



DRAMA and THEATRE

A-LEVEL

Examination Board: Edexcel

Course content:

This course has been designed to engage students through encouraging creativity, focusing on practical work which reflects 21st-century theatre practice. It is a highly enjoyable course in which you will develop your understanding of theatre from both a performance and design perspective. As well as practical assessment you will complete written work to assess your knowledge, understanding and application.

Course content & assessment:

AS Level (first year of course: most, if not all, students will not sit the AS exam)

Component	Method	Assessment	% of total AS level
1: Exploration and Performance	Students study a range of influential theatre makers' theories before selecting one to apply to a practical interpretation of a script, performing one key extract. This is accompanied by a monologue or duologue chosen from a second play text. A supporting portfolio is written to demonstrate a full understanding of stagecraft, technique and analysis throughout the rehearsal process.	Internally assessed, externally moderated	60% AS
2: Theatre Makers in Practice	Students will study another script in detail, designing their own directorial concept as they examine the playwright's intentions and the social historical context of the play. They will also see a range of live theatre and evaluate both the performance and design elements of the productions they see.	Written exam: 1 hour 45 mins	40% AS

A Level (Second year of the course)

Component	Method	Assessment	% of total A level
1: Devising	Students will devise an original performance piece using a play script and a theatre practitioner as stimuli. A significant part of the mark for this unit comes from the written portfolio which allows students to evaluate their contribution to the piece in terms of research, performance skills and creativity.	Internally assessed, externally moderated	40% A Level
2: Text in Performance	Students study a script and perform one key extract, demonstrating their understanding of the full play through their interpretation. Each student will then also perform a monologue or duologue from a different play text.	Visiting examiner	20% A Level
3: Theatre Makers in Practice	This component demands the study and exploration of two scripts, one a modern text with focus on directorial interpretation and the other a classic play in light of an influential theatre practitioner, focusing on how the text could be reimagined for a modern audience. Students will watch range of live theatre and evaluate both the performance and design elements of the productions they see.	Written exam: 2 hours 30 mins	40% A Level

Continued



DRAMA and THEATRE STUDIES *Continued*

Skills acquired:

You will learn advanced performance techniques: vocal and physical discipline and adaptation; creating and developing characterisation; movement and gesture in a range of theatrical styles; interpreting a script with sensitivity and creativity; successful ensemble dynamics; working with a director. You will acquire appropriate language with which to analyse design, performance and technical elements of a live theatre production in detail and with secure justification. You will learn to apply the theories of influential theatre practitioners to your own performance work with sensitivity and intelligence in order to be assured of an intended response from your audience.

Links with other subjects:

English, in terms of exploring play texts and developing essay-writing skills. Music and Dance also complement Drama - both being practical courses, with a focus on performance skills. Many drama students also study psychology as the ability to question characters and dictate audience response is crucial. The focus on social and historical context also allows history students to use their knowledge, particularly in terms of political theatre and theatre makers who were deliberately provocative against a social situation.

Possible careers:

This course is an excellent choice for students wishing to pursue careers in the theatre, law, politics, arts therapy, journalism, creative arts, teaching, marketing, advertising, events management or arts administration.

Recent drama students have gone on to study for degrees in: Law, English Literature, Modern Foreign Languages, Psychology, Musical Theatre, Technical Theatre and Stage Management, Dance, Event Management, Performing Arts, Art Therapy, Music and Recording, Drama, Maths, Teaching, Business and Accountancy, Medieval History, Art.

Prior experience: It is recommended that you will have studied Drama or another Performing Art at GCSE level. However, exceptions can be made on the condition that you have experience of performing to an audience and have a good grade in English. You must be able to communicate clearly and effectively on paper as well as verbally.

Student comments:

"...Studying drama at A level could quite possibly be the best decision I have ever made. The course and the support from the teachers here brought out a whole new confidence I never knew I had... It is also a very fun and interesting course to take and having that contrasting with other more stressful courses made the balance of A Level work a lot easier."

"I hadn't realised how much I would be learning about history, literature, philosophy and psychology on this course... Drama is essentially the study of human beings through powerful and engaging storytelling."

"It's not just about performing or studying a text, it's about channelling creativity and using it to create something beautiful. Learning to do this at JM made me realise this is what made me happiest which is why I now do it everyday. And earn a living from it, too!"

"...The course enriches personal skills which become vital when applying for jobs in the future; teamwork, confidence, time management, delegating tasks, communication and ambition are words I've associated with my Drama A-Level on recent job applications. I could talk forever about the fun I had doing drama at sixth form and also the extra curricular activities as well. Drama was the best part of my time at JM...I couldn't recommend it any higher!"