

Student Assessment Bachelor of Arts – Theatre:

As the BA concentrations were being developed, we identified the need to evaluate and interact on a more formal and consistent level with all BA students. Although we had a mechanism in place for assessing learning outcomes for all Theatre majors who were in their final year, (Senior Progress Review), we didn't have a means of tracking and assessing student progress of the underclassmen. By implementing the underclassmen jury procedure, we hope to be able to track the progress of all Theatre majors. Since the system has only had one round of underclassmen (Spring 2017) we are yet to collect a data set that will provide enough information to better understand if we are meeting all of our learning outcomes.

MFA Candidate Assessment:

The Graduate School requires that all Graduate Students receive a formal assessment at least once per academic year. The Department of Theatre conducts formal reviews of all MFA candidates 2 times per academic year – one at the completion of the fall semester, and a formal review and evaluation at the end of the spring semester. Each fall review culminates with a written and/or face-to-face meeting between the candidate and their immediate mentor. The spring review follows a more formal procedure whereby a document is filed with the Graduate School outlining the progress of the candidate.

Bachelor of Arts: Theatre

BA: Theatre (Concentration in Performance)

See MDP A

Purpose

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theatre (Concentration in Performance) is a broad-spectrum program that seeks to provide a foundational knowledge of drama, a comprehensive skill set for the theatre, and a concentration in performance within the context of a liberal arts education.

The theatre faculty realizes and is proud of the liberal arts education at the University of Arkansas. Understanding the competitive nature of a career in the entertainment industry, we believe in the importance of well-rounded students who have a knowledge of human cultures, the physical and natural world, and who have intellectual and practical skills that will allow them to be life-long learners and active and responsible citizens. Furthermore, we value and teach the many “intersections” provided by the theatre with art, science, history, literature and civic and social engagement.

Mindful of the liberal arts and the theatre core, the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Performance) degree is grounded in the missions of the university, college and program, supported by its curriculum, and seniors are assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Theatre majors currently participate in Senior Progress Review, a capstone project. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every class, production and assessment towards the program's learning outcomes.

Learning Outcomes:

Learning Outcome 1: Dramatic Analysis and Theatre History

Theatre students should have the ability to comprehend a diverse and shared theatrical/cultural heritage by analyzing and understanding the major movements and works of the theatre.

Introduction to Theatre

Script Analysis

Theatre History I

Theatre History II

Learning Outcome 2: Technical and Design Aspects of the Theatre

Theatre students should have the ability to process and utilize the technical and design aspects of the theatre by demonstrating safe and effective stagecraft, communicating an idea in visual terms and by creating innovative theatrical designs.

Fundamentals of Theatrical Design

Learning Outcome 3: Performance Aspects of Theatre

Theatre students should have the ability to process and utilize the performance aspects of the theatre by demonstrating competencies in acting, voice, movement and characterization.

Stage Movement

Stage Speech

Acting I

Acting II

Acting III

Acting IV

Playwriting

Directing

Learning Outcome 4: Theatre Production Skills

Application of effective, creative and collaborative production skills by synthesizing culture, theatre technology, design, and/or performance in the production and rehearsal process.

Stage Technology I

Stage Technology II

Stage Management

Theatre Practicum

Learning Outcome 5: Citizenship/Collegiality/Communication

Theatre students should demonstrate competency in communication, collaboration and creativity by being an effective member of our theatre company, our college and our university community.

Theatre students also receive instruction/mentorship in all labs, performance spaces and rehearsals outside of the traditional classroom setting.

Curricular Table

Bachelor of Arts: Theatre (Concentration in Performance)

See MDP A

The Curricular Table for the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Performance) reflects healthy percentages for Theatre Studies (26%) and General Studies (35%) and areas for Performance (18%) and Electives or a Minor in another subject (22%). The components and percentages of the degree comply with NAST Standards.

All required courses are documented for students and advisers on the Degree Checklists and plotted over eight semesters on the Curriculum Guides. The checklists and curriculum guides are available online, from Fulbright Advising, from the main Theatre Office and during each semester's advising fair. The Degree Checklist and Curriculum Guide for the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Performance) are provided in *Appendix E 5*.

The BA in Theatre Curriculum has recently been overhauled at the University of Arkansas given our intention to meet NAST standards and improve graduation and retention rates. The graduation rate for theatre majors has been consistent at a 6-year rate for several years. The degree checklist was a menu of options that caused students to take courses out of the recommended order. This, coupled with a combination of department led and centralized advising created confusion as to the proper order of courses and the impact that not following the advice led to many students taking too long to graduate. Often conflicting information was being given to students by the department and central advising such as the order in which to take courses. To combat this, the department re-evaluated the BA curriculum to streamline the course offerings and to create areas of concentration in Performance and Design and Technology. The department also created the Advising Fair, every semester event that advertises courses, provides advising and gives soon to be graduating students a final assessment of their degree checklist. This has proven very successful for the students who avail themselves of it, and we are hoping the streamlined degree will help students graduate on time. The concentrations went live as of Fall 2016.

