M.A. in Theatre and Performance  
(C21 Studies & Perspectives)

Department of Theatre Studies  
School of Performing Arts, University of Malta

Start: October 2015  
Offer: part-time day and part-time evening  
Duration: 5 semesters (2 years)  
Fee: [http://www.um.edu.mt/finance/service/coursefees](http://www.um.edu.mt/finance/service/coursefees)  
Requirements: a Bachelor’s degree (with second class) or equivalent. For full details click [here](http://www.um.edu.mt/finance/service/coursefees).

Description

The M.A. surveys, analyses, and rethinks the study of theatre and performance in the reconfigured (postmodernised, mediatised, and globalised) spaces of the twenty-first century. It focuses on studies and perspectives that are mainly emergent in the new century, but which have links and applications that are related and relevant to other historical periods.

The programme focuses on three principal areas:

(1) The challenges and evolving strategies of historiography – it analyses perspectives of looking both at the way performance is understood and the innovative possibilities in which history is written in the C21.

(2) The development of theoretical and philosophical approaches in the light of changing human conditions – it considers a range of emergent and/or evolving perspectives such as critical posthumanism, postphenomenology, technoscience, and cognitive science.

(3) The nature and breadth of contemporary performance practices, with special emphasis on C21-characteristics and developments – it examines the incorporation of innovative technology and processes as they pertain to the aesthetics, medium, and location of performance, as well as to compositional strategies.

The M.A. includes sessions by international experts (scholars and/or practitioners), as well as scope for practical research, tailor-made to the students’ interests.

Some of the questions that the course addresses include: What are the historical lineages and traces of C21 theatre and performance? What impact do theatrical and performance practices have on our contemporary social, cultural, and political world? How does the theatre remain a vibrant force in the C21? How can ideas and questions raised by theatre and performance be used to make sense of human engagement across the world and in a globalised context?

The programme is aimed at students who want to pursue a taught postgraduate degree in Theatre Studies, Performance Studies, or the Performing Arts, as well as at graduates of language, literature, or philosophy with an interest in drama, theatre, performance, and/or contemporary theory. The course is particularly suited for students interested in pursuing research at the forefront of the performing arts and the humanities.
Programme of Study

YEAR 1
Semester 1
THS5050 Performing Histories: C21 Perspectives (10 ECTS)
PFA5002 Researching Performance (10 ECTS)
Semester 2
THS5052 Performance Practices in the C21 (10 ECTS)

YEAR 2
Semester 1
THS5051 Theories for Performance: C21 Critiques (10 ECTS)
Semester 2
THS5053 Specialised Studies (10 ECTS)
THS5054 Directed Research Project (10 ECTS)
Semester 3
THS5055 Dissertation (30 ECTS)

Study-Unit Content

THS5050: Performing Histories: C21 Perspectives
This study-unit focuses on the challenges and evolving strategies of historiography in the new century. Accordingly, it analyses perspectives of looking both at the way performance is understood and the innovative possibilities in which history is written in the C21. To this effect, the unit will consider contemporary aesthetic and interpretative approaches that respond to changing cultural, political, global, and critical contexts, as alternatives to standard period-restrictive and subject-specific approaches. By its very nature, the unit will consider various historical periods as object of study.

PFA5002: Researching Performance
This study-unit is shared amongst all Master’s courses by the School of Performing Arts. It guides students through some of the main issues encountered while researching performance at a higher level. It discusses both the practical aspects of gathering data, such as interviewing, accessing archival material and information available in electronic format, as well as valid ways of organizing and presenting data. The study-unit also deals with the responsibilities that come with being a researcher, towards oneself and the institution through which the research is taking place, as well as towards the people you involve in your research. The second part of the study-unit will analyse theoretical aspects that are particularly pertinent to research in the performing arts, such as researching one’s own praxis, philosophical and sociological ways of speaking about the body in performance and analysing the different applications of theatre in society.

THS5052: Performance Practices in the C21
This study-unit focuses on the nature and breadth of contemporary performance practices, with special emphasis on C21-characteristics and developments. Accordingly, it examines the incorporation of innovative technology, processes, and other elements as they pertain not only to the aesthetics, medium, and location of performance, but also to compositional strategies, including the technical preparation (training) of performers/technicians/participants. The unit will consider cutting-edge work as well as the
appropriation of elements of the same in mainstream performance. Reference to historical processes and aspects which were innovative in their time will also be made.

**THS5051: Theories for Performance: C21 Critiques**

This study-unit focuses on the development of theoretical and philosophical approaches in the light of changing human conditions in the new century. Accordingly, it considers a range of emergent and/or evolving perspectives such as critical posthumanism, postphenomenology, technoscience studies, sociomaterial practices, and cognitive science. The implications for, application to, and impact on theatre and performance, both contemporary and historical, will be explored.

**THS5053: Specialised Studies in Theatre and Performance**

The study-unit enables students to join experienced and international specialists in order to examine current issues and approaches to theatre and performance studies. Visiting specialists will have a '21st century' dimension to their research and areas of expertise, one which will be applied to a variety of contexts, practices, or historical eras. In the weeks leading to the specialists' visits, students will prepare for these sessions through a series of tutor-led seminar-based discussions where recommended preliminary material will be discussed and/or presented. Course material will vary depending on the visiting lecturer but one will expect to tackle such material as new dramaturgies, post-dramatic theatre, embodied practices, and performance hybridity.

**THS5054: Directed Research Project**

Students will pursue a directed research project, under the supervision of a member of staff who is to be consulted on the choice of the topic researched as well as kept informed on how the research is proceeding. Students will be directed to (a) formulate a research proposal; (b) identify and put in practice pertinent methodologies; and (c) present results in seminar and/or written form. The research topic will have a clear 21st-century dimension either with regard to the subject or to the methodologies used. It may also consist of a practical assignment or contain a practical component.

**THS5055 Dissertation**

The dissertation study-unit provides each registered student with an opportunity to identify and investigate a research topic within theatre studies, considered by the board of studies of Theatre Studies to be a suitable area of research that falls within the expertise of an allocated supervisor. The dissertation enables students to expand on the themes explored during the taught components of the course, document, and/or critically assess performances and use documentation, as well as academic literature to write a dissertation in accordance with the department's guidelines. Although the nature of this study-unit emphasises the importance of independent learning, regular encounters with the supervisor are also a necessary component so that students can be guided to produce a work of academic writing that is of a standard expected at postgraduate level. Dissertation length: 20,000 words.

For more information: theatre.spa@um.edu.mt.