

**London Stage: Draft Honours Proposal (Theatre)**  
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**THET399H**

In lieu of the final 8-10 page essay-review on three productions that other students will undertake, Honours students will be required to write an 8-10 page research paper. The research can be one of two kinds.

The exact focus of the research paper must be discussed and agreed upon with the lecturer.

1) Students will research the production history of **one** play that they have seen. It must be a play which has achieved the status of a classic, has been revived several, if not many, times and on which reviews are available. Students will consult not only reviews but also the playwright's own comments in essays, interviews, letters and diaries. The aim of the research is to compare the interpretation and reception of the production the student will have seen with the interpretation and reception of past productions. They will be required to consider and assess the play's different meanings and impacts at different historical periods. A good starting point for research is the **Writer-Files** series (Methuen) which documents, through review extracts and writers' own comments, the work of major European and American dramatists of the last hundred years. Follow-up research can be undertaken in the London Library.

2) Students will conduct research by interviewing the production personnel, actors and the director of **one** production they have seen on the course. The aim of interviewing say the set or lighting designer is to understand in depth how the stage design or lighting functioned and what effects and meanings it created. Interviewing the director would examine his/her overall interpretation of the play, why s/he put this particular play on now, and how it fitted in with the mission of the theatre where the play is being performed. Speaking to actors would include discussion how they conceived their roles in the context of their and the director's overall interpretation of the play.

Alternatively students would interview **either** production personnel **or** actors **or** the director of **two** productions they have seen on the course. They are required to draw comparisons about different approaches to, or styles of set, sound, lighting and costume design **or** directing **or** acting, depending on their area of interest.

To carry out this research students may need to see the production(s) twice. It is important to emphasize that the research will not be on technical aspects per se, but how they contribute to the audience's overall experience and understanding of the production. It should be noted that Option 2 will require a considerable degree of tenacity on the part of the student in order to arrange interviews. A student undertaking an internship or working in a theatre may find it easier to arrange.

Productions vary from semester to semester due to offerings. As an example of the range of plays seen during the course of a semester, a summary of the last three semesters is attached below.

Spring 2007:

Frost/Nixon  
Therese Raquin  
Rock n Roll  
The Coram Boy  
John Gabriel Borkman  
The Seagull  
The Caretaker  
Soldier's Fortune  
Tom Fool  
Skin Game  
Cabaret  
Othello

Autumn 2007:

Merchant of Venice  
Rhinoceros  
Rafta, Rafta  
Parade  
Once we were Mothers  
How to Curse  
Fiddler on the Roof  
The Arsonists  
War Horse  
Cloud Nine  
Boeing Boeing

Spring 2008:

President's Holiday  
Vertical Hour  
Helter Skelter  
A Prayer for my Daughter  
Women of Troy  
The Homecoming  
Dealer's Choice  
Blackbird  
Bliss  
Speed the Plow  
Major Barbara  
Cabaret  
King Lear