

TH394 THEATRE WORKSHOP
IES Abroad Dublin Summer Intensive Acting Program

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This two-week module, conducted in Killarney, County Kerry, Ireland through the West End House School of Arts, will provide students with an introduction to contemporary theatre-making in a European dramatic tradition. There will be a strong emphasis on how contemporary Irish Playwrights have been inspired by ancient drama in a European Context, and students will examine how the Irish during the dark ages played a part in saving and restoring this rich dramatic history. Using a workshop format, the course will explore improvisational approaches and texts, culminating in a staged performance at the end of the two-week period. The class sessions focus on the orchestration of meaning and experience for the spectator, from conception through execution, with an eye toward the broader cultural implications of the actor's work.

CREDITS: 2

CONTACT HOURS: 30

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

Meetings, rehearsals, critiques, and tutorials. Visits to local historical sites, attendance at performances, and guest lectures are an integral part of this course.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

Due to the essentially practical nature of the course, the key elements are:

- Class participation – 30%
- Final showcase performance – 40%
- Written Assignment – 30%

Class participation

Participation includes devising work, critiquing texts, and editing the work to create the final showcase. This participation is graded in the following terms:

- Outstanding Participant: Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas are consistently substantive and insightful, and persuasively presented. Absence would significantly diminish the quality of class.
- Good Participant: Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive and insightful, and often persuasively presented. Absence would diminish quality of class.
- Adequate Participant: Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas are sometimes substantive and insightful, but seldom offer a new direction. Absence would diminish quality of class.
- Non-Participant: Little or no contribution in class. Subsequently, there is limited basis for evaluation. Absence would not affect the quality of class.
- Unsatisfactory Participant: Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive, provide little insight, and are rarely constructive. Absence would improve the quality of class.

Final Showcase Performance

The showcase will be performed by the students at the end of their two-week session. The material used in scene work will be comprised of texts from the curriculum as well as from original material drawn from the students' engagement with Irish culture. Each student will be required to perform in a minimum of one scene; this scene or scenes will be graded in terms of participation, execution and understanding of text.

	Excellent	Good	Poor
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Performance	Technical aspects of performance including Acting, Movement, Choreography and Stagecraft are displayed to a high standard.	Technical components are not displayed in a consistent or regular manner.	Technical components of performance are very limited and not being delivered to a basic standard.
Transference from Rehearsal to Performance	The work created and developed during the workshops and rehearsal manifests itself in the final performance. All aspects of this work are delivered to a high standard.	The transference of work from rehearsal period to performance is executed in a limited capacity.	The transference of work created is not evident in the final performance.
Understanding of the text and pedagogy of the chosen material.	The analysis and understanding of the material used in showcase is of a very high standard.	The analytical and understanding of text such as character development is very limited.	There is very little analytical and text work on display during the final performance.

Written Assignment

This written assignment is submitted on the final session of the programme. It will be a minimum of 1,500 words and a reflection on the work carried out during the programme. This paper will focus on the challenges and differences the student perceives between Irish Theatre and other cultures. These differences can be highlighted through identity, societal issues, political and religious themes.

	Excellent	Good	Poor
Depth of Reflection	Demonstrate a conscious and thorough understanding of the writing prompt and the subject matter.	Demonstrate a basic understanding of the writing prompt and the subject matter.	Demonstrate little or no understanding of the writing prompt and subject matter. This reflection needs revision.
Coherence and Style	Demonstrate control of the conventions with essentially no errors, even with sophisticated language.	Demonstrate partial control of the conventions, exhibiting occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension.	Demonstrate little or no control of the conventions, making comprehension almost impossible.
Critical thinking and Analysing Perspectives	Student assesses and evaluates perspectives, knowledge, and opinions gained from course concepts and experience. Student links these assessments to own perspectives and opinions on the issue.	Student asks questions and shows awareness of multiple perspectives. Opinions are stated with some analysis and support.	Student accepts things at face value; opinions are stated without analysis or support.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students are able to:

- Evaluate the aesthetic, personal and social value of the art of theatre
- Analyse the conventions of Irish and European dramatic structure, language and gesture
- Analyse the playwright's conception of characterization and motivation

- Gain a perspective of Irish Theatre as a performer
- Articulate how ancient drama has impacted on contemporary Irish playwrights

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Because IES Abroad courses are designed to take advantage of the unique contribution of the instruction and the lecture/discussion format, regular class attendance is mandatory. Any missed class, without a legitimate reason will be reflected in the final grade. A legitimate reason would include: documented illness or family bereavement. Travel, (including travel delays) is not a legitimate reason.

