

**DRAMA 201: World Drama I**  
Natalie Harrower, Fall 2008

**Theatrical/Production Concept Assignment**

| Assignment  | Details   | Due date   | % of grade |
|---|---|--|------------|
| Part I: Directorial Concept   | 1000-word proposal  | Wed Oct 8, 2:30pm (in class)                                 | 15%        |
| Part II: Visual Palette   | Visual collage on a piece of standard Bristol board (approx 22" x 28") AND 500-word statement | Mon Nov 10, 4:00pm (in class)                                | 15%        |
| Part III: Performance Choices   | 5-8 min. performance in class, AND 500-word statement of choices                              | Written portion due same day as performance. See dates below | 15%        |
| Performances: <b>Sept 22:</b> Miles Gloriosus; <b>Sept 29:</b> Jealousy of Isabella; <b>Oct 8:</b> The Oresteia; <b>Oct 15:</b> Everyman; <b>Oct 20:</b> Matsukaze; <b>Oct 29:</b> Dulcitus; <b>Nov 5:</b> As You Like It; <b>Nov 12:</b> Tartuffe; <b>Nov 19:</b> Le Cid; <b>Nov 26:</b> Life is a Dream |   |  |            |

**What is this assignment all about?**

This is a three-part group assignment that asks you to generate a multi-part concept for the staging of a particular play, and to communicate how these choices serve the play text, and what your choices attempt to communicate to a Kingston theatre audience in 2008.

**How do we get started?**

Read the play your group has been assigned. Set up a meeting with your group members and discuss the play, sharing initial ideas for a production. Choose a scene to perform in class, read it several times as a group. Set up a schedule of meetings for working on the various aspects of the assignment, and for rehearsals.

**What ideas should we address in each part of the assignment?**

**I. Directorial Concept (Oct 8 at beginning of class) - 15%** \_\_\_\_\_

Before a play can be rehearsed and a production can be designed and mounted, the director must define his or her central approach to the play. For the purposes of this assignment, your group will create a 1,000-word proposal that sets out the main elements of this central approach. Your group proposal must address the following elements:

- Setting: When (time period) and where (geographically) are you going to set your play? Why?
- Historical/Political Context: What are the relevant historical circumstances that shape your choice in setting? How do these relate to the play? Relevant context includes political, social, and cultural events and movements that shape your concept of the production.
- Theatre Space: Where in Kingston will this play be performed? You are welcome to choose any space inside or outside of Queen's, as long as you justify your choice of that space.
- Production Scale: What is the size of this production? Will it fit the financial constraints of a departmental production, or will it require a massive budget? Alternately, could it be performed as 'poor theatre'?

Generating the directorial concept by addressing these elements is the first step, but the main goal of the 1,000-word proposal is to explain why you have made these choices, how they serve the play you have been assigned, and what these directorial choices may communicate to the audience.

## II. Visual Palette (Nov 10 at beginning of class) - 15%

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Each group will submit a collage of images that seek to show how their production will *look*. The collage, which will be assembled on a standard piece of Bristol board (available at, e.g., the Office Depot), should describe, in images, the colours, visual styles, contrasts, and shapes that will dominate the set, props, lighting, and costumes. The 500-word statement that accompanies the collage will explain why this particular visual palette was chosen, how it informs the directorial concept, and what it attempts to communicate to the audience. The following elements should be considered when developing ideas for the 'look' of the production, assembling the palette, and writing the explanation:

- What colour(s) will dominate the production? How does colour relate to the directorial concept?
- What will the production's lighting look like? Will stark images dominate, or softer, romantic images?
- What shapes, images, symbols, etc. influence your production's design?
- What textures and materials fit the directorial concept?

The collage does not have to contain complete sketches of the set and costumes, but it should contain the raw imagery that would shape the eventual design of these aspects. Again, the central goal in the written explanation is to address the choices you have made as a group, and how these choices present the play text.

## III. Performance Style (see Performance Schedule for dates) - 15%\*

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Each group will choose a 5-8 min. excerpt from their play, and perform it for the class as scheduled. On the same date as their performance, the group will submit a 500-word written statement that outlines the choices they made in determining the performance style, and how these choices serve their theatrical concept. Consider some or all of the following when determining performance style:

Pace: fast, slow, even, uneven

Gesture & Movement: how bodies move on stage

Voice: volume, pitch, quality of voice

Magnitude: size of performance, from small to large

Awareness of the audience: do the actors recognize the presence of the audience, or does the style support the illusion that the performance is a sealed, complete world?

Acting Style: all of the above contribute to the sum total of 'acting style', but it is also possible to think in terms of recognised 'styles', such as naturalism, melodrama, mechanical, slapstick, etc.

**In-class performance:** Rehearsals must involve all members of the group, but not all members of the group must perform. Total rehearsal time must not exceed 10 hours. Performances, regardless of directorial concept and visual palette, must focus on the performance aspect itself, and include minimal to no props, costumes, or set pieces. The department wardrobe and shop are not being made available for this assignment, in order to support the focus on making distinct choices in *performance*.

**500-word Statement:** As with the other written portions of this assignment, the statement must explain what choices the group has made in how the play will be performed, and must discuss how these choices support the overall production concept (directorial and visual). The statement should make specific reference to moments in the play in order to provide examples of performance choices.

\*The in-class performance itself will not be graded, so the mark for this portion of the assignment is based on the written statement about performance choices. Students who fail to participate in rehearsals or who are not present for the performance will forfeit 5% of their final grade.