and encourage them to think about both change and continuity in relation to the history of criticism. Lectures and lecture handouts will make recommendations for further reading as appropriate, and lecturers will make an effort to demonstrate to students both the modes of analysis appropriate to the study of criticism and possible connections and contrasts between different approaches to criticism. Students should ensure that they follow the reading for the lectures each week, and take note of the exact form and nature of the assessment exercise from the start of the course.

The workshops will allow students the opportunity to ask questions about the course and its assessment, to reflect on how to get the most out of the course and how best to study for it, and to discuss the first lecture and general preliminary questions about different kinds of criticism.

There will also be an Assessment Briefing Session/Q&A after the penultimate lecture.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

All lectures take place in the G.07, Meadows lecture theatre, Doorway 4, Medical School, Teviot Place, Mondays 12.10-1pm.

Week 1  Introduction to Critical Practice Courses  Prof Penny Fielding / Dr Simon Malpas

Week 2  Reading and the Work of Criticism  Dr Aaron Kelly
Arnold, 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time'  [NTC: 691-714]
Eagleton, 'From Literary Theory'  [NTC: 2140-2146]
Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa'  [NTC: 1938-1959]
Week 3  **Modes of classical criticism**  Dr Allyson Stack
Plato, from *Republic*, [NTC:45-77]
Aristotle, *Poetics* [NTC: 88-115]
Longinus, from ‘On Sublimity’ [NTC: 136-154]

Week 4  **Neo-classical criticism**  Dr Tom Mole
Sidney, 'From The Defence of Poesy' [NTC: 254-83]
Pope, 'An Essay on Criticism' [NTC: 349-362]
Johnson, from 'Preface to Shakespeare' [NTC: 373-86]

Week 5  **Taste, imagination and the role of the critic**  Dr Carole Jones
Addison, extracts in *NTC*. [NTC: 336-345]
Burke, extracts in *NTC*. [NTC:450-460]

Week 6  **Romantic criticism and its legacies**  Dr Keith Hughes
Schiller, from *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* [NTC: 481-492]
Coleridge, from *Biographia Literaria* [NTC: 579-591]
Shelley, from 'A Defence of Poetry' [NTC: 591-613]

Week 7  **Formalism and criticism**  Dr Keith Hughes
Brooks, from *The Well-Wrought Urn* [NTC: 1213-1229]
Wimsatt & Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy'
[NTC: 1230-1246]

Week 8  **Criticism beyond formalism**  Dr Alex Thomson
Frye, 'The Archetypes of Literature' [NTC: 1301-1315]
Jauss, from 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory'
[NTC: 1403-1420]

**NB: This is the Monday of Essay Completion Week**

Week 9  **NO LECTURE**

Week 10  **Criticism and History**  Dr Aaron Kelly
Jameson, from *The Political Unconscious* [NTC: 1818-1846]
Spivak, from *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* [NTC: 2110-2126]

Week 11  **Criticism, Politics and Identity**  Dr Aaron Kelly
Butler, from *Gender Trouble* [NTC: 2536-2553]
Bhabha, 'The Commitment to Theory' [NTC: 2351-2372]
LECTURE HANDOUTS

All lecture handouts will be available via the CP Criticism Learn section in advance of the lecture.

SET TEXT


ASSESSMENT

Write a 2,500 word essay on ONE of the following essays from the Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism

4. Oscar Wilde, ‘From The Critic as Artist’. [NTC: 794-807]
5. Raymond Williams, ‘Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory’. [NTC 1423-1437]

Your answer should address the following three objectives:

a) To give a concise précis of the essay.
b) To enter into a critical discussion of the essay.
c) To locate the essay in relation to the history of criticism, and specifically to compare or contrast it with other extracts from the Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism as discussed in the lecture programme [see CP: Criticism lecture schedule above].

Although your essay should be written in continuous prose, you should draw attention to the point in your essay at which you turn to each of these elements. You are free to decide the balance between the three elements in your essay for yourself – for example you may find that an extended comparison is the best way to focus a critical discussion of the extract – but you should bear in mind that the marking of the assessment will depend on having adequately addressed all three elements.
In many ways the analytical techniques you will use in putting together the essay are similar to those you will have put to work in first and second year. However as we will see in the lecture course, responding to a critical argument and responding to a literary text are different sorts of exercise and require different forms of judgement. Because throughout your work at honours level you will be required to respond to critics as well as to literary texts, this exercise aims to help you explore appropriate forms of judgement.

