This sample unit outline is provided by CHC for prospective and current students to assist with unit selection.

Elements of this outline which may change with subsequent offerings of the unit include Content, Required Texts, Recommended Readings and details of the Assessment Tasks.

Students who are currently enrolled in this unit should obtain the outline for the relevant semester from the unit lecturer.
Unit Name | Contemporary Drama
---|---
Unit Code | DM285
Awards | Bachelor of Education (Middle Years) - Drama minor  
              Bachelor of Education (Secondary) - Drama teaching area  
              Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Education (Secondary) - Drama major/minor  
              This unit is able to be undertaken towards other CHC awards according to course rules and the meeting of prerequisite requirements, as applicable.
Core/Elective | Elective
Prerequisite | 20 credit points of 100-level DM units
Mode | Internal
Delivery/Contact hrs | Class contact 33 hours  
                      Engagement with unit materials 44 hours  
                      Assignment preparation 63 hours  
                      Total 140 hours
Unit Rationale | The playwrights of the Contemporary Period have brought a diversity of voices, ideas, approaches and techniques from the philosophies of postmodernism, deconstruction and post-structuralism. This has resulted in fresh interpretations of the classics and a broadening of appreciation for non-western traditions and the cross-cultural and multi-cultural theatre of Asia, Africa, and South America, in particular. Playwrights have shown concern for issues of oppression and social welfare, mythology and ritual, and the role of drama in contemporary society. The avant-garde theatre of the late twentieth century presented volatile, controversial, and provoking themes which transversed sexual, cultural, and psychological boundaries. It also celebrated nationalism, diversity, and plurality. Realism continues to provide the defining focus while the dramatic form incorporates eclecticism, experimentation and deconstruction.

There is a lack of signposts to provide a chronological treatment of Contemporary Drama. However, five major categories provide a framework for exploration which reflects the ferment of the age and innovation in adopting high-tech stage practices. These categories are political, social, popularist, global and multicultural, and are represented in playwrights such as Hare, Ayckbourn, Fo, Fredo, Havel and Shaffer, as well as in the dramatic theories of Augusto Boal and Antonin Artaud. These contemporary works cross national, gender and racial frontiers.

In this unit, students will study a range of plays which cover the five categories to experience the diversity of the new form. This will encompass both the study of the text and the use of drama to realise the full dramatic impact. The fulfilment of this study will be student compositions of dramatic scenarios expressing contemporary themes and performance.

Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this unit, students will have provided evidence that they have:

1. Identified the major dramatic form of contemporary playwrights.
2. Recognised the transition of national into global theatre which acknowledges cultural contexts.
3. Appreciated drama as a methodology for communicating universal experiences within diverse cultural contexts.
4. Expressed dramatic form through a range of theatrical techniques developed by contemporary directors.
5. Developed a range of skills to provide an appropriate interpretation.
6. Transformed the ideas of contemporary dramatists into a new form of dramatic expression.
7. Written at an appropriate tertiary standard (with special attention to correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, usage, sentence structure, logical relations, style, referencing and presentation).
Content:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Drama expressing the contemporary world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Contemporary playwrights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Dramatic and theatrical forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>Drama in western and non-western societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>The philosophical voice in contemporary drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Contemporary drama within a Christian framework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Set Text Requirements:


Recommended Readings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Item</th>
<th>Topic/s</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes assessed</th>
<th>Week Due</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of a contemporary play text (1000 words)</td>
<td>Students will examine the theatrical form of a play, refer to the conceptual ‘meaning’ in the scripted language and evaluate ideas, issues and concepts that they consider significant in the text.</td>
<td>1, 3-4, 6</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental theatre performance (10 minutes per person)</td>
<td>The class will work in groups of 2-3 on an experimental performance piece that demonstrates a particular aspect of contemporary life and displays new dramatic and/or theatrical forms. It should be an innovative performance and should adopt a philosophical stance on the aspect.</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Week 7-10</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique and analysis of a contemporary stage drama (1000 words)</td>
<td>Students will view a contemporary stage drama and analyse and critique how clearly dramatic meaning emerged, and what part the director’s manipulation of dramatic form played in communicating meaning.</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Unit Overview:**

This unit seeks to provide a framework in order to discuss the diversity of contemporary drama. It is therefore not a chronological study of the period in relation to contemporary drama, but an examination of new forms of theatre and an exploration of new, controversial themes that cover a wide range of different cultural and traditional ideas and values. The framework offered in this unit is five-fold: political, social, popularist, global, and multicultural, and playwrights who represent some or all of these categories are studied.