Content, Methodology and Levels of Achievement

Content and methodology for the Bachelor of Arts: Theatre (Concentration in Performance) degree meet NAST Standards, are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes. The varied contents and methodologies are best discussed by examining the theatre studies core then the concentration in performance.

The theatre core is foundational and addresses all five of the program's learning outcomes as it provides information on, and exercise and practice for the basic aspects of theatre. THTR 1223 - Introduction to Theatre provides hands-on experience in the artistic and technical aspects of theatre. Playwriting, directing, acting and design principles are discussed. Analytical, conceptual, and critical approaches to dramatic texts as well as genre identification are covered by lecture, discussion, writing and research in THTR 1423 – Script Analysis. The principle eras, major cultural forces, artistic movements, styles, playwrights (their influences and processes) and

artists of the past are covered by lecture, discussion, writing, examination and research in the two theatre history surveys: THTR 4233 and THTR 4333. The elements of design and basic design concepts are covered by demonstration, research, creative projects, practice and presentation in THTR 2313 – Fundamentals of Theatrical Design, THTR 1313 - Stage Technology I: Costumes and Makeup provides basic costume construction and basic principles of theatrical makeup application, THTR 1323 – Stage Technology II: Scenery and Lighting introduces students to the basics of scenic construction, shop tools and shop safety as well as basic stage lighting principles. Both Stage Tech I and Stage Tech II have a laboratory component, THTR 1311L and THTR 1321L respectively. Students apply their stage technology skills in the scene and costume shops and complete crew assignments in departmental productions. THTR 1883 - Acting I for Theatre Majors explores the physical, vocal, and imaginative processes required for performance of dramatic texts. Basic production skills and practices are demonstrated, supervised, practiced and synthesized during Production Practicum (THTR 3001) which guarantees each student's exposure to and involvement with the theatre production process. The final course that rounds out the Theatre Core is THTR 3683 Stage Management which relates issues of management and producing to the academic and professional process. Additionally, all theatre majors are subject to a Fulbright College writing requirement that can be fulfilled in THTR 4233, THTR4333, THTR 4453 or THTR 4733.

Advanced coursework for the Concentration in Performance begins with THTR 2483 - Stage Movement for the Actor. Instruction incorporates physical warm-up strategies and exercises designed to improve relaxation; develop flexibility, alignment, strength, kinesthetic awareness, and appreciation of mind/body unity; and to connect stage movement to imagination, character development, and text. Techniques covered include Alexander training, Michael Chekhov work, dance, theater games and gentle yoga practice. THTR 2683 - Acting II is an acting studio course deepening the exploration of techniques introduced in Acting I, including expanded work on characterization and script analysis through exercises, scene-work and monologue performance. THTR 3433 - Stage Speech introduces the basic skills of speech, voice production and communication for performance and broadcasting. Special focus on General American speech and the characteristics of speech regionalisms. This course explores breath control, resonance, articulation, pitch, volume, voice quality and stress management. THTR 3653 - Directing I examines the basic principles and techniques of play direction, including play analysis, audition and rehearsal organization, staging and collaborating with actors. THTR 3663 - Acting III is an advanced acting studio building on techniques introduced in Acting I and II. Intensive work on script analysis, emotional preparation, awakening the imagination, characterization, partner work and playing action. THTR 4063 - Playwriting introduces the fundamentals of playwriting culminating in the completion of an original play and THTR 4683 - Acting IV - Shakespeare Performance explores Shakespearean texts, with focus on scansion, verse and prose, poetry, characterization and voice and articulation. The Concentration in Performance prepares the actor for professional work in the industry, graduate studies and the education field.

Senior Progress Review:

All theatre majors are required, in the semester before graduation, to successfully complete the Senior Progress Review, a faculty assessment of each student's accomplishments in performance and production. This is currently the only assessment tool used by the department to evaluate a student's readiness for graduation and to assess the fulfillment of the Learning Outcomes

outlined above. The department is in the process of defining new assessment avenues and will implement them beginning in the spring of 2017.

See Appendix E 7.

Underclassmen Juries:

In their freshman, sophomore, and junior years, students will be invited to have a conversation with the faculty team about class work, production work and college life in general. The student will be instructed to bring their up to date degree checklist, so that the team can make sure that the student is on the correct path for graduation.

