

# Theatre Studies and Technical Stage Production



- Academic study integrated with practical work and staged productions in the drama studios
- Teaching by experienced practitioners and theatre professionals and placements in local theatres
- Students will work with state-of-the-art, industry-standard equipment and software



This course aims to provide potential stage managers, technicians, sound and lighting designers and other practitioners with a wider understanding of theatre than just a technical or stage-management specialism. It is an alternative pathway for creative students who wish to study drama and pursue a career in the Arts, but do not wish to perform on the stage. It will produce well-read graduates with a wide knowledge of drama and the theatre industry and the potential to be able to progress in the theatre profession, become senior arts practitioners and ultimately, industry leaders. The course encourages creative students to explore the concept and aesthetics of lighting and sound as scenographic, rather than just technical theatre arts.



## Contact Information:

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## What will I do?

The course is intended to equip you with a broad knowledge of theatre and drama, in addition to technical stage production skills. You will, of course, be taught professional stage management techniques, lighting and sound design and how to rig and operate lighting, sound and other stage effects - but you will also have the opportunity to study theatre and radio drama, plays, playwrights, theatre practitioners and the history and nature of playhouses and the theatre industry itself. You can also choose to learn something about other aspects of theatre production such as directing and stage design - or creating posters and programmes. (You will have the opportunity to try your hand at those disciplines - but the course does not include specialist training in stage design, set construction or costume-making.) The course is integrated with the Drama, Performance and Theatre Arts course in a way that that is intended to encourage a single cohort of technicians, stage managers and performers.

In terms of the modules you will study, the course will consist of 50 per cent academic theatre studies and 50 per cent practice-based work. (Although, because of the nature of lecture-room subjects and practical subjects, more hours will be spent undertaking the practical work.)

In the first year, in addition to studying the history of drama, theatre and the nature of the professional theatre industry you will receive a practical and theoretical training in the creative techniques, methodologies and technologies of theatre lighting and sound and stage management which you will apply to an assessed project and public performances of student work. You will also have the opportunity to work collaboratively and devise your own theatre work with student performers and other creative practitioners. You will also receive health and safety training and help to develop your academic writing and study skills

In the second year you will continue your studies of plays, playwrights, practitioners, theatre history and the theatre profession and will gain practical experience and further expertise by applying your technical and creative and/or stage management skills to two major theatre productions, both of which will culminate in public performances. You will also have the opportunity to broaden your experience and technical skills by undertaking studies and practical work in Radio Drama. Other drama options will allow you to investigate areas of applied theatre, critical theory, modern drama, comedy, etc.

In the third year you will work on your own academic or practical projects with other fellow students on modules and projects of your own choosing. You will work independently of your tutors, but will be able to rely on support or supervision if and when you need it. You can apply to have the opportunity to form your own theatre company, create your own piece of theatre, undertake a professional work placement, write a play, or undertake more academic work in areas such as post-modern theatre. There will also be an opportunity to stage-manage or design the lighting or sound for a major professional-standard, final-year theatre production. You could, if you wish, request an alternative production role in Marketing or Settings, or Costume.

Throughout your three years on the course you will have the opportunity to stage-manage and/or make a creative technical contribution to theatre productions and events within several different genres of live performance and in differing performance spaces and theatre forms. You will also be encouraged to explore the concept of lighting and sound as scenography

We will explore the notion that, in a contemporary performance environment, a sense of time, place, period and atmosphere - and the ebb and flow of mood, emotion, images and ideas - can be created, represented and enhanced by the imaginative, dynamic and semiotic use of light and sound. You will be asked to consider and explore the suggestion that traditional theatrical scenery and stage sets, in the representational sense, are no longer appropriate as the primary environmental medium for contemporary performance. In an empty space, a performance environment can be totally defined by light and sound working in harmony with the actions and words of the performer - a sound can set the scene, the actions of the performers can define the stage area, light can emphasise, enhance or add meaning. We will investigate and experiment with the idea that with minimal scenic elements non-representational performance spaces have great creative potential, where performers and lighting and sound scenographers can work together in a fluid and dynamic way to create intimate, epic or experimental environments or instantly conjure up places, emotions, ideas and extraordinary events - out of thin air.

“ I can take any empty space  
and call it a bare stage”

**Peter Brook**

“ Through light, anything is  
possible”

**Adolph Appia**

“ Music is what feelings sound  
like”

**Anon**

## How are you assessed?

We use a wide variety of methods to assess your work. You will sometimes be marked on your contribution to a staged theatre production, or on your presentations in workshops. You may be required to take part in a group seminar class or submit various forms of written assessment such as essays or reports. You will not be required to sit exams.

## How do we look after you?

You can consult individual tutors about aspects of the courses they teach, or you can talk things over with your Personal Tutor. In addition, you can take courses to hone your academic or IT skills, gain work experience or help plan your career. The Student's Union offers help and advice on a wide range of issues to do with student life.

## Who are the staff I will work with?

**Derrick Cameron** - specialises in areas of theatre history, especially black British theatre and post-war British Drama.

**Jo Dawson** - is a freelance lighting designer and an experienced technical theatre practitioner.

**Paul W Jones** - has extensive experience in Production Management and in Lighting Design. He also has an interest in documentary and verbatim theatre and theatre history.

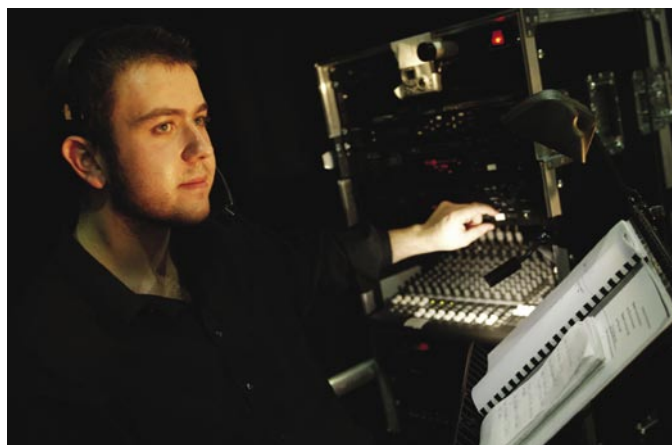
**Rob Marsden** - teaches theatre practice, is an experienced director with his own theatre company and has expertise in community theatre work.

**Chris Martin** - worked as an actor, director and writer with the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the New Vic Theatre.

**Shelley Piasecka** - is a practitioner with expertise in devising Live Art and the interpretation of contemporary and classical texts.

## What can my Degree/Foundation Degree/Other lead to?

This degree will provide you with the knowledge, understanding and background that will prepare you for a variety of professions connected to the cultural industries, education and the performing arts.



## What our students say.....

"...I've worked my way up and worked in all aspects of the theatre including Front Of House, Backstage Crew, Wardrobe, Theatre Development, Functions and Events and Press and Marketing....thank you for your help during my Drama and Theatre Arts course as it set me up for a career path I am really enjoying and it's going well."

**Laura Bell, 2004 graduate. Currently working at the Regent Theatre, Hanley.**

"My time at Staffs was the best three years of my life; if it weren't for the course and the inspirational rapport formed with tutors/professionals/mentors/peers I don't think I would be working in the business today."

**Jennie Harris 2003 graduate. Currently working at the Palace Theatre Manchester.**

"I would recommend Staffordshire University to anyone considering where to study. The variation of the curriculum and the depth of knowledge the University offers its students has enabled me to achieve a fantastic career path within two years of graduating."

**Julie King, 2006 graduate, currently working as a Young People's Theatre Director for the New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme.**

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