

**IM Syllabus 2026**

**THEATRE & PERFORMANCE SYLLABUS**

**IM 34**

**Theatre and Performance  
Syllabus**

**IM 34**

Part 1 – Theatre Events and Practitioners (2½ hours)  
Part 2 – Exploring Performance Practice (8–10 minutes)

## **1.0 Introduction**

The Intermediate Theatre and Performance Syllabus introduces candidates to theatre as a phenomenon which involves 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 with extra-daily activity, 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 understanding of theatre practice through performance;
2. a general understanding of theatre events and the work of theatre practitioners and playwrights in different historical periods;
3. writing and basic analytical skills;
4. a proactive disposition;
5. individual expressivity, interpretation, and decision making;
6. evaluation skills;
7. 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. the ability to document group performance progress;
4. the ability to interpret a given text or to develop original material for a performance.

## **4.0 Subject Content**

The Subject Content is determined by the Aims and Assessment Objectives of the syllabus. This is achieved through:

1. A basic knowledge of theatre-making practices;
2. a basic knowledge of the development of theatre history;
3. basic underlying implications of historical development;
4. the 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.

Part 1: Theatre Events and Practitioners – 60% of the final mark

Part 2: Exploring Performance Practice – 40% of the final mark

Candidates can qualify for Grades A-E ONLY if they satisfy examiners in both Part 1 and Part 2 of the examination.

### 5.1 Part 1: Theatre Events and Practitioners

**Part 1** consists of a written paper of two and a half hours addressing theatre events and the work of theatre practitioners throughout history. It carries 60% of the global mark.

The examination paper for Part 1 will consist of 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
Analytical and reflective skills	15 marks
Use of appropriate terminology	10 marks
Structure and presentation	15 marks

### 5.2 Part 2: Exploring Performance Practice

**Part 2** consists of a group performance followed by an interview related to the working process developed for the creation of the performance.

Part 2 carries 40% of the global mark. The work will be marked out of 100 according to the following marking scheme:

Physical and vocal approach to the work	30 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	10 marks
Logbook	15 marks
Interview	10 marks

All candidates involved in the group performance will be called for the examination together. The procedure will be as follows:

- (i) the group performance followed by
- (ii) an individual interview with each member involved in the group performance.

## **6.0 Syllabus Content**

### **6.1 Part 1: Theatre Events and Practitioners**

Part 1 addresses the development of theatre events, the context within which these developed, and the work of playwrights and theatre practitioners behind these events in different historical periods. Candidates will be expected to be knowledgeable about:

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

The following areas will be examined:

#### **6.1.1 Theatre and the Community**

- a. Organisation of performance – Ancient Greek Festivals as contexts of performance.
- b. The development of dramatic forms in Ancient Greece: tragedy and comedy.
- c. The development of ancient Greek theatre structures.
- d. The relevance of democracy in relation to the development of theatrical activity.
- e. Reference to the contribution of Ancient Greek playwrights: Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Euripides, and Sophocles.

#### **6.1.2 Theatre of Rediscoveries**

- a. Rediscovery of the classics and their impact on spatial and dramatic developments in theatre.
- b. *Commedia dell'Arte* as a performance phenomenon.
- c. Reference to the contribution of Renaissance playwrights including: Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Niccolò Machiavelli, Molière, and William Shakespeare.

#### **6.1.3 Theatre of Reforms, Reactions, and Popular Entertainment**

- a. Naturalism and Realism in theatre: the reproduction of life on stage.
- b. The turn of the twentieth-century and the rise of the actor.
- c. Konstantin Stanislavski and the development of the 'system'.
- d. Bertolt Brecht and Epic theatre.
- e. Musicals and commercial theatre production.
- f. Theatre as popular entertainment – the relevance of Broadway and West-End theatre productions.

- g. Reference to naturalist and realist plays by playwrights including: Anton Chekhov, Henrik Ibsen, and George Bernard Shaw. Reference to dramatic works by Bertolt Brecht. Reference to musicals and other popular theatre performances.

#### 6.1.4 List of Plays

Candidates shall study **three** complete play-texts, one from each of the three areas outlined in 6.1.1, 6.1.2, and 6.1.3. Play-texts should be chosen from the following list:

1. Theatre and the Community: *Oedipus Rex* – Sophocles **or** *The Frogs* – Aristophanes
2. Theatre of Rediscoveries: *Romeo and Juliet* – Shakespeare **or** *The Imaginary Invalid* – Molière
3. Theatre of Reforms, Reactions, and Popular Entertainment: *The Seagull* – Chekhov **or** *Mother Courage and Her Children* – Brecht

#### 6.2 Part 2: Exploring Performance Practice

Part 2 explores performance practice through group work which the candidates will present in the form of a performance. The presentation of the performance will be followed by individual interviews with each candidate. There will be two to three examiners for the assessment of the group performance and the interviews.

Groups presenting the group performance must consist of a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 10 candidates. The duration of the performance must be between 8 and 10 minutes long. Candidates will be asked to stop if their performance exceeds 10 minutes. A maximum of 15 minutes will be allotted for the candidates to prepare for the performance, including the setting up of space, if applicable. Each candidate is expected to present an individual logbook outlining the progress of his/her work leading to the performance. Interviews after the group performance presentation will be conducted individually with each candidate involved in the group performance. Each interview will take approximately 5 minutes.

The candidates may opt for any of the following:

- performance of a play-text 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. In the case of Part 2: Exploring Performance Practice, the candidates may choose one of the following options:

1. To team up with other private candidates who will work together and present the performance as a group. Groups in this case must consist of a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 10 candidates.
2. To team up with extra performers (i.e. performers that will not be assessed) to a maximum of 3 performers. The group shall therefore include 1 assessed private candidate and either 1 or 2 extra non-assessed performers. The assessed private candidate and the extra non-assessed performers must be identified before the start of the performance.

With regard to both option 1 and option 2, when selecting a venue for the performance, the candidate/s need/s to liaise with one of the institutions where Theatre and Performance is being offered. Alternatively the candidate/s can liaise with MATSEC at the time of registration for the use of the MITP theatre for the performance. All expenses related to the MITP theatre are to be borne by the candidate/s.

## 8.0 Further Notes

### 8.1 Notes on the Group Performance

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

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

- **structure** – the basic foundation supporting the material and work;
- **content** – the material the candidates 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 performances should be kept at a basic level. One space, not exceeding 10m by 10m, will be used for all the performances.

### 8.2 The Logbook

The logbook is to be downloaded from the MATSEC website. The candidate is required to use the logbook to record the work/preparation done for the performance. Each individual candidate should have his/her own record. The content of the logbook should reflect the individual perspective of the candidate presenting it.

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

The logbook needs to be presented during the performance examination.

### **8.3 Notes on the Interview**

Following the performance, each candidate will individually discuss his/her performance with the examiners' panel. The panel can ask any question relating to the aspects mentioned in 8.1 and 8.2.