Introduction to Drama: Theory and Praxis

Course Code: HM379

Category: Open Elective
Credit: 3-0-0-3

Course Outline:

"What is drama but life with dull bits cut out." - Alfred Hitchcock

This course offers the students an opportunity to participate in the interesting “bits” of human life, viz., drama. The course acquaints students with drama as a literary and a performative genre. The course will not only present students with a comprehensive history and different theories of drama, but will also encourage the students to learn the practical aspects of theatre. The emphasis will be laid on understanding, appreciating and analysing different dramatic texts from the West and the East. The crux of the course is its emphasis on performing drama rather than just reading it as a classroom text. Students will learn the basics of theatre production in the course.

Course contents:

The course will be divided into two components, class room lectures and theatre workshops held either at OAT, LTs or SAC.

(The usual weekly pattern will be two contact hours for lectures and one contact hour for performance)

The lectures will cover the following topics:

Lecture 1-2: Introduction: The idea of Play and performance in life and on stage.
   - History of drama, types of drama
Lecture 3-4: Elements of Drama: important terms and concepts
Lecture 4-5: Theories of drama: Aristotle and Bharata
Lecture 6: Elements of Tragedy
Lecture 7-8: “Antigone” by Sophocles
Lecture 9: Elizabethan Theatre
Lecture 10-14: “Hamlet” by Shakespeare
Lecture 15: Elements of Comedy.
Lecture 16-17: Oscar Wilde’s “Importance of Being Earnest”
Lecture 18-19: Sanskrit Drama, elements, types.
Lecture 20: Bhasa’s “Karnabharam”
Lecture 21-23: Brief overview of Modern European and American Drama
In the Theatre workshop, students will be given exercises that establish the concept of space, body, movements, enunciation and so forth. The workshop will culminate with a performance open to the entire DA-IICT community.

The students are expected to read the assigned texts and participate actively in the theatre practice sessions and classroom discussions.

**Plays:**

1. “Antigone” by Sophocles
2. “Hamlet” by Shakespeare
3. “Importance of Being Earnest” by Oscar Wilde
4. “Karnabharam” by Bhasa
5. Extracts from Aristotle’s *Poetics*
6. Extracts from Bharata’s *Natyashastra*
7. “Budhan”

**Secondary Readings:**

Selected readings will be circulated by the instructor. Students are encouraged to develop their understanding on the dramatic genre by reading select portions from the following books:

1. *Introduction to Drama* by Lee A Jacobus
2. *Theatres of Independence- Aparna Bhargava Dharwadker*
3. *Modern Indian Plays* Ed. Chandrashekhar Kambar
4. Bertolt Brecht *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*
5. Performative Circumstances: From Ramlila to Avant Garde by Richard Schechner
6. Stanislavski’s *An Actor Prepares*
7. *Theatre of the Oppressed – Augusto Boal*
8. *The Right to Perform – Safdar Hashmi*

**Outcomes and Objectives:**

- The ability to understand and appreciate great works of drama
- The ability to synergize various ideologies that go into making of great works of art around the world
- The knowledge of various historical eras through the discussed texts
- Learning the basics of theatre production
- Overcoming stage fear and marked improvement in public speaking