



## IIT Mandi Proposal for a New Course

**Course number** : HS 302  
**Course Name** : Introduction to Drama in English  
**Credit Distribution** : 3-0-0-3  
**Intended for** : Undergraduate  
**Prerequisite** : None  
**Mutual Exclusion** : None

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### 1. Preamble:

This course aims to introduce students to select texts of drama in English. The course will begin with a study of plays from the classical period and will conclude with contemporary versions of varying theatrical traditions. It intends to enable students to acquire analytical and interpretive skills through the reading of scripts and gain practical experience in script abridgement and performance. Both reading and performance intensive, the course aims to help students explore multiple aspects of drama and performance in English.

### 2. Course Modules with quantitative lecture hours:

#### Module 1: Introduction to drama (3 hours)

- Historical overview of the dramatic form
- The basic elements of a play (plot, character, setting, atmosphere, mood, etc.)

#### Module 2: Tragedies (6 hours)

- Historical overview of tragedies
- Components of tragedies (catharsis, hamartia, dramatic irony, etc.)
- Structure of tragedies
- Revenge tragedy
- Domestic tragedy

*Suggested text:* William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (1623); *Hamlet* (c.1509)

#### Module 2: Comedies (6 hours)

- Historical overview of comedies

- Old comedy and New comedy
- Tragicomedy
- Satire
- Comedy of errors
- Sentimental comedy
- Domestic comedy

*Suggested texts:* Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895); Neil Simon, *The Odd Couple* (1965); Northrop Frye, “The Argument of Comedy” (1949)

### **Module 3: Modern Theatre (11 hours)**

- An overview of modern drama
- Expressionism
- Naturalism
- Living newspapers
- Epic theatre
- Theatre of the absurd

*Suggested texts:* Eugene O’Neill, *The Emperor Jones* (1920); Hallie Flanagan Davis, *E=mc<sup>2</sup>* (1947); Edward Albee, *The Zoo Story* (1958); Martin Esslin, “The Theatre of the Absurd” (1960)

### **Module 4: Drama on the Global Stage (8 hours)**

- Colonialism and its legacy in theatre
- Politics of language
- Global neo-imperialism

*Suggested texts:* Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King’s Horseman* (1975); Brian Fiel, *Translations* (1980); Manjula Padmanabhan, *Harvest* (1997); Mahesh Dattani, *Dance like a Man* (1989); Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins, *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics* (1996)

### **Module 5: Performing Plays (8 hours)**

- This module will be devoted to performances based on plays from or relevant to the syllabus. These performances will be conducted in class and all students are expected to contribute to the performance. The tentative audience for the performance will most likely be the registered participants for the course. Students will be divided into groups after which they will perform portions of a selected play from the syllabus or any play of their choice. Students will be informed about this requirement in the beginning of the course itself so that they can adequately prepare and decide upon possible texts. They are not expected to spend excessive time beyond class hours in preparation for the play—memorizing scripts is only optional, as is the preparation of costumes, props, stage, etc. In lieu of a full-performance, students may also perform a

table reading/ read aloud portions of the play in a simulated theatre setting for the class.

### 3. Textbooks:

- Klaus, Carl H., Miriam Gilbert, and Bradford S. Field, Jr., eds. *Stages of Drama: Classical to Contemporary Theater*, U.S. 2003.  
 Pickering, Kenneth, *Key Concepts in Drama*, Palgrave Macmillan, U.S. 2005.

### 4. References:

- Albee, Edward. *The Zoo Story*, 1958.  
 Aristotle, *Poetics*, Penguin Classics, (Revised Edition), U.K. 1996.  
 Soyinka, Wole, "Death and the King's Horseman," in *Contemporary African Plays* by Martin Banham and Jane Plastow, Methuen Publishing, U.K., 1999.  
 Dattani, Mahesh, *Dance like a Man*, Penguin Petiti, (2006)  
 Esslin, Martin. "The Theatre of the Absurd," *The Tulane Drama Review*, 4.4:3-15, 1960.  
 Frye, Northrop "The Argument of Comedy." *Shakespeare: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. Ed. Russ McDonald. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. 94-95, 97.  
 Gilbert, Helen and Joanne Tompkins. *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics* London: Routledge, 1996.  
 G.J. Watson, *Drama: An Introduction*, Macmillan Press, U.K. 1983.  
 Flanagan Davis, Hallie, *E=mc<sup>2</sup> in Routledge Drama Anthology and Sourcebook from Modernism to Contemporary Performance* by Maggie B. Gale and John F. Deeney (Editors), U.S. and U.K. 2010.  
 O'Neill, Eugene. *The Emperor Jones*, Dover Publications, U.S. 2012.  
 Padmanabhan, Manjula. *Harvest, Kali for Women*, India 1997.  
 Shakespeare, William, *Macbeth*, Penguin Classics, U.K., 2015.  
 Shakespeare, William, *Hamlet*, Penguin, Dover Thrift Edition, U.S. 2000.  
 Simon, Neil. *The Collected Plays of Neil Simon*, Plume, U.S. 1986.  
 Wilde, Oscar. *The Importance of Being Earnest and other Plays*, Penguin Group, Signet Classics, 1985.

(Similarity content is declared as per the number of lecture hours on similar topics)

| S. No. |   | Course Code | Similarity Content | Approx. % of Content |
|--------|---|-------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1.     | - | -           | -                  | -                    |

6. Justification of new course proposal if cumulative similarity content is >30%: N.A.