

Theatre at Bristol

bristol.ac.uk/theatre

2020

Welcome to the Department of Theatre at the University of Bristol



Congratulations on your offer!

We're so sorry we can't welcome you to the department in person but we hope this slide show will help you find out about the department and answer any questions you may have about what it would be like to join us.



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Our Department

The department was founded in 1947 by scholar and theatre director Professor Glynne Wickham and was the first drama department in the UK. We have a long history of being innovators in theatre education and practice and it's a legacy that are proud to be taking forward.



1957 Premiere of Harold Pinter's *The Room*, performed by Bristol drama students

We have innovative, forward-looking and award-winning researchers and teachers. You will be taught by leading scholars in their fields who write books and essays, give public lectures and performances, make shows and work with theatres and other cultural organisations from museums to palaces. The theatre we study, like the theatre we make, can happen anywhere.

Our teachers are award-winning individuals at the forefront of a range of fields, exemplifying our broad approach. We have a number of leading theatre historians and scholar-practitioners making new work and designers and scholars researching the latest developments in audience studies.

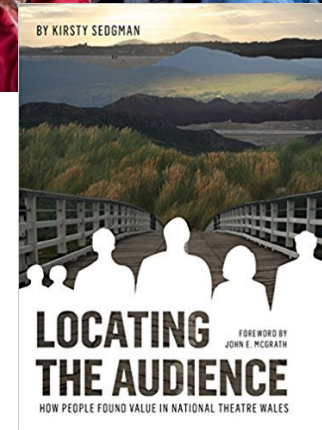
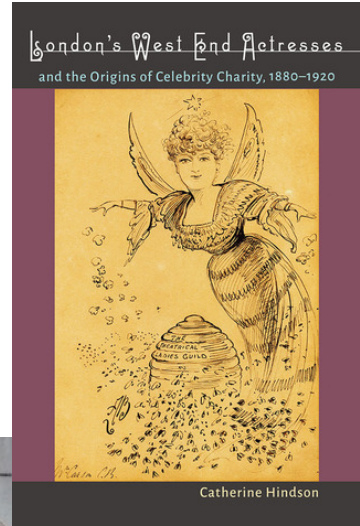
Whether your passion is on stage, in the auditorium or understanding how the pieces fit together, we've got you covered.



Catherine Hindson's book *London's West End Actresses and the Origins of Celebrity Charity, 1880-1920* was shortlisted for the Theatre Book Prize 2017.

The Lost Palace, an interactive visitor experience that Paul Clarke collaborated on for Historic Royal Palaces won a Museums and Heritage Award in the Innovation category.

Kirsty Sedgman's work on audience research, including her book *Locating the Audience*, was recently awarded a Theatre and Performance Research Association Early Career Research Prize.



Our Facilities



- Two theatres: The Wickham Theatre and the White Theatre
- Two rehearsal studios
- Costume, sound and design workshops
- The Theatre Collection

Theatre Collection

The Theatre Collection is housed in department and is the second largest British Theatre collection after the V&A museum. It is a rich resource of material related to theatre: posters, flyers, set designs, costumes and costume design.

You will use this archive in units such as Performing the Archive and for independent study.



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Our Cultural Partners

We work with our partners to build industry links and to offer placements to our students

- Bristol Old Vic
- Tobacco Factory
- Mayfest
- In Between Time
- RSC
- Battersea Arts Centre
- The Globe
- Travelling Light Theatre ACTA





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Our Courses

Our Degrees

Single Honours:

- BA Theatre and Performance Studies

Joint Honours:

- BA Theatre and Film
- BA Theatre and English
- BA Theatre and a Modern Language
- MArts Theatre with Innovation



In our teaching we don't separate theory and practice: we help you become a **thinking practitioner** who understands and can communicate the what and why as well as execute the how.

You will work in a range of practices that include writing, presenting, performing, designing, reading, directing, collaborating. You will work in different modes, including seminar discussions and workshops, practical tutorials and lectures, group work and one-to-one supervision. Over the course of your degree, you will go from acquiring skills and knowledge to using those new skills to draw new conclusions, make new theatre and introduce new ideas.