CONTENT:

Session	Content	Assignments and Readings
Session 1	Introduction to Ensemble Work <u>Morning</u> Ensemble work through the practice of viewpoints <u>Afternoon</u> Free Time <u>Evening</u> Free Time	• Bogart, Anne and Tina Landau (2005). <u>The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition</u>. (excerpts)
Session 2	The use of Character through Viewpoints <u>Morning</u> Forest walk through Killarney National Park, visiting sites with of mythological interest <u>Afternoon</u> Exploring Time and Space <u>Evening</u> Performance - "PURE," a one-hour, three-person evening of Irish storytelling, singing and dancing. Venue – West End House - Black Box Studio.	• Brook, Peter (1995). <u>The Empty Space: A Book About the Theatre: Deadly, Holy, Rough, Immediate</u>, pages: 1-46, "The Deadly Theatre" • Rodenburg, Patsy (2019). <u>The Actor Speaks: Voice and the Performer</u>, chapter 3, p161-234. "Voice and Speech meet Word and Text."
Session 3	Introducing Irish Storytelling and Text Work <u>Morning</u> Boat trip on the lakes of Killarney; includes a visit to the 6th century Innisfallen Monastery <u>Afternoon</u> Exploring rhythms of language <u>Evening</u> Free Time	• Carr, Marina (2004). <u>By the Bog of Cats</u> • Act 1, Scene 1: The Ghost Fancier Meets Hester • Act 1, Scene 6: Carthage Meets Hester • Act 3, Scene 3: Caroline Meets Hester • Heaney, Seamus (2005). <u>The Burial at Thebes</u>. Chorus' speeches.

Session 4	Exploration of Character and Text Work through Movement <u>Morning</u> The art of movement while embodying both character and text <u>Afternoon</u> Free Time <u>Evening</u> A historical and musical lesson in the Irish Harp – music instrument and national symbol of Ireland. Venue - West End House, Black Box Studio.	• The Theatre of Marina Carr (2008). Chapter 10, pp 160-171. "Journeys in Performance." • Cahill, Thomas (1996). How the Irish Saved Civilisation.
Session 5	How Storytelling has Evolved from Ancient Times to the Present Day <u>Morning</u> Realising similarities of ancient text in a contemporary setting <u>Afternoon</u> A visit to Listowel International Writers Week Festival <u>Evening</u> A visit to Listowel International Festival	• Heaney, Seamus (1991). <u>The Cure at Troy</u>. Scene 1 - The arrival of Neoptolemus and Odysseus to meet Philoctetes. • Hodge, Alison (2000). <u>Twentieth Century Acting Training</u>. Chapter 5, pp 98-112 "Brecht and Actor Training." • Brook, Peter (1995). <u>The Empty Space: A Book About the Theatre: Deadly, Holy, Rough, Immediate</u>. Chapter 9, pp 174-190 "Transparency and the invisible network" Assignment: Rehearse and prepare chosen material for showcase.
Session 6	Embodying the Text <u>Morning</u> Using the landscape to inform the playing of the text <u>Afternoon</u> Storytelling bus tour of Killarney's historical and ancient sites <u>Evening</u> Free Time	Rehearse and prepare chosen material for showcase
Session 7	Realising the Rehearsal Process <u>Morning</u> Workshop and theatre visit with Siamsa Tire, National Folk Theatre of Ireland <u>Afternoon</u> Transforming the creative material to a performance-based presentation	Students will meet individually with the instructor to review progress on their paper.

	<u>Evening</u> Free Time	
Session 8	Bringing the Process to a Performance <u>Morning</u> Session 8: Transitional work, leading to a product-based theatre <u>Afternoon</u> Free Time <u>Evening</u> Performance "God has no Country": a one-hour one-person show, written and performed by Donal Courtney. The play is based on Irish Storytelling tradition and is set in Killarney and Rome. Venue – West End House, Black Box Studio.	
Session 9	The Final Performance Rehearsal for final showcase at Innisfallon Monastery on Innisfallon Island	
Session 10	The Final Performance Performance of final showcase at Innisfallon Monastery on Innisfallon Island	Final paper is due

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Forest walk through Killarney National Park, visiting sites with of mythological interest
- Performance - "PURE," a one-hour, three-person evening of Irish storytelling, singing and dancing.
- Boat trip on the lakes of Killarney; includes a visit to the 6th century Innisfallon Monastery – the site of the final showcase performance.
- A historical and musical lesson in the Irish Harp – music instrument and national symbol of Ireland.
- A visit to Listowel International Writers Week Festival.
- Storytelling bus tour of Killarney's historical and ancient sites.
- Workshop and theatre visit with Siamsa Tire, National Folk Theatre of Ireland.
- Performance "God has no Country": a one-hour one-person show, written and performed by Donal Courtney. The play is based on Irish Storytelling tradition and is set in Killarney and Rome.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Bogart, Anne and Tina Landau. The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition. Theatre Communications Group, 2005.
- Brook, Peter. The Empty Space: A Book About the Theatre: Deadly, Holy, Rough, Immediate. Scribner, 1995.
- Cahill, Thomas. How the Irish Saved Civilisation. Routledge, 1996.
- Carr, Marina. By the Bog of Cats. Faber & Faber, 2004.
- Heaney, Seamus. The Burial at Thebes. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.
- Heaney, Seamus. The Cure at Troy. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991.
- Hodge, Alison. Twentieth Century Acting Training. Routledge, 2000.

- Leeney, Cathy and Anna McMullan (eds). The Theatre of Marina Carr. Carysfort Press, 2008.
- Rodenburg, Patsy. The Actor Speaks: Voice and the Performer. Methuen Drama, 2019.