

# HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

## COURSE OUTLINE

1. **COURSE TITLE**

Playwriting for Drama

2. **COURSE CODE**

HUMN3077

3. **No. OF UNITS**

3 Units

4. **OFFERING DEPARTMENT**

Department of Humanities and Creative Writing

5. **PREREQUISITES**

NIL

6. **MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

Cantonese

7. **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

The course aims at providing basic concepts, knowledge and skills in writing script for theatre play, and also practical training in rehearsing, discussing and revising their scripts. It will introduce different theories of plot construction, character creation and their aesthetic underpinnings. It will at the end provide students with opportunities to see their scripts staged through presentation or mini-performance so that they can further reflect on their works.

8. **COURSE CONTENT**

I. Theories of dramatic construction: from Aristotle, Freytag to Frye

a) Theme and its expression

b) in medias res or ab initio

c) Plot and subplot

d) Dramatic action, exposition and development

e) Climax, falling action, anti-climax and resolution

f) U-shaped pattern

g) Division into acts and scenes

h) Purpose of each scene

i) The role of space and time: from the three unities and five acts play

j) Difference from film and television scripts

II. Aesthetic style and purpose

a) Naturalistic

b) Stylised

- c) Absurd
- d) Symbolic

III. Creating a character

- a) Stock character and stereotype
- b) Foil, round, static and dynamic character
- c) Psychological exploration
- d) Expression of a character: speech and action
- e) Character development and change
- f) Aristotle on character
- g) Shakespeare's construction of character
- h) Modern theatre: characterless character?

IV. Language and lines

- a) Naturalistic
- b) Verse and prose
- c) Dialogue, monologue, rhetoric, chorus
- d) Rhythm and diction

V. From text to performance

- a) Performance instructions: how much is enough?
- b) Rehearsal, discussion, reflection, revision
- c) "What do you mean by this?": communication with the director and actors
- d) Dialogue with the audience: from applause to cat-call

9. **COURSE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (CILOs)**

CILO	By the end of the course, students should be able to:
CILO 1	Describe the basic theories and concepts of writing drama script for theatre;
CILO 2	Produce playwriting such as plot construction, scene division, character creation, writing dialogue suitable for stage performance, etc. through practical writing exercises and a final work.
CILO 3	Recognise awareness in the issues, problems and difficulties in turning a text into a stage production.

10. **TEACHING & LEARNING ACTIVITIES (TLAs)**

CILO alignment	Type of TLA
1	In the lecture, students will be introduced basic knowledge and concepts of theatre and play writing, and will be given excerpts from masterpieces theatre for reading.
2	In the class exercises, students will be given different tasks according to the lecture topic: different methods of plot construction, character building, writing dialogues, etc. Students may also rehearse their own works in the group reading sessions, and may discuss each other's work for further revision and improvement.
3	Students will be given the task of developing and writing their own full length play with step-by-step monitoring and consultation with the teacher.

11. **ASSESSMENT METHODS (AMs)**

Type of Assessment Methods	Weighting	CILOs to be addressed	Description of Assessment Tasks
Presentation	30%	CILO 1	Students will be required to present and report on different theories and concepts of drama writing for theatre.
Term Paper	30%	CILO 2	Students should write up sketches, plot constructions, characterizations and scenes as preparations for a full-length play.
Final exam	40%	CILO 3	Students should submit a full-length play ready for staging, participate in read throughs and discussion sessions, and present it through mini-performances.

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