The following notes are intended to help you think about each of the objectives of the assessment exercise:

a. To give a concise précis of the essay.

A précis is not simply a statement of the author’s intention. Rather it is an overview of their argument which considers not only what they set out to do but how they do it: whether they devote space to conceptual analysis or give literary examples. Consequently, you should aim to address the extract as a whole and not just focus on the beginning or on the conclusion. It might also consider the genre of the piece: is it a manifesto or statement of intent? is it a critical review or polemical riposte to another critic? is it analytical or impressionistic in form? An effective précis is more than a summary of an extract, it is a critical analysis in its own right because you will be drawing attention to what are the central lines of argument or investigation and what are subordinate ones. However, this will involve the exercise of your own critical judgement: for example, it would be up to you to identify the key arguments of the extract, and what are merely examples given in support of that argument.

b. To enter into a critical discussion of the essay.

Once you have given your précis – which we now see to mean something like an analytical summary – you are in a position to enter into a critical discussion of the extract. The précis is an essential prerequisite for your critical discussion because it is only reasonable to judge the success or validity of an argument once we have clearly understood what it is trying to achieve: it is not helpful to state that instead of doing one thing, an author should have tried to do something else. (Although note that you will have an opportunity to make this sort of point through comparison with another author who has chosen to do something different.) You might also bear in mind that just as literary criticism does not mean pointing out flaws and mistakes in a text, so ‘a critical discussion’ does not require you to find fault with an extract. At a very basic level it means drawing attention to features of interest in the piece, but more specifically it might mean exploring a combination of any number of the following questions:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the critical argument?
- Are there specific assumptions or circumstances that we need to be aware of before we can understand the argument, or that we need to bear in mind if we wish to make an assessment of its success?
• To what extent are the author of the extract and its arguments products of a particular time and place?
• To what extent are these arguments about criticism still relevant today?
• Is the approach to literature demonstrated by the extract more relevant to some literary forms or periods than to others?
• Is the style of the extract significant?
• If so, why the author has chosen to write in this particular style?
• Does the style of the extract make a difference to the analytical or persuasive force of the argument?

c. To locate the essay in relation to the history of criticism, and specifically to compare or contrast it with other extracts from the Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism as discussed in the lecture programme.

One aim of the course is to give you a sense not only of changing ideas of criticism over the ages, but also of continuity: that we may still be doing the same things with texts, or thinking about them using the same terms and categories, as much older writers. This final element of the assessment asks you to address this by looking at the essay you have chosen in relation to 2 of the extracts which were analysed in the lectures (see CP: Criticism lecture schedule above for details).

An ideal answer will seek to show both similarities and differences, for example by seeing how two authors go about different ways to reach similar ends, or how two authors draw different conclusions from similar starting points. Or you might be interested in the ways that quite different accounts of criticism sometimes turn out to harbour very similar unacknowledged or unexamined assumptions about the nature of literature or literary study.

Your aim is not so much to ‘classify’ or ‘label’ critical arguments (this is neo-classical whereas that is romantic) but to explore particular similarities and differences between the work of specific critics. After all, it is only on the basis of such specific comparisons that a historian of criticism can draw generalisations about schools of criticism; and the test of a good historian will always be the extent to which they complicate such generalisations.

Think of this as a way of revising the course: looking back over what has been discussed in the lectures, and seeing what larger patterns of similarity and difference you can see in the way that the critical enterprise has been discussed or conceived over the last two millennia.

**SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT**

**Deadline:** before 2p.m. on Monday 8 December 2014

You should submit one electronic copy and one printed copy. Both electronic and hard copy submission must be completed by the deadline set for the essay.
Electronic and hard copies must be textually identical. Any submission containing significant discrepancies between hard and electronic copies will be declared void and a mark of zero will be recorded.

The electronic copy should be submitted via the Turnitin interface on LEARN for the Critical Practice: Criticism course.

One printed copy of the essay should be submitted via the English Literature Essay Submission box Number 3 (for THIRD YEAR students), located outside the Undergraduate Teaching Office on the first floor of 50 George Square.

The essay should be stapled or securely fastened or placed in a plastic sleeve or folder.

The assignment will be anonymously marked, so please do not put your name anywhere on it. For the same reason, no essay cover sheet is required.

Please enter the following information on the first page of your assignment:

Matriculation Number
Examination Number
Name of Course: "Critical Practice: Criticism"

Please also type in the following sentence. DO NOT SIGN IT:

"Except for ideas and passages properly acknowledged in the text, this writing is all my own work."