The faculty teams will consist of at least one member from each theatre discipline, i.e. Performance, Design, Technology, Analysis and Criticism.

With teams of faculty in place at each assessment session, we will effectively speak to a student's coursework, backstage and crew assignments, onstage and production work and citizenship. The following outcomes can be used as a guide to determine whether the student is on track, falling behind or should be placed on probation. The faculty can also use the information learned to determine adjustments to courses and production assignments; i.e. are we teaching what we say we are teaching?

Students will sign up online for a time slot and will be sent an email confirming the slot and giving them a room assignment. The faculty teams will use the provided form to assess the student's progress as they matriculate through the program. To achieve the greatest degree of success, the Advising Fair will be a major part of the assessment process. See Appendix E 6.

Results

Enrollment in the degree program concentration is unknown as it has only been in place since the Fall of 2016. Official figures will be available Fall of 2018. Unofficially, we have reason to believe we have approximately 70% of our theatre majors pursuing the Performance Concentration.

See MDP B I Heads Data Report 2016-17

Strengths and Areas for Improvement

The degree is committed to a liberal arts core, electives, has a comprehensive theatre core, a well-structured emphasis, strong enrollment, a quality regional presence, actively engaged students, excellent facilities, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, and working and productive alumni.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion.

- Undergraduate performance students need access to rehearsal spaces on weekends and evenings. This is currently unavailable.
- In order to take greater advantage of summer and/or career performing opportunities, the program needs to develop consistent strategies and funding to help performance students overcome barriers to summer work.

- Recruiting efforts require scholarship funds that will go hand in hand with the positive reputation of the program. At present, the program cannot compete with the generous scholarships of other institutions.
- The program does not have a consistent and formal means of evaluating alumni employment, activity and perspective. The program needs to develop and apply, with consistency, an alumni survey.
- Currently the theatre department facilities are spread across campus building and stretch to downtown. A more facility that allows theatre practitioners to collaborate more immediately is a pressing need.

For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing

Bachelor of Arts: Theatre

BA: Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology)

MDP A.

Purpose

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology) is to provide a foundational knowledge of drama, a comprehensive skill set for the theatre, and a concentration in design and technology within a broad-based liberal arts education.

The theatre faculty realizes and is proud of the liberal arts education at the University of Arkansas. Understanding the competitive nature of a career in the entertainment industry, we believe in the importance of well-rounded students who have a knowledge of human cultures, the physical and natural world, and who have intellectual and practical skills that will allow them to be life-long learners and active and responsible citizens. Furthermore, we value and teach the many “intersections” provided by the theatre with art, science, history, literature and civic and social engagement.

Mindful of the liberal arts and the theatre core, the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology) degree is grounded in the missions of the university, college and program, supported by its curriculum, and seniors are assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Theatre majors currently participate in Senior Progress Review, a capstone project. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every class, production and assessment towards the program’s learning outcomes.

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Learning Outcome 2: Technical and Design Aspects of the Theatre

Theatre students should have the ability to process and utilize the technical and design aspects of the theatre by demonstrating safe and effective stagecraft, communicating an idea in visual terms and by creating innovative theatrical designs.

Fundamentals of Theatrical Design

Scenic Design

Lighting Design

Costume Design

Theatrical Makeup Design

Rendering for the Theatre

Drafting for the Theatre

Scene Painting

Learning Outcome 3: Performance Aspects of Theatre

Theatre students should have the ability to process and utilize the performance aspects of the theatre by demonstrating competencies in acting, voice, movement and characterization.

Acting I

Learning Outcome 4: Theatre Production Skills

Application of effective, creative and collaborative production skills by synthesizing culture, theatre technology, design, and/or performance in the production and rehearsal process.

Stage Technology I

Stage Technology II

Stage Management

Theatre Practicum

Learning Outcome 5: Citizenship/Collegiality/Communication

Theatre students should demonstrate competency in communication, collaboration and creativity by being an effective member of our theatre company, our college and our university community.

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See Appendix A

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and Technology (18%) and Electives or a Minor in another subject (22%). The components and percentages of the degree comply with NAST Standards.

All required courses are documented for students and advisers on the Degree Checklists and plotted over eight semesters on the Curriculum Guides. The checklists and curriculum guides are available online, from Fulbright Advising, from the main Theatre Office and during each semester's advising fair. The Degree Checklist and Curriculum Guide for the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology) are provided in *Appendix E 5*.

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All required courses are documented for students and advisers on the Degree Checklists and plotted over eight semesters on the Curriculum Guides. The checklists