First Year Reading List 2020/21

Congratulations on gaining a place at Royal Holloway! We are looking forward to meeting you in the new term.

Please find below details of readings for you to do in advance of your start with us. The list is organised by course so that you can be clear which course the readings relate to. There are also a couple of recommendations for reading that might be useful more generally.

Required reading for first year courses.

Please note that:
- Single honours BA Drama & Theatre students take DT1100 and DT1200, and can choose 2 of these modules DT1300, DT1400 and DT1920
- Students studying BA Drama with Dance take DT1100, DT1200, DT1920, and a choice between DT1300 OR DT1400
- Students taking joint honours degrees with other departments take DT1100 and DT1200.
- Students taking Drama with Philosophy (where Philosophy is the minor subject) take DT1100 and DT1200, and a choice between DT1300 OR DT1400.

DT1100 Theatre & Performance Making (Autumn term)

Theatre and Performance Making is about working in collaboration with others and devising an original performance. Most of your undergraduate work will involve group work.

Core Reading:
*Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook* by Alison Oddey, 1994

*An Actor's Work on a Role* by Konstantin Stanislavsky; Jean Benedetti, 2009

Recommended Reading
*Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre* by Keith Johnstone; Irving Wardle, 2019

Viewing: two performances by leading interactive practitioners Coney and emerging theatre makers KilltheCat are scheduled solely for RHUL Drama first year students - booking details will be circulated shortly, you are strongly encouraged to book your place.

Thurs Sept 24th: *Telephone by Coney*, 7pm - live digital performance exclusively for first year RHUL Drama students of innovative interactive theatre makers' Coney's acclaimed new work. Tickets are Pay What You Can - between £5 and £10 is a guide price – link to follow - booking essential, ticket numbers are limited.

Thurs October 1st: *The House Never Wins* by KilltheCat. This innovative new piece, conducted live over Whatsapp, explores and challenges our idea of what live performance can be and do. Tickets £10, booking early recommended as numbers are limited.
DT1200 Theatre & Text (Spring term)
This course is designed to equip you with critical and creative skills for engaging with theatrical texts of various kinds. We will consider multiple relationships between page and stage, looking at the evolution and diversity of the performance text, as well as various methods and principles developed to generate performance texts across a broad historical, cultural and stylistic range. We’ll explore the wide variety of choices available to all theatre makers – actors, directors, performers, designers, and more – in working on staging performance texts, asking questions about how meaning is produced on the page and in performance, the possibilities and limits of interpretation, and the dynamics of working with text. The course will also consider how performance can generate text: considering, for example, the archive of performance (in reviews and other documents), and the different stylistic methods that students and others can use – and have used – to engage with performance, critically and creatively.

Suggested Preparatory Reading
Theatre & Audience by Helen Freshwater, Red Globe Press, 2009
How Plays Work by David Edgar, Nick Hern Books, 2009

DT1300 Theatre & Culture (Autumn term)
This module supports and enhances your skills in Theatre Studies by asking you to explore dramatic texts in relation to their cultural contexts. We will explore a series of case studies, both historically and in the contemporary, that have a particular resonance at this moment in time. As Britain leaves the EU and the newspapers speak of an ‘invasion’ of migrants crossing the English Channel in boats, we will look at how migration has always been perceived of as a threat, and how this has even been expressed in horror texts. As the world reverberates to the impact of the killing of George Floyd and the ensuing Black Lives Matter movement, we will explore how race has been constructed in theatre texts, and how questions of representation and cultural ownership have changed over time. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact upon all our lives, we will explore how performance can address illness, but more importantly, what roles it might play in healing. Taken together, these case studies will equip you with a set of skills – a toolbox – that you will be able to use throughout your degree studies with us.

In preparation for the course, we would like you to source a theatre programme, image of a performance, or some other kind of object or prop from a past performance that you would be happy to discuss with other people in one of our seminars. If you do not have anything, do not worry. We will also provide you with some examples that you can use.

Please also read:

DT1400 Theatre & Ideas (Spring term)
Theatre & Ideas is an interdisciplinary course. That means that we will explore how ideas from other disciplines can illuminate our critical and creative engagement with theatre and
performance and how, in turn, theatre and performance can inform and interrogate other areas of life. Theatre & Ideas will take you beyond the vocabulary of theatre and into the terrain of philosophy, critical theory, economic theory, cultural and literary studies and politics, but always with a view to probing how these offer a toolbox of ideas to equip you for the study and practice of theatre. We also want to explore how theatre might illuminate or make an intervention in some of the key political and social issues of the moment. The course is organised into 3 sections. In part one - Interdisciplinary Encounters - we will look at key themes such as The Migration Crisis or Fake News. Part two - Performance and Ideas - will focus on how performance can generate debate, discussion and interventions. Finally, in part three, you will be presenting your own performance lectures on a theme of your choice. There is no need for preliminary reading at this stage. We will be in touch to explore and set the readings during the Autumn term.

**DT1920 World Dance Histories (both terms)**

You should aim to see as much dance as possible over the summer, either live or on screen, and make notes about what you have seen.


The following text is particularly interesting in contextualising the hybridity of a professional contemporary dancer today. There are references made to key choreographers who have contributed to the historical development of both the European and American contemporary dance scene. The text discusses the idea that a contemporary dancer today cannot be separated from the choreography itself and that they carry with them a range of movement vocabularies and training skills into any creative process. Please take a look at pages 14 and 15, asking yourself, what does it mean to be a contemporary dancer today? Roche, Jenny. *Multiplicity, embodiment and the contemporary dancer: Moving identities*. Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, 2015. 1-24.


Preliminary Viewing: The video link below is an extract of independent artist Rosemary Butcher’s work Hidden Voices (2004). Her involvement with radical performance groups such as X6 (UK) and Judson Dance Theatre (US) during the late 1960s and 1970s has been a significant influence on her practice. Butcher’s work is a good example of how the practice of these experimental groups made their way to the UK, paving the way for the development of British New Dance.

The performance extract can be viewed here: [https://vimeo.com/88743389](https://vimeo.com/88743389)

**General Recommended Reading**

For students interested in some further reading, Palgrave's "Theatre &" series is great resource for building an academic theatre foundation. Co-edited by the Department's own Professor Dan Rebellato, books in this series are short, affordable, accessibly written, and great introductions to key topics and critical debates in the field. Here are just a few written by academics at Royal Holloway. You might start with Professor Helen Nicholson's Theatre
& Education, which examines radical theatre-makers working with young people. As you read, I invite you to reflect upon your own journey with theatre thus far and to contemplate your upcoming journey at Royal Holloway by inverting the title: Education & Theatre.