



**TH380 ACTING: THEN AND NOW**  
IES Abroad London

**DESCRIPTION:**

The course explores key historical theatre cultures in two complementary senses: firstly in terms of their original historical physical and imaginative performance styles, processes, structures and reception (delivered by the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art - RADA); secondly, though exploring the relevance and utility of those historic dimensions for current acting/performance practice (the direct IES-delivered component). By experiencing this 'lattice' of complementary IES and RADA practical and theory classes, IES students will complete the course with an experiential and reflective understanding of acting stylistics in general and of the contemporary relevance and utility of specifically historic theatre practices and cultures, acting modes and play texts. They will therefore be well armed to meet the challenges of the rehearsal room in relation to 'the actors' tool-kit' and there will be a renewed understanding and impact for students pursuing other performance disciplines such as dramaturgy, directing or stage management. In addition, by means of the personal research project embedded in the course, they will also enhance their ability to research, identify, analyze, interrogate and synthesize concepts and practices and to present their findings critically and lucidly in both written and more directly presentational modes.

**CREDITS:** 3 credits

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45 hours

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

**PREREQUISITES:** This course will appeal to theatre majors or minors but, space permitting, is open to any students with an active interest in performance. As such, the participant will be familiar and confident with the process of investigative rehearsal and of working with others to present their findings as performed pieces.

**ADDITIONAL COST:** None

**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

RADA Component

- Rehearsals
- Performances
- Discussions

RADA's 'Ages and Stages of English Drama' is a unique 'practicum' that encourages students to explore - in a refreshingly engaging manner - the drama and social background of six key stages of English drama. Each day's session will be supervised by one of the academy's directors, and include a warm-up/skills class, tailored to the subject in hand; PowerPoint, exposition and practical work on the societal context; rehearsal sessions on text; and an informal sharing of work. In all, students will work with twelve members of the RADA faculty. The course will run from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30p.m., with a one-hour lunch break at 1:00 p.m. The pattern of each day remains the same: in the morning, a subject appropriate warm up (voice movement or dance) followed by an introduction to the period and to the text, then in the afternoon, rehearsals finishing with a sharing of the work.

IES Abroad Component

- Seminars
- Student presentations
- Guest lectures
- Practical workshops
- Mixed methods of delivery in the IES Abroad component with the application of Moodle

In these classes students will further develop and reflect on their practical experience and attend a series of practitioner-led classes and workshops in support of their assessment. The precise order of the IES classes may be adjusted to accommodate Guest Practitioner availability. Distributed between the RADA days on alternate weeks, students will have three practical workshops

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delivered by core IES faculty and a visiting theater professional, exploring current performance processes and techniques, and so contextualising and integrating some of the material introduced in the RADA component into contemporary rehearsal practice. In addition, each student will have a REQUIRED individual 15-minute tutorial between week 7 and week 11 to check in with the progress of their research paper. The student must show a development of the approved proposal.

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**

- RADA - 50% (continuous assessment)
- IES Abroad - 50% composed of the following:
  - Participation - 10%
  - Final Performance/Presentation of Research - 20%
  - Research Paper (2,500 words) - 20%

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

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

- Demonstrate an understanding of key aspects of historical theater performance cultures, especially in their relation to the evolution of current performance practice
- Utilize and integrate historic performance techniques and approaches into a contemporary ‘actors’ tool-kit’
- Articulate the central role and contribution of the performer in both historic and contemporary theater settings, and understand the ways in which this role has changed over time and in different cultures
- Identify and articulate the importance of specific cultural ‘worlds’ in the enactment of dramatic action both historical and contemporary
- Demonstrate critical thinking and independent thought in integrating performance practice with research, and in the subsequent presentation of findings
- Deploy effectively and appropriately a range of contemporary techniques in the development of individual performances

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Regular class attendance is mandatory. Irregular attendance may result in a lower grade in the course, and/or disciplinary action. The IES Abroad London class attendance policy does not allow for unexcused absences, and grades will be docked one-half letter grade for each such absence. Rare exceptions will be made for the following reasons:

- The student is too sick to attend class. In this instance, the student must call the IES Abroad Centre before class to notify any of the IES Abroad staff. It is not sufficient either to email, send a message with a friend or call the Centre after the class has started.
- A serious illness or death in the immediate family requiring a student to travel home. This requires written approval from the Centre Director before departure.

**CONTENT:**

Students will participate in six full-day classes at RADA, in their rehearsal space, and with their tutors, studying a cross section of acting styles through time, up to the present day. These will be alternated with complementary sessions taught by IES Faculty, as well as tutorial support for individual student research projects.

