

Introduction to Theatre

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We're delighted you're thinking about studying at Brunel University London.

Our lecturers have put together the following information to help you prepare for your course. This will give you a snapshot of the materials and reading list you'll be using. You'll get a full breakdown of information before you enrol.

On our website you can also [find out more about your modules](#) and [chat to a current student](#).

If you have any more questions, [please get in touch](#).

We look forward to welcoming you to Brunel.

Sample lecture/coursework questions

1. What do you think about the tension Mark Fortier describes 'between language based theory and the non-verbal aspects of theatre' on page 12? What can theory add to our understanding of Theatre? What perspectives might be helpful in analysing performances that you have seen and making a case that it was meaningful or significant?
2. What is 'semiotics' and how can this type of theoretical framework be used as a tool for analysing theatre and performance? See Chapter 1
3. What kind of theatre or performances are you drawn to? Traditional theatre where the 'authorship' is heavily determined by a playwright? Productions that have been radically adapted by a singular director? Collective ensemble work where work is devised and 'authored' by a group? Why?
4. How do Roland Barthes' ideas regarding the role of an author's intent (or lack thereof) apply to how performance can be interpreted by spectators? How does this change how the meaning or importance of performance is determined or debated? Does meaning always rely on what the writer, director, designers, or performers intended? If not, what does this open up for performance analysis? See pages 19-27
5. Choose a performance you have viewed virtually and consider representations of gender in light of Fortier's section on feminism. Does the production offer a critique to stereotypes or traditional societal views? Does it perpetuate limited understandings of a particular issue of gender, or does it point to ways of how people and/or society can be potentially transformed?
6. In the current COVID-19 crisis, what role can theatre and performance play and where can it be located? Online? Outdoors? In theatres that are modified for social distancing? What examples have you seen? Is theatre and performance being redefined in ways that might shape the future? What is your vision or suggestion as we move forward?



Reading list

- Fortier, Mark. (2016) Theory/Theatre: An Introduction. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.*

* Available electronically from Brunel Library after registration is completed. We recommend you purchase the book to take in-text notes, place post-its, etc. The Brunel Library electronic version is great for keyword searches. There is also a Kindle edition.

Indicative content

Study Themes	Reading
Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies	Introduction - Fortier
Perspectives on Analysing Theatre Language and Representation	Chapter 1 - Fortier
Perspectives on Audience Reception and Making Meaning	Chapter 2 - Fortier
Perspectives on Gender in Performance	Chapter 2 - Fortier, re-read 72-99
Performance and Culture in a time of crisis	Stay abreast to announcements from Theatre websites, read blogs in related sectors: here are a few: Guardian Stage News, WhatsonStage, Howlround, Theatre Commons, BullyBloggers

