

HL 2026: READING DRAMA | August 2025 Semester
Wednesday 09:30 to 12:20

Course Aims

This module teaches you the skills and vocabulary required to close read drama. You will learn how to analyse and evaluate hard copy scripts and to recognise the way in which these scripts accommodate themselves to evolving theatrical traditions – and, moreover, what these evolving traditions owe to changes in society more generally. Special attention will be given to the way in which theatrical form shapes thematic content (and vice versa).

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. compare and contrast major trends in the history of western drama – including Greek Drama, Medieval Drama, Renaissance Drama, French Neo-Classical Drama, Dramatic Realism, Modern Drama and Postmodern Drama.
2. explain how changing perspectives on representation in society more generally impacted what constitutes mimesis in the theatre.
3. evaluate information sources critically and employ those sources professionally in their own work
4. raise the sorts of critically informed questions (either in class discussion – or in an essay proposal) which sustain an extended critical treatment of a major theatrical text.
5. appraise concepts with academic integrity, argumentation, and evidence using both cognitive and emotional reasons.

Course Content

This subject will examine the major dramatic movements in drama from the Greeks through Medieval, French Neo-Classical theatre to more contemporary modes including Dramatic Realism, Theatre of the Absurd, and Modern and Postmodern Drama.

Course Co-ordinator: Dominic Nah

Lecture Schedule (2025/26)

Week No. / Date	Topics	Readings
Week 1: Wed 13 Aug	Course Introduction	-NIL-
Week 2: Wed 20 Aug	Introduction to Greek Drama	<i>Oedipus Rex</i> by Sophocles
Week 3: Wed 27 Aug	Medieval Drama	<i>Abraham and Isaac</i> by Anonymous (The Brome Version) <i>Everyman</i> by Anonymous

Week 4: Wed 03 Sep	Renaissance Drama	<i>The Spanish Tragedy</i> by Thomas Kyd
Week 5: Wed 10 Sep	Restoration Drama	<i>The Beaux' Strategem</i> by George Farquhar
Week 6: Wed 17 Sep	French Neo-Classical	<i>Tartuffe</i> by Moliere
Week 7: Wed 24 Sep	Realism	<i>A Doll's House</i> by Henrik Ibsen
Recess Week: Wed 01 Oct	-No Class-	
Week 8: Wed 08 Oct	In lieu of a class meeting, all students will meet with the instructor to discuss essay proposals in individual or small group settings. Online and in-person slots can be arranged.	
Week 9: Wed 15 Oct	Postmodern Drama	<i>The Dumb Waiter</i> by Harold Pinter
Week 10: Wed 22 Oct	Political Drama	<i>Sizwe Bansi Is Dead</i> by Athol Fugard
Week 11: Wed 29 Oct	Representing Trauma on Stage	<i>Death and the Maiden</i> by Ariel Dorfman
Week 12: Wed 05 Nov	Feminist Perspectives	<i>Top Girls</i> by Caryl Churchill
Week 13: Wed 12 Nov	Cosmopolitan Theatre	<i>Barber Shop Chronicles</i> by Inua Ellams

Course Assessment (2025/26)

10% - Final Essay Proposal (400-word proposal)

Deadline: Fri 10 Oct 2025

40% - Final Essay (1,700 – 2,000 words)

Deadline: Wed 19 Nov 2025

50% - Final Exam (2 questions, 2.5 hours)

AI Course Policy: The use of generative AI is not allowed during assessments. Should AI be used in individual cases with specific approval, you must follow the citation rules and regulations as set out by the university.

1. Core Texts:

All plays available through NTULearn except the following (orders have been made through the NTU Bookshop):

Harold Pinter, ***The Caretaker & The Dumb Waiter: two plays by Harold Pinter***, London: Grove Press, 1994. ISBN-13: 978-0802150875

Inua Ellams, ***Barber Shop Chronicles***, Oberon Books, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017. ISBN-13: 978-1786821782