LATE SUBMISSION

As this exercise is a Degree Examination, there is no procedure for the granting of extensions. Your work must be submitted by the due date. Late submissions count as defaulting on a Degree Examination, and will normally be marked at zero.

If you are unwell or experience acute personal difficulties whilst undertaking the assignment, you should contact your Personal Tutor, School Student Support Officers and the Chairman of the Board of Examiners as a matter of urgency. You should also obtain a medical certificate covering the relevant part of the assessment period as soon as possible. Your Personal Tutor or the Student Support Officers will be able to advise you whether you should make use of the University’s Special Circumstances provision, and how to do so.

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POSSIBLE FURTHER READING

Lentricchia, Frank & McLaughlin, Thomas eds., *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (2nd edn.)


CRITICAL PRACTICE: POETRY

RATIONALE

The course will introduce students to the critical skills they need to read a variety of poetic forms. It will examine a range of the key techniques of versification, including metre and rhythm, imagery and metaphor, rhyme and verse forms. The aim is to enhance the ways in which poetry can be read and to give you a critical vocabulary with which to define and explore this process. The course will also consider a wide range of poetic modes and explore how these have changed over time. It will also consider some of the key critical questions that bear upon the interpretation of poetry.

TEACHING METHODS

Students will attend a weekly lecture, plus a workshop at the midpoint of the course. Lectures will describe and analyse poetic technique with reference to specific examples and will suggest their wider application for students to develop either in their own reading or on other courses where relevant. Students will be free as usual to consult course lecturers, or any other member of staff, during office hours. Questions and exercises suggested in lectures during the course will direct students towards putting into practice the concepts introduced.

The workshop will be an hour and thirty minute discussion split into two parts. First, students will participate in a discussion of a particular poem in which techniques of reading discussed in the lectures will be put into practice. This will be followed by a broader discussion of poetic form in relation to one or two core critical questions (again drawing on the lecture programme).

LECTURE PROGRAMME

All lectures take place in G.07, Meadows lecture theatre, Doorway 4, Medical School, Teviot Place, Thursdays 12.10-1pm.

1 Introduction: Poetic Form Dr Alan Gillis
2 Prosody Dr Rebecca Davies
3 Rhetoric Dr Rebecca Davies
4 The Lyric Dr Lee Spinks
5 The Sonnet Dr Suzanne Trill
6 Eighteenth-Century Forms Prof Penny Fielding
7 Dramatic Monologues Dr Sarah Dunnigan
8 ESSAY COMPLETION WEEK
9 Modernist Poetics Prof Penny Fielding
10 Poetry and Vernacular Dr Alan Gillis
11 The Gender of Poetry Dr Suzanne Trill
LECTURE HANDOUTS

All lecture handouts will be available via the CP Poetry Learn section in advance of the lecture.

SET TEXTS

Where possible, lectures will draw their examples from the Norton Anthology of English Literature.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment will be by means of a two-hour examination during the assessment period at the end of Semester One.

The paper will be divided into two sections. The first will be a close reading exercise which will ask students to analyse one poem and to show a detailed understanding of literary techniques and poetic devices. The second section will ask students to write a discursive essay on one of the critical issues raised by the lecture programme.

Past papers for the course can be viewed on the Library website via Exam Papers Online.

POSSIBLE FURTHER READING

Fraser, G.S. *Metre, Rhyme, and Free Verse*. Methuen, 1970
CRITICAL PRACTICE: PROSE

RATIONALE

The course will examine a range of English prose and narrative forms, their historical development and social context, and theories and tactics established for their analysis. It aims to improve students’ knowledge of these areas, along with their reading and interpretative skills and proficiencies. Theories and ideas will be discussed and their implications for primary critical analysis demonstrated and explored.

TEACHING METHODS

The course will be taught primarily by lectures, once weekly for ten weeks, plus a workshop towards the end of the course. The lectures and workshop will examine a range of English prose and narrative forms, their historical development and social contexts, and theories and tactics established for their analysis. Lectures will discuss these areas, exploring and demonstrating their implications for critical analysis and suggesting how they may improve students’ knowledge and their reading and interpretative skills.

Issues considered will include the rise of the novel and narrative history; distinctions between story and discourse; realism; narrators and narrative ‘frames’; free indirect style and other means of transcribing consciousness; irony and tone; temporality, structure and form; genre; fictionality and metafiction.

Questions and exercises suggested in lectures during the course will direct students towards practice with the concepts introduced. Students will be free as usual to consult course lecturers, or any other member of staff, during office hours.