Year 1



The first year introduces students to different ways of working with and in the theatre. We look at theatre archives to see what we can learn about the traces of performances past; we spend time in a working theatre (Bristol Old Vic) to appreciate programming and production and we run tutorials in the workshops on a range of production skills and tutorials in the classrooms to develop a range of academic skills.

In the first year, you will have at least 12 hours contact time a week in the classroom.

Year 1 Single Honours

Teaching Block 1

- Introduction to Performance Studies
- Performance Contexts
- Introduction to Performance Practices

Teaching Block 2

- Staging the Text
- Producing the Performance
- Bristol Futures, Faculty Wide or UWLP Units

Please note, available units may be subject to change.



Teaching Block 1

Introduction to Performance Studies: Lectures and seminars introduce you to forms of theatre and performance and ways of analysing, writing and talking about them. Delivery: lectures and seminars.

Performance Contexts: in this unit you will be taught how to use the Theatre Collection for research around seasonal and festive performance (summer folk performances, community performances which celebrate local and regional events). This leads up to working with Bristol Old Vic around their Christmas show. Students receive exclusive talks from production team and get access to a technical rehearsal and are invited to the press night of the show.

Introduction to Performance Practices: Workshops introduce you to different aspects or practice, including: acting; directing; ensemble performance; scenography/set design; lighting; sound design and music for theatre; costume; stage management.



Teaching Block 2

Staging the Text: Take a play from page to stage, work as an ensemble to make your own interpretation of an act or section, leading to a public performance. We're working towards staging Caryl Churchill's *Love and Information* in May.

Producing the Performance: production work on *Love and Information*, building on experience in Prod Skills 1 and 2.

Bristol Futures or open unit: an opportunity to take a unit from elsewhere in the faculty or across the university



Year 1 Joint Honours

If you are joint honours, you take these three units with us;

- Introduction to Performance Studies
- Introduction to Performance Practices
- Either Producing the Performance or Staging the Text

Plus three units in your other subject:

For example in English you would also take Critical Issues; Approaches to Poetry; Literature 1150-1740

In Film you would take Filmmaking Fundamentals; Close up on Film; Close up on Television



Each 20-credit unit represents about 200 hours work in total, distributed differently depending upon the unit. There is an expectation of at least 2 hours of group and/or individual preparation (rehearsal, reading, library study, group study) for each scheduled class hour. This is a full-time job, but as students – and staff – are doing what they love, the time flies by.

Some courses with large performance-based assessments have ‘intensives’: periods of intensive rehearsal and preparation time, which happens mostly in the department; other courses have essay or presentation assessments that require ‘intensive’ study in the library or at your laptop. We balance your schedule to give time to both kinds of intensive study, as well as the usual diet of lectures and workshops, seminars and tutorials.



Year 2



In the second year you will have at least ten hours of contact time. Optional units deepen your analytical expertise, knowledge around particular performance contexts, periods and genres and expand their practical skills in theatre making.

Year 2

Single Honours:

- Performance Histories
- Politics of Performance
- Four options

Joint Honours

- Performance Histories OR Politics of Performance
- One or two options
- Units in your other subject



Year 2 Mandatory Units

Performance Histories: This unit will introduce you to a range of historical texts and performances, from the Medieval to the mid twentieth century. It is taught in lectures and seminars and culminates in a student symposium in which students present their work in panels like a conference.

Politics of Performance: this unit picks up chronologically after Performance Histories around the early to mid 20th century and Brecht. It includes student-led reading groups around political themes, like Feminism or Performance and Race.



Year 2 Options

Some examples of option units include:

- Performing the Archive
- Popular Performance
- Melodrama
- Interpreting Plays
- Early Modern Theatre Practice
- Choreography
- Applied Theatre
- Clowning through History
- Decolonizing the Stage
- Faculty open units and cross-listed English units



Year 3

In the third year you will have at least eight contact hours a week, including a programme of professional development sessions.

Increasingly you will be studying independently with supervision from individual staff. Independent study includes a 10,000 word dissertation or a performance project that culminates in May at Gradfest, a public platform for students to perform their work.

You will also gain experience of working in professional environments through a placement with partner organisations. Roles regularly include assistant directing and performing with Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory, assistant producing and marketing with Mayfest, as well as literary development at the Bristol Old Vic.





