



TH 390 PLAYWRITING WORKSHOP

IES Abroad London

DESCRIPTION: This course is a creative writing course, and an exercise in devising a piece of theatre from scratch. It focuses specifically on drama script writing and is dialogue driven. It deals with language holistically – addressing how it is used and what this tells us of the person speaking. The range of skills, abilities and motivations of each individual student is utilized to develop a unique organic piece of work, a short play, written as an ensemble piece. This piece will be given a barely rehearsed reading, informally, for fellow students at the end of the semester, but the student is not assessed on performances delivered.

CREDITS: 3 credits

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

ADDITIONAL COST: Students in any class that requires attendance at theater performances are charged a fee to help cover the cost of these performances. Classes subject to this fee are DR315, TH350, and TH390. If students are in two or more of these classes in the same term, they are charged only once. For more information on the fee, please see the program fee sheet. **Note: This additional fee is not charged to students in the Theatre Studies Program, as performances are included in their program fee.**

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Weekly writing workshops, editing each other's work, as well as team writing. It is a collaborative venture, and students will write collectively, as well as individually. The plot, characters and central themes will emerge from discussions and ideas produced as a group.
- Students may in addition find themselves responsible for writing a particular scene, which will then be submitted for general approval. Occasionally students have found this difficult, either because they want to write 'their own play' or they are unwilling to accept others' critical response in the spirit of support in which it is always intended. If either is the case, interested students would be advised not to take this class, but rather to write her/his own play on his/her own time.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

100% continuous assessment – and there is always writing set between each week.

All written exercises will be retained by the tutor to measure each student's specific development and this will go some way to grading at the end. Approximately the first half of the semester is concerned with more general writing assignments, the second focuses on the creation of the 20-minute play. Students will be graded on their growth as a writer, on their comprehension of structure, style and characterization and on the development of their dramaturgical language, and most importantly on their ability to creatively contribute as part of an ensemble.

Sustained commitment throughout the project is crucial as is compulsory attendance. Students are writing as a group, and if classes are missed, students will miss a part in the group's determining what the piece of writing is ultimately to be.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Be the co-writer of a short play.
- Demystify the process of writing, and develop the skills to create characters and scenes.
- Understand the broader definitions of style and structure.
- Be a confident editor of other's work.

The group will also address as pure script the production seen the previous week.

CONTENT:

Weeks 1 – 12: Class content is totally dependent on the makeup of each group, and changes each semester; it's 'made to measure' rather than 'off the peg' but always experiential and imaginative rather than theoretical.

It has proved rewarding for past groups because it takes the form of an exploration of ideas, and does not have the rigid structure of



other academic courses. For those students who are happier with straightforward knowledge acquisition rather than active and creative problem solving, then this may not be the course for them. The process will be open, discursive and exploratory.



REQUIRED READINGS:

- You will be required to read the text of at least one play seen as part of the weekly theatre visits, and lead a discussion on its structure and style.