

**Kingston
University**
London



Classical Theatre MA

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

www.kingston.ac.uk/pgclasstheatre

About the course

Course overview

Classical Theatre is a unique course designed for acting and directing students who wish to advance their expertise and understanding in a theatre environment.

Developed by Sir Peter Hall, one of the world's most distinguished theatre directors, the course asks 'What is classical theatre?' and investigates answers through a mix of theoretical and practical work that covers a range of essential skills. The course is taught in the Rose Theatre Studio, Kingston.

What you will study

You will study the work of leading practitioners of the past and present, situated in their social, political and cultural context. You will also explore:

- genre, history, tradition, convention and cultural context in relation to performance;
- the use of the body in mask and movement;
- the importance of voice and language; and
- the interpretation of text in performance.

The course is essentially the same for actors and directors, although special provision will be made for the different skills.

Taught by academic staff from Kingston's drama team and visiting professional practitioners, the first four modules provide a holistic approach to the teaching and learning. The course culminates with a production (the fifth module) at the end of the year, directed by a professional director at the Rose Theatre. You will graduate with a level of knowledge commensurate with having worked for a professional theatre company.

Professional experience

You will benefit from the chance to work alongside professionals in a working theatre. Students have recently performed in several productions on the main stage at the Rose Theatre, including:

- Stephen Unwin's productions of *Miss Julie* and *As You Like It*; and
- Peter Hall's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Dame Judi Dench.

Other students have been credited as assistant director on:

- the Royal Court's recent production of *Ingredient X* by Nick Grosso; and
- the Rose Theatre's production of *As You Like It*.

Facilities

Although all postgraduate teaching in Drama takes place at the Rose, the Drama department is based a short distance away at the Reg Bailey Building on our Penrhyn Road campus. The building is dedicated entirely to Drama, with two, equipped performance spaces, as well as various teaching and rehearsal rooms.

The Penrhyn Road campus provides a modern environment with excellent facilities, including the Learning Resources Centre, which houses the library and computer facilities.

Rose Theatre, Kingston

Kingston's Rose Theatre provides a main theatre stage, studio and education rehearsal room. The venue has been described by Sir Peter Hall as one of the best theatre spaces he has ever seen.

Resources in London

Kingston is just a 25-minute train journey away from central London. Here you can access a wealth of theatres and performance spaces, including the National Theatre, the Barbican Centre and West End theatres.

Course content

Modules

Culture and History

In this module you will develop a sophisticated understanding of canonical plays in the context of the theatre culture in which they were originally produced. You will conduct detailed studies of theatre practice at key moments in history, and engage with the place of theatre in relation to wider social, economic and political concerns.

The Body – Mask and Movement

In this module, skilled practitioners and academics will lead you through systems of training, improvisation, rehearsal and performance that situate the body at the heart of the actor's creative process. You will develop a comprehensive knowledge of theories and practices associated with practitioners such as Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Grotowski, Laban and Lecoq.

Text and Language

In this module you will gain an in-depth understanding of the relationship between text and language in performance, and develop advanced techniques in speech production. You will explore the approaches of important practitioners from both the theatre and other public stages.

Scene Studies

In this module you will work with a director on a series of scenes drawn from the classical repertoire. Within the context of an ensemble, you will develop and reflect on your own creative contribution to the interpretation of the text. You will also develop an advanced understanding of the processes by which text is translated from page to stage.

Production Project

In this module you will work closely with a professional director to stage a production at the Rose Theatre. You will put into practice everything that you have learnt on the course and will experience working as part of an ensemble, both in rehearsal and performance. You will also write a critical, reflective account of the production period.



Sir Peter Hall delivers a masterclass

Teaching staff

Adam Ainsworth is the course director for the Classical Theatre MA. He is a founder member of both the Institute of Materials and Sittingbones, and has devised a number of projects that have been performed in theatres across London. Adam has also worked as a director and dramaturg for The Irene Taylor Trust, and specialises in actor training focusing particularly on the work of Meyerhold and Stanislavski. His interests include devised theatre, community drama, aspects of clowning and physical comedy, and the music hall and variety. His research interests include 19th-century pantomime and early 20th-century variety performance. He is currently developing research informed by the transcription, interrogation and realisation of a pantomime script used at The Britannia Saloon, Hoxton, in 1854, and is writing a historiographical thesis of the Kingston Empire Theatre.

