

IM SYLLABUS (2015)

THEATRE & PERFORMANCE

IM 34

SYLLABUS

**Theatre and Performance IM 34
Syllabus**

(Available in September)

Part 1 - Theatre History (2½ hrs)

Part 2 - Performance (½ hr)

1.0 Introduction

The field of theatre studies lies somewhere between theatre practice and academic study. On the one hand, it is practically oriented towards dramaturgical preparation of theatrical events (*spectacula*), and yet on the other hand has a specific subject matter that no other academic discipline has dealt with in sufficient depth. Theatre Studies is essentially an historical discipline. All phenomena that it examines no longer exist at the moment when conclusions are drawn. Theatre studies can also be carried out systematically and theoretically.

(A. Kotte, *Studying Theatre: Phenomena, Structures and Functions*, 2010, p. 1.)

As phenomena, theatrical events involve communities. As an area of study and research, theatre studies investigates the performative nature of these events, how communities express themselves through performance, the contexts and structures within which they operate, and the reasons and outcomes of this behaviour. The field of theatre studies investigates how people relate to their immediate social, political, and religious contexts, and how these in turn inform the performance of events. Theatre studies therefore bridges daily activity with extra-daily behaviour, in a process which deals with the aesthetics and ethics of performance.

2.0 Aims

The course in Theatre and Performance should promote the development of:

1. a general critical understanding of the history of theatre and performance;
2. writing, analytic, and reflective skills;
3. a proactive disposition;
4. individual expressivity, interpretation, and decision making;
5. evaluation skills;
6. group dynamics.

3.0 Assessment Objectives

Candidates will be assessed on:

1. a general knowledge of Western theatre history;
2. the ability to work in a collective and collaborative environment;
3. individual creative skills;
4. the ability to document (i) individual, and (ii) collective progress;
5. the ability to interpret a given text and/or develop original material for performance.

4.0 Subject Content

Subject content is determined by the Aims and Assessment Objectives of the syllabus. This is achieved by the:

1. knowledge of the development of theatre history;
2. underlying implications of historical development;
3. sensitivity to contemporary theatrical practices;
4. ability to work with others in a collective environment;
5. awareness of meeting an audience within a performance situation.

5.0 Scheme of Assessment

The Intermediate Theatre and Performance examination consists of **two** parts.

5.1 Part 1

Part 1 consists of a written paper of two and a half hours on Theatre History and carries 60% of the global mark. There will be four questions of which candidates will be required to answer **three**, in essay form. All questions carry equal marks. Each essay will be marked out of 100 according to the following marking scheme:

Knowledge of Theatre History	40 marks
Synoptic level of answer	20 marks
Analytic and reflective skills	15 marks
Use of appropriate terminology	10 marks
Structure and presentation	15 marks

5.1 Part 2

Part 2 consists of:

- (i) a Solo Presentation, carrying 20% of the global mark;
- (ii) a Devised Collective Presentation, carrying 20% of the global mark; and
- (iii) an interview, which can deal with any of the various aspects of Part 2.

The Solo Presentation will be assessed out of 100 using the following marking scheme:

Physical and vocal approach to the work	40 marks
Clarity of structure	15 marks
Content: appropriate use of material/s in performance	15 marks
Use of performance space	10 marks
Programme note	5 marks
Logbook	15 marks

The Devised Collective Presentation, with global mark 100, will be assessed following the marking scheme below:

Physical and vocal approach to the work	35 marks
Clarity of structure	10 marks
Content: appropriate use of material/s in performance	15 marks
Use of performance space	10 marks
Interaction between performers	15 marks
Programme note	5 marks
Logbook	10 marks

The examination for Part 2 will take place as indicated hereunder. All candidates involved in the group for the Devised Collective Performance will be called for the examination together. The various components of the exam for Part 2 will take place in the following order:

- (i) the Solo Performance;
- (ii) the Devised Collective Performance; and
- (iii) an individual interview with each member of the Collective Performance group.

To be awarded a pass in the examination, candidates must satisfy the examiners in both Part 1 and Part 2.

6.0 Syllabus Content

6.1 Part 1: Theatre History

Theatre History will consider theatre from four different perspectives:

- a. The different contexts within which theatrical activity developed: the social, political, and religious contexts.
- b. The organisation of theatrical activity.
- c. The development of spatial structures and techniques involved: theatre architecture, and scenography.
- d. Main contributors: actors, playwrights, theatre managers, directors, and theorists.

The following areas will be examined:

6.1.1 Ancient Theatre: Celebration of the Community

- a. Organisation of performance – Ancient Greek Festivals as the context of organisation.
- b. The emergence of Tragedy and the development of Comedy.
- c. Space of performance and the way spatial structures evolved out of different needs of the community.
- d. The relevance of democracy in relation to the development of theatrical activity.
- e. Reference to the contribution of important Ancient Greek playwrights: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes.

6.1.2 Renaissance Theatre and its Heritage in the Development of the Baroque

- a. Rediscovery of the classics and their impact on theatre.
- b. The development of space and scenery.
- c. *Commedia dell'Arte* as a performance phenomenon.
- d. The emergence of the Baroque.
- e. The development of the *Teatro all'Italiana* and the way this spatial dimension will be established as *the* space for theatrical activity.
- f. Reference to the contribution of important Renaissance playwrights: Shakespeare, Molière, Calderon, Goldoni, and Beaumarchais.