The workshops will run across weeks 9-11, and material necessary for participation in them can be accessed on the Learn section for the course. We will use these workshops to discuss and focus your sense of the key issues addressed by the course, and to look at close reading exercises which will also help prepare you for the exam. These sessions are also a chance for you to ask questions or to discuss core topics from the course with staff and students.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

All lectures take place in the Teviot Lecture Theatre, Doorway 5, Old Medical School, Teviot Place, Mondays 12.10-1pm.

1 Introduction: Prose and Narrative Theory Prof Randall Stevenson
2 Rise of the Novel and Narrative History Prof Randall Stevenson
3 Genre Dr Katherine Inglis
4 Metafiction Dr Ken Millard

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LECTURE HANDOUTS

All lecture handouts will be available via the CP Prose Learn section in advance of the lecture.

WORKSHOP GUIDANCE NOTES

The workshops will assist your preparation for the exam by focusing on the key skills required for the assessment. Some guidance notes for participants in workshops will be made available to you in advance via Learn.

SET TEXTS

All students should read, and own, a copy of Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (New Edition, Routledge, 2002), around which discussions of theory will be based.

There are no primary literary texts as such; students are encouraged to draw upon whatever primary texts best exemplify their specific arguments about prose, in the context of the question. However, as far as possible, lectures will try and draw their examples from the following short prose pieces:

- Henry James ‘The Turn of the Screw’ (1898)
- Joseph Conrad *Heart of Darkness* (1899)
- James Joyce ‘The Dead’ (1907/1914)

ASSESSMENT

Assessment will be by means of a two-hour examination during the April-May assessment period.

This will be divided into two sections. In the first section, you will be asked to analyse a passage of prose narrative in the light of the ideas and topics discussed during the course. Your analysis will be expected to pay particular attention to technical and stylistic features of the selected passage. In the second section, you will be required to write an essay in response to a question addressing one or more of the ideas and topics raised by the course.
Past papers for the course can be viewed on the Library website via Exam Papers Online.

POSSIBLE FURTHER READING

Lectures may well also draw on the following texts, some of which could therefore usefully be consulted:

Chatman, Seymour, *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Cornell University Press, 1990)
Miller, J. Hillis, *Reading Narrative* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1998)
CRITICAL PRACTICE: PERFORMANCE

RATIONALE

The course aims to encourage students to think about the processes by which a play text becomes a performance text, how meaning is generated in theatrical performance, and what sorts of critical and theoretical modes might be helpful in writing critically about performance. It will develop students' knowledge of the modes, genres and technical constituents of dramatic performance, with specific regard to a number of the key movements, theories and practices that have shaped modern performance. By the end of the course students should be able to analyse the constituents of a dramatic performance and reflect upon the critical accounts of performance theory produced by others and themselves.

TEACHING METHODS

Two groups of lectures and one week of group workshops. The lectures will be grouped under the following titles, and will collectively address the implications of thinking of plays as primarily performance texts, and seeking to understand them in a performance context. The first group of lectures, Means of Performance: Stage, Space and Audience, will explore various aspects of performance and its conditions, and look at how such elements might contribute to the meaningful experience of theatre. The second group, Performance Styles and Conventions, will look at some of the ways in which dramaturges, theorists and practitioners have responded to their contemporary conditions of performance, and incorporated an awareness of the capacity of these elements to shape meaning and effect into the development of particular styles or kinds of theatre.

The workshops, which will take place in Weeks 11 or 12, will allow students to try out some of the modes of analysis covered in the lecture programme in group discussion, in the context of exploring questions or issues regarding the course assessment.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

All lectures take place in Lecture Theatre 2, Appleton Tower, Thursdays 12.10-1pm.

(i) Means of Performance: Stage, Space and Audience

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>What is performance?</th>
<th>Prof Randall Stevenson</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aspects of performance</td>
<td>Prof James Loxley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Performance Spaces and Theatre Audiences</td>
<td>Prof Randall Stevenson</td>
</tr>
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(ii) Performance Styles and Conventions

4 Watching Drama: Renaissance Theatre: Prof Greg Walker
5 Addressing the Audience: Medieval Theatre: Dr Sarah Carpenter
6 INNOVATIVE LEARNING WEEK
7 Melodrama Ms Nicola McCartney
8 Naturalism Dr Sarah Carpenter
9 ESSAY COMPLETION WEEK
10 Brecht and Epic Theatre Ms Nicola McCartney
11 Contemporary Performance Possibilities Prof James Loxley

LECTURE HANDOUTS

All lecture handouts will be available via the CP Performance Learn section in advance of the lecture.