The day Death
Came
to Tea



www.gradfest.org.uk



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Year 3 Single Honours

Year 3

- Independent Study: Performance Project or Dissertation
- 4 options:
 - Work Placement
 - Eighteenth Century Performance Practices
 - Contemporary British Theatre
 - Translation and Adaptation
 - Site Specific Performance
 - Devised Performance
 - Extended Essay



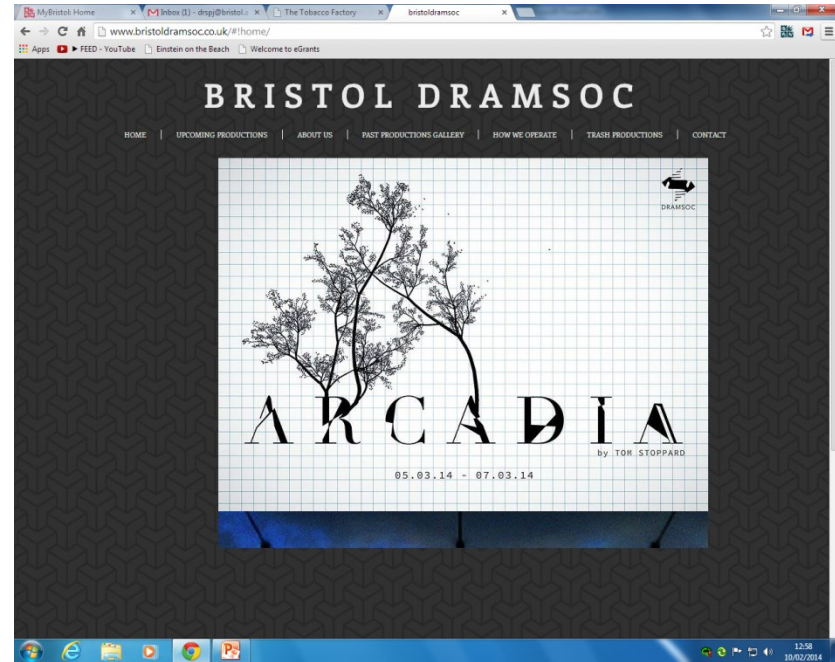
Year 3 Joint Honours

Year 3

- Two from:
 - Independent Study: Practice
 - Independent Study: Dissertation
 - Extended Essay
 - Work Placement
- Up to two options from:
 - Eighteenth Century Performance Practices;
 - Contemporary British Theatre
 - Translation and Adaptation
 - Site Specific Performance
 - Devised Performance
- Remaining units to come from your other subject



Extracurricula opportunities



There is a wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Leadership is one of the core transferrable skills theatre graduates leave us with: it is something they exercise here as well, leading in a range of activities from the Students' Union to the netball team, from journalism to the various drama societies and particularly the department society, InterAct.



Some of you may also be thinking about drama schools. In a conservatoire, you will work in a competitive environment honing one specific skills (eg. acting). You will become very good at that one thing. In an academic theatre department like ours, you will work **collaboratively** with your peers and your tutors to develop a range of skills that can take you into the theatre and creative industries or elsewhere.



Many of our students go onto employment in the creative industries, working in contexts where they had placements. Several will go on to drama school and you will always encounter Bristol graduates on stage or directing, programming and producing. Our graduates include:

Julia Donaldson (childrens author)

Greg Doran (Artistic Director RSC)

Caroline Goodall (actress)

David Grieg (playwright)

Sarah Kane (playwright)

David Nicholls (writer)

Simon Pegg (comedy writer/ actor)

Tim Piggott-Smith (actor)

Mark Ravenhill (playwright)

Laura Wade (playwright)

David Walliams (writer/ comedian)

Our former students are also working in other fields. We produce independent researchers and practitioners with a range of transferable skills that are useful in any field that requires persuasive communication, critical and creative problem solving, group working, leadership.

Some of the other destinations our graduates go on to include:

- teaching
- therapy
- law
- advertising
- politics



Thank you for reading. We hope we have given you an insight into our department but if you would like to know more or have any questions, please do get in touch. We look forward to working with you.