6.1.3 Realism in Theatre and Twentieth-Century Developments

- a. Realism in theatre – the reproduction of life on stage.
- b. The influences of the Industrial Revolution on theatre and performance.
- c. Reference to important realist playwrights: Chekhov, Ibsen, Strindberg, and Shaw.
- d. The turn of the twentieth-century and the rise of the actor.
- e. Spaces for performance – formal spaces and alternative dispositions of space.
- f. Important contributors in twentieth-century theatre: Stanislavski – The ‘system’; Brecht – Epic theatre; Grotowski – Poor Theatre and the laboratory dimension. Brief reference to the contribution of major twentieth-century playwrights: Beckett, Brecht, Miller, and Pinter.
- g. Theatre in Malta since the 1960s – Francis Ebejer and the social, political, and religious contexts within which he operated and through which theatre in Malta developed.

6.1.4 List of Plays

Three complete play-texts are to be chosen. One play from each of the three sections below is to be considered and discussed in relation to the respective, particular period.

1. Ancient Theatre: *Oedipus Rex* – Sophocles **or** *Antigone* – Sophocles
2. Renaissance Theatre: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – Shakespeare **or** *The Imaginary Invalid* - Molière
3. Late Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century: *The Cherry Orchard* – Chekhov **or** *Life of Galileo* – Brecht

Additional reference can also be made to other play texts in order to deepen the discussion about the particular historical period.

6.2 Part 2: Performance Practice

There will be two to three examiners for the assessment of the Solo Presentation and the Devised Collective Presentation, and the interview.

6.2.1 Solo Presentation

The duration of the Solo Presentation must be between 3 to 5 minutes, including the setting up of the space, if needed. Candidates will be asked to stop if their performance exceeds 5 minutes. The candidates are expected to present a programme note (about 500 words) and a logbook.

Note: This section is deliberately entitled 'solo' not 'monologue' in order not to limit candidates to base their work on a script. Although candidates may wish to opt for an interpretation of a script, they can also decide to work on original non-scripted material.

6.2.2 Devised Collective Presentation

The duration of the Devised Collective Presentation must be between 8 to 10 minutes, including the setting up of space, if applicable. The candidates are expected to present a programme note (about 500 words) and a logbook.

The candidates may opt for any of the following:

- performance of a play or sections of it;
- an original devised performance (not necessarily based on an established text).

The different layers which constitute theatre performance should be distributed among the candidates. These include:

- actors / actresses;
- light person / s;
- costumes, scenery, props;
- music and other layers constituting the performance.

7.0 Private Candidates

Private candidates are expected to cover the same syllabus as candidates presented by post-secondary schools and colleges. For Part 2 of the syllabus, private candidates are required to identify a Theatre and Performance teacher who is teaching the subject in one of the schools approved by the MATSEC Board and who will act as supervisor for their presentations.

Private candidates need to register with MATSEC for the subject at least by the 15th October preceding the examination sitting.

8.0 Further Notes

8.1 Notes on the Solo and Devised Collective Presentations

Candidates need to be self-sufficient in both presentations, that is, no outside help will be allowed during the presentations.

Three important aspects of performance that help candidates construct a solid presentation should be tackled:

- **structure** – the basic foundation supporting the material and work;
- **content** – the material the student will be working with, which may include texts, music, lights, costumes and other props needed for the performance; and
- **working process** – the process of construction throughout the duration of the studies based on the structure and content.

Lights to be used in the presentations should be kept at a basic level. One space, not exceeding 10m by 10 m will be used for all presentations.

8.2 The Logbook

A logbook will be provided by the MATSEC Support Unit. The candidate is required to use the logbook to record the work / preparation done for the presentations. In the case of the Devised Collective Presentation, each individual candidate should have his / her own record.

The logbook should include notes about the progress of work, problems arising during the working process and possible solutions.

The logbook will be supervised and signed by the tutor of Theatre and Performance. It needs to be presented during the performance examination.

8.3 Notes on the Interview

Following the performances, the candidate will discuss his / her performance with the examiners' panel. The panel can ask any question relating to the aspects mentioned in the previous sections.

9.0 Texts

9.1 Recommended Texts

- N. Fraser, *Theatre History Explained*, Crowood Press, 2004
- M. Wallis & S. Shepherd, *Studying plays*, London & New York, Hodder Education, 2002

The above books cover more areas than those required by the syllabus.

9.2 Further Reading

- O. Brockett, *A History of the Theatre*, Allen and Bacon, 1991.
- A. Kotte, *Studying Theatre: Phenomena, Structures and Functions*, Germany, LIT Verlag, 2010.
- M. Schino, *Alchemists of The Stage. Theatre Laboratories in Europe*, trans. by Warrington P., Holstebro-Malta-Wroclaw, Icarus Publishing Enterprise, 2009.
- J. R. Brown (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of The theatre*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001.
- D. Rubin (ed.), *World Encyclopaedia of Theatre*, London and New York, Routledge, 1994 (Malta, J. J. Schranz, V.A. Cremona, P. Xuereb, C. Xuereb).
- V.A. Cremona, 'Politics and Identity in Maltese Theatre: Adaptation or Innovation?', *The Drama Review*, Vol. 52, No. 4, Winter, 2008.
- M. Azzopardi, *It-Teatru f'Malta*, Malta, PIN Progress Press 2003.
- M. Galea, *It-Teatru Malti tas-Seklu Dsatax, Vol 1 and 2*, Malta, Mireva Publications 1997.