SET TEXTS


All students should read the following plays. Each one will serve as a prime example in a particular lecture, but may well be referred in others.

Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*
Anon, *Mankind*
Shakespeare, *Richard III*
Strindberg, *Miss Julie*
Brecht, *Mother Courage*
Beckett, *Endgame*

ASSESSMENT

The course will be assessed by TWO tasks relating to the issues addressed in one of the two sections of the course (lectures 1-3 for Task 1; lectures 4-9 for Task 2).

Each task will be focused on a different play (two in total) chosen by you, though you should not choose one of the Core Texts (see list above) used in exemplifying lectures. A list of suggestions can be found below.

These two tasks will be handed in as a portfolio at the end of the course, the word limit for which is 3,000 words. Task 1 should be approximately 1,000 words and Task 2 should be approximately 2,000 words.
ASSESSMENT TASK 1 – approx. 1,000 words

Thinking about the ways in which extra-textual aspects of performance generate effects and meanings, choose a scene or extract from a play of your own choice (you may wish to choose one from the list below but you are not required to do so).

Then choose one or more extra-textual aspect(s) and write an account of how it might be deployed in an imagined performance of your chosen scene or extract. You should focus particularly on how this specific dimension of performance could work to shape the audience’s experience and understanding of the extract or scene.

To complete this task you will have to make a number of directorial decisions about your chosen aspect of performance. You will not be assessed on the originality of your staging, but on the ways in which you explore what is at stake in the decisions that you make.

Further Advice for Assessment Task 1 – Staging a Scene: Processes, Aspects and Key Questions

The first part of the assessment asks you to choose a scene from one play and explore how extra-textual aspects of performance (such as space, movement, sound, lighting, the bodies of the performers, etc.) generate meaning. Below is a brief checklist of some of the key questions you might want to consider and relevant aspects of staging. Choose the aspect or aspects most significant for your interpretation of the scene.

1. Opening questions

What is the scene about? What do I want to communicate in performance? These are the key questions that will orientate the decisions made about your chosen aspect(s) of performance. In many ways, they are literary-critical questions: what one is interested in at this point is interpretation of the text.

2. Processes of staging

Once you have decided what the scene is (or should be) doing or conveying, it becomes important to explore the means by which these ideas or effects can be communicated. The key questions here are to do with how the particular media available in performance can be deployed.

Choose one or more of the following aspects of performance:

Type of performance space – Bodies of the actors – Rhythm and pacing – Lighting – Sound – Setting – Costume

First explain what you have chosen to do, and then discuss how that choice will contribute to the overall meaning and effect of the scene in performance.
Why have particular decisions been made and how are they likely to affect the audience’s response to the scene?

ASSESSMENT TASK 2 – approx. 2,000 words

Choose a scene or extract from another play and, using this sample, explore how issues of theatrical convention generate meaning and help create the performance event.

First, consider the performance conventions within which your chosen scene or extract was originally written and staged, and how they might have shaped its meanings or effects. Then give an account of a possible production of that scene staged within the conventions used by ANY other performance tradition explored throughout the course (including Modernism and Beyond). What kind of new performance event do these changes propose? How does the translation of a play into different performance conventions affect its meaning or effect, and change the relationship between play and audience?

When completing this task, you should consider whether you would want or need to make changes to the play-text as written. If your imagined production would indeed seek to make substantive changes to the text of the play, you are welcome to include an illustrative sample of such rewriting (up to 500 words in addition to the 2,000 words of critical analysis) if you judge that it would make your exposition of your production clearer. You will not be assessed on the quality of this rewriting, but on the analysis that you provide of it and the possible production in which it figures.

Further Advice for Assessment Task 2 – Experimenting with Performance Conventions: Processes, Aspects and Key Questions

Assessment 2 asks you to choose a scene or extract from another play and then briefly to think about the performance conventions within which it was originally written (Classical Greek, Elizabethan, Naturalist, avant-garde, epic etc.). Below is a brief checklist of some of the key questions you might want to address when thinking about the significance of historical performance conventions.

1. Opening questions

What is the scene or extract about? How do the specific performance conventions according to which it was written help to generate meaning? How do they conceptualise and embody aspects of performance (actors/characters, theatrical space, etc.) and how do they affect the audience. In some ways, these too are literary-critical questions, but they are concerned with how the formal, conventional aspects of performance help to create meaning. Here are some examples of the kind of questions you may want to consider:
• What kind of play is the original?
• What conventions does it utilise?
• How does it view the notion of dramatic character?
• Does it employ the conventions of boy-actors and men-playing-women?
• Does it use masks?
• How does it present dramatic time and scenic space?
• How does it relate to the audience?
• What understanding of the scope and function of drama do these conventions embody?
• Is there a political or ideological dimension to these conventions?

2. Processes of Re-imagining

Once you have considered what the scene or extract is saying (or should be) and how the particular theatrical conventions contribute to this, then re-imagine that scene in terms of ANY other theatrical/performance tradition explored throughout the course. Here are some examples of the kind of questions you may want to consider:

• What performance tradition have you chosen to re-imagine your chosen scene, and what might make this re-imagining an appropriate or effective one?
• What kinds of performance conventions are crucial to this performance tradition, and which of these are most important to your adaptation?
• Does this adaptation require you to change the text of the play, and if so in what ways?
• In what ways does your adaptation change the role of the audience in relation to the performance?
• In what ways does your adaptation challenge or change the political or ideological function of the play?

List of suggested texts for use in assessed exercises
(You may, if you wish, select texts from beyond this list):

Euripides, The Bacchae
Aristophanes, The Frogs
Christopher Marlowe, Dr Faustus
William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, Coriolanus
Ben Jonson, The Alchemist
John Webster, The Duchess of Malfi
Elizabeth Carey, The Tragedy of Mariam
Jean Racine, Phaedra
Aphra Behn, The Rover
William Congreve, The Way of the World
Friedrich Schiller, The Robbers
Oscar Wilde, Salome
Henrik Ibsen, The Master Builder
Anton Chekhov, *The Seagull*
George Bernard Shaw, *Saint Joan*
Bertolt Brecht, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, Saint Joan of the Stockyards*
Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*
Eugene O’Neill, *Long Day’s Journey into Night*
Harold Pinter, *The Birthday Party*
John Arden, *Sergeant Musgrave’s Dance*
Caryl Churchill, *Cloud Nine*
Mark Ravenhill, *Shopping and Fucking*
Diane Samuels, *Kindertransport*

No publication details are given as there are many different editions of some of these plays. Multiple copies of all of these texts (some in a number of different editions/translations) are held in the library.

**SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT**

**Deadline:** before 3 p.m. on Thursday 2 April 2015

You should submit one electronic copy and one printed copy. Both electronic and hard copy submission must be completed by the deadline set for the essay.

Electronic and hard copies must be textually identical. Any submission containing significant discrepancies between hard and electronic copies will be declared void and a mark of zero will be recorded.

The electronic copy should be submitted via the Turnitin interface on LEARN for the Critical Practice: Performance course. Please upload the two Tasks as one document.

A printed copy of the portfolio should be delivered to the English Literature Essay Submission box Number 3 (for THIRD YEAR students), located outside the Undergraduate Teaching Office on the first floor of 50 George Square.

The pages of the portfolio should be stapled or securely fastened or placed in a plastic sleeve or folder.

The assignment will be anonymously marked, so please do not put your name anywhere on it.

Please enter the following information on the first page of each copy of your assignment:

Matriculation Number
Examination Number
Name of Course: "Critical Practice: Performance"
Please also type in the following sentence. DO NOT SIGN IT:

"Except for ideas and passages properly acknowledged in the text, this writing is all my own work."

**LATE SUBMISSION**

As this exercise is a Degree Examination, there is **no procedure for the granting of extensions**. Your work must be submitted by the due date. Late submissions count as defaulting on a Degree Examination, and will normally be marked as zero.

If **you are unwell or experience acute personal difficulties** whilst undertaking the assignment, you should contact your Personal Tutor, School Student Support Officers and the Chairman of the Board of Examiners as a matter of urgency. You should also obtain a medical certificate covering the relevant part of the assessment period as soon as possible. Your Personal Tutor or the Student Support Officers will be able to advise you whether you should make use of the University's **Special Circumstances** provision, and how to do so.

**Computer problems are in no circumstances** an acceptable reason for delayed or incomplete submission.

**POSSIBLE FURTHER READING**

Esslin, Martin, *The Field of Drama: How the Signs of Drama Create Meaning on Stage and Screen*, London: Methuen, 1988  
Roose-Evans, James, *Experimental Theatre from Stanislavski to Peter Brook*, London: Routledge, 1989  