Professor Colin Chambers was formerly a journalist and theatre critic. Colin was literary manager of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) from 1981–1997. Colin co-wrote and directed Kenneth Tynan's first play with Richard Nelson, and co-adapted *The Diaries of Kenneth Tynan* for the RSC. His books include the following titles:

- *The Story of Unity Theatre* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1989)
- Award-winning *Peggy: The Life of Margaret Ramsay, Play Agent* (Nick Hern Books, 1997)
- *The Continuum Companion to Twentieth Century Theatre* (ed. Continuum, 2002)
- *Inside the RSC* (Routledge, 2004)
- *Here We Stand: Politics, Performers and Performance – Paul Robeson, Isadora Duncan and Charlie Chaplin* (Nick Hern Books, 2006)

Trish Reid teaches theatre history and performance in culture. She worked for a number of years as a musician and actor before entering higher education as a mature student. Trish is particularly interested in how identities, especially in terms of nationality and gender, are constituted through performance.

Frank Whately teaches on the course and is a trustee of the Rose Theatre, Kingston, having initiated the campaign to build it. He also founded the Kingston University Drama department. Frank is both a teacher, with over 30 years' experience, and a director. He has directed productions in theatres throughout the world, including those in the West End and on Broadway. He has won several awards, and his work has been broadcast on radio and television. His research interests include theatre buildings and stage architecture, writing plays, music theatre, Renaissance theatre, staging Renaissance drama, and the playwright and the stage.

Special features

- This unique classical theatre programme has been designed to train actors and directors for the stage.
- The course has been developed by Sir Peter Hall, one of the world's most distinguished theatre directors, and forms part of his original vision for the Rose Theatre, Kingston, of which he is Emeritus Director.
- Teachers are experienced playwrights, actors, directors and critics, so you can be sure your teaching is relevant to the real-world demands of the theatre.



Visiting professionals

Visiting actors and directors lead a diverse range of masterclasses and workshops on the course. Professionals who have visited recently include Sir Peter Hall and Stephen Unwin.

Sir Peter Hall is one of Britain's most distinguished theatre directors. He celebrated 50 years in the business in 2003. At 24, he directed the world premiere of the English version of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. In 1961, he established the Royal Shakespeare Company and ran it for 10 years. He then directed the National Theatre (now the Royal National Theatre) for 15 years, moving it to its new premises on the South Bank. After leaving the National, Sir Peter established his own company, the Peter Hall Company. Sir Peter is Chancellor of Kingston University and Kingston's Director Emeritus of the Rose Theatre.

Stephen Unwin is Artistic Director of the Rose Theatre, Kingston, and visiting professor at Kingston University. His career began at the Almeida Theatre on an Arts Council Director's Bursary. Stephen then went on to become Associate Director of the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, and Resident Director at the National Theatre Studio. In 1993 he founded English Touring Theatre, for which he has directed almost 30 productions of new and classical work, both on national tour and in London. In 2003 he won the Shakespeare's Globe Sam Wanamaker Award. Stephen has also written several books on drama and has taught in universities and drama schools nationally and internationally. He became Artistic Director at the Rose Theatre in January 2008.

Other award-winning actors and directors who have visited include **Dame Judi Dench, Janet Suzman, Barbara Houseman, Jane Asher and Sam Walters**.

In addition, international company **Moon Fool** has worked intensively with students in a week-long series of workshops informed by their production of *Ill Met By Moonlight*.

Classical Theatre MA

Entry requirements

One or more of the following:

- Successful completion of a certified programme of study in an area appropriate to the content of the degree (normally a good second-class honours degree or its equivalent)
- Relevant non-certificated learning, which might include prior experience in the theatrical profession

International students

All non-UK applicants must meet our English language requirements. For this course it is IELTS of 6.5 overall, with special conditions for students who require a Tier 4 student visa. Please make sure you read our full guidance about English language requirements on the course webpage, which includes details of other qualifications we'll consider.

All students are required to attend an audition/interview.

Duration

One year full time

Attendance/delivery

The study commitment varies depending on which course you take, but may include evening, weekend or day-release sessions and can vary from semester to semester. Timetables are subject to change. Please contact the postgraduate admissions office for further details.

Assessment

Performance, productions, practical essays, demonstration, critical writing and reflective work

Location

Located beside the River Thames, Kingston University is within the London travel-pass zone. Easily accessible from surrounding areas such as Surrey and Middlesex, its local train stations (Kingston; Surbiton) are also only 25 minutes from London Waterloo.



Further information

Contact details

Please contact the Faculty's Admissions Office with any further queries.

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