

MFA in Drama Course

Playwriting Major

DRDR 2011, 2012, 2013, Professional Practice I, II, III

Professional Practice is not a class but actual participation and practice in performances, school projects, workshops, play-readings, and directing, as well as outside internships. *Professional Practice* is the learner's practice-led research pathway to the *Thesis Project*. It offers an opportunity to experiment, explore embodied knowledge and balance theoretical work with practical exercise and understanding. The student's assessable work can be as: playwright, director, assistant director, assistant to director, teacher, actor, producer, dramaturge, designer, or as a management team member. Such practice can also benefit students by the acquisition of in-depth and hands-on experience in theatre-related work subject to the approval of the stream leader/graduate advisor and MFA Coordinator.

This course is an on-going process in which the student is guided through consultation and evaluation. It is a student-centred learning-pathway where both the work and its assessment are negotiated by the learner, thus making this module complementary to the *Thesis Project*.

DRPW 2005 Playwriting Strategies

This course that focuses on the practice and application of playwriting principles. It explores techniques for communicating dramatic information, ideas, moods, and feelings through the composition of creative written work for the theatre. It includes instruction in the craft of creative writing, scene writing, script development, stage direction, dialogue and action analysis, editing and adaptation, script reading, and the process of creation of full productions.

Sessions combine Lecture-Laboratory, with practical work as appropriate. Printed notes are distributed to the student in class. The main written language is Chinese, with the principal focus on Cantonese drama. Students may be assigned to act as a playwright's assistant for a faculty or guest directed production, and must attend all technical meetings and evaluation sessions.

DRPW 2006 Playwriting: An Art Form

The course aims to nurture playwrights to become well-rounded artists and dramatists addressing how they express themselves, and even how they might transform what they see and understand of the world. The focus is on the process and development of personal tastes and styles, and on the discovery of a playwriting student's personal choices of expression, as well as on helping each student to write to the best of her/his ability. Encouragement is given to help students to write personally and truthfully about ideas that have great meaning to us.

At this stage of study, the student also focuses on completing and refining her/his fulllength work through play-readings and group discussions. A producible draft for a future project/production, not necessarily the final draft, in a full-length format must be completed in this semester.

DRPW 2007 Playwriting: Tracing the Threads of Masterpieces

This colloquium course is designed to provide students with diverse, inspiring, and practical stimuli from great literature throughout Western theatre to broaden as well as intensify students' aesthetic perspective on the creation of a masterpiece. It provides advanced and in-depth studies into the art of playwriting, understanding the historical development of dramatic composition from the classical Roman theatre to that of the twentieth century. Interesting comparative studies of different eras reveal changes of writing styles. Different approaches on similar themes demonstrate ideological positions adopted by various playwrights. Isolating these similarities or differences entails specialised areas of criticism and ways of interpretation.

The weekly meeting is designed as a roundtable discussion. Colloquium foci are pre-set so that students can prepare before the meeting. Students play a major role in generating meaningful discussions and share their findings with fellow-students through oral and audio-visual presentations. Depending on the English fluency of the students, translated works can be used for study in place of the original English scripts. The language for written projects and presentations can be either English or Chinese.

DRPW 2008 Drama in Literature

Literature in this course is considered to be a playwright's basic resource. Students study literary material (that is apart from plays) mainly selected from Chinese and Western fictions with a focus on the authors' insight into the world and their perception of men as individual human being. It has a focus on 'dramatisation' and the 'dramatic' in fiction. Using Aristotle's *Poetics* as a working framework for an understanding of drama and Lajos Egri's *The Art of Dramatic Writing* as a counterpoint for a theoretical basis, it aims at exploring the unique narratives and sub-textual meanings of the great (dramatic) works in literature, thereby enriching the students' methodology in dramatic structure and characterisation. It is also a study of the art of adaptation, so much a necessary tool of both writers and general theatre practitioners.

DRPW 2009 New Script Workshop

The workshop provides a forum for the development of new work in the MFA Directing and Playwriting programmes. Audiences may get a first glimpse of new work by MFA playwriting majors. It is an in-depth, hands-on, practical exploration of new script creation, developing original voices and art forms, explore different and sometimes difficult tasks facing artists involved in the development of a new play.

The ultimate goal of the workshop is to help playwrights and directors to incorporate each other's methods and to understand each other better in a collaborative process. In the New Script Workshop, through discussion and analysis, and through development or production of their own or their colleagues' plays, students could gain essential experience for their future careers as playwrights, dramaturges, literary managers, actors, and/or directors.

DRTP 2001, 2002, 2007, 2008 Thesis Project Seminar I, II, III, IV

Required in each semester of the two-year programme, the seminar format of the *Thesis Project Seminar* enables students to share ideas and knowledge about their own practice, to examine the work and practice of peers and professionals in the field, and to explore paradigms from different drama specialisations and theatre practices. The seminars are designed to encourage critical reflection on, and analysis of, personal work and practice, and serve as a forum for students to identify and refine their *Thesis Project* ideas. For students in their final semester of the programme, it is a testing ground for their *Thesis Project* defence (*viva voce*) and they will be required to make a presentation to their class peers

D RTP 2009 Thesis Project in Drama

The *Thesis Project* serves as the capstone experience in the graduate curriculum. It is a demonstration of the synthesis of the student's learning and conceived as a conduit between the curriculum and the realisation of artistic expression, and as such reflects the student's achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the programme. The *Thesis Project* demonstrates the candidate's in-depth command of a chosen area of specialisation, and understanding of the highly sophisticated and complex relationship between drama, the context within which it is created, the students' creative voice, and the candidate's future career goals. Accomplished in various formats, the *Thesis Project* embodies the candidate's individual artistic vision through original, innovative, and creative contributions to the field of theatre.

The stream leader/course advisor, (or designated specialist advisor) supervises the *Thesis Project*, which the MFA Coordinator monitors. The student(s) presents the *Thesis Project* proposal to the School Graduate Education Committee for approval. A tri-partite *Thesis Project* defence committee comprised of the stream leader/course advisor, Head of the relevant discipline or one other faculty member, and one external assessor approved by the School Graduate Education Committee assesses the *Thesis Project*. The MFA Coordinator, *ex officio* or, in the event that the MFA Coordinator is the stream leader/course advisor, another independent member of faculty, chairs the *Thesis Project* defence committee. The role of the chair of the *Thesis Project* defence committee is purely procedural and as a measure of quality assurance and consistency in the process; the chair does not participate in assessing the *Thesis Project*.