Week	Content	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>IES ABROAD</b> Course introduction  (Note this session will be scheduled for 90 minutes prior to students going to RADA for the first time).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seminar to introduce the course, its context and to introduce the ideology and importance of the research paper - what it is, what it is for, and what form it could take as a presentation.</li> </ul>

Week	Content	Assignments
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>RADA</b> Pageants & Wagons – Medieval Drama <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play text: <i>Everyman</i> (anon)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pattern of each RADA day will be the same: in the morning, a subject appropriate warm up (voice movement or dance) followed by an introduction to the period and to the text, then in the afternoon, rehearsals finishing with a sharing of the work.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>IES ABROAD</b> Practical Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 'dramatic moment' - the Stanislavsky/Knebal 'dramatic event/active analysis' model for actors and directors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James Thomas <a href="#"><u>A Director's Guide to Stanislavsky's Active Analysis</u></a>. Chapters 1-3, pp 87-140</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>RADA</b> The Wooden 'O' – Shakespeare's Theatre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play text: <i>Henry V</i>, William Shakespeare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will experience different tutors in the RADA workshops but the pattern of each RADA day remains the same: in the morning, a subject appropriate warm up (voice movement or dance) followed by an introduction to the period and to the text, then in the afternoon, rehearsals finishing with a sharing of the work.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>IES ABROAD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actioning the Text. This workshop will look at some of the texts from RADA workshops through another lens. Does this process enhance the historical perspective? To what extent is the historical perspective usable for the actor - and the audience today.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caldarone, Marina &amp; Lloyd William, Maggie. <a href="#"><u>Actions: The Actors' Thesaurus</u></a> London 2004 Nick Hern Books</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>RADA</b> The Return of the King – Restoration Comedy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play text: <i>The Country Wife</i>, William Wycherley</li> </ul>	

Week	Content	Assignments
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>IES ABROAD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seminar to discuss possible research paper topics and related forms of delivery. The 2,500-word paper will be handed in at the end of the semester</li> <li>Reflecting on RADA workshops students discuss possible research paper topics and related forms of delivery</li> <li>2500-word paper introduced here and workshoped</li> <li>The paper is due at the end of the course but the content will be shared with the group in the form of a 'creative presentation'. Thus, the entire group share the collective research findings. The group will collectively scrutinize each topic to ensure that the thesis is academically water-tight and that the choice of method of presentation enhances the communication of the content.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alfreds, Mike. <u>Different Every Night. Freeing the Actor.</u></li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>RADA</b> Smoke and Mirrors – Victorian Melodrama <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play Text: <u>Lady Audley's Secret</u>, Mary Elizabeth Braddon and George Roberts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students submit a 200-word written research proposal which clearly outlines the academic premise of the Research Paper – feedback provided to students on any issues emergent before signing off on the topics.</li> <li>Student tutorials to discuss research paper by appointment.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>IES ABROAD</b> Reflective personal study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No scheduled class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donnellan, Declan. <u>The Actor and The Target</u> London 2002. Chapters 1-6, pp 1-64.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>RADA</b> The Survival of Language – Mid to Late Twentieth-Century Drama <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play Text: <i>The Homecoming</i>, Harold Pinter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student tutorials to discuss research paper by appointment.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>IES ABROAD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback on The Actor and The Target</li> <li>A Guest Practitioner will lead a practical workshop. Subject possibilities: Improvisation, Laban, Michael Chekhov and the Psychological gesture</li> </ul>	

Week	Content	Assignments
Week 12	RADA "Is That a Thing? – Current Trends in English Drama"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student tutorials to discuss research paper by appointment.</li> </ul>
Week 13	IES ABROAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessed Presentation of Research Paper Findings and peer Feedback</li> </ul>

**COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:**

- None

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

Entire texts of each play to be studied in Part One. See above. These include

- Braddon, Mary Elizabeth and George Roberts. Lady Audley's Secret.
- Pinter, Harold. The Homecoming.
- Shakespeare, William. Henry V.
- Wycherley, William. The Country Wife.

The titles of these plays are likely to change every semester. Students will be briefed about the proposed titles at the beginning of the course.

Additionally, the professors will be drawing on the readings below in discussions held in class and through practical classes conducted at IES. Students would be expected to demonstrate engagement with the readings in their final research paper or practicum.

- Alfreds, Mike. Different Every Night. Freeing the Actor London: Nick Hern Books, 2007.
- Caldarone, Marina & Lloyd William, Maggie. Actions: The Actors' Thesaurus. London: Nick Hern Books, 2004.
- Donnellan, Declan. The Actor and The Target London: Nick Hern Books, 2002.
- Thomas, James. A Director's Guide to Stanislavsky's Active Analysis. Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

- Benedetti, Jean. The Art of the Actor: The Essential History of Acting from Classical Times to the Present Day. Routledge, 2007.
- Brown, John Russell. The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre. Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Day, Gary. The Story of Drama. Bloomsbury: Methuen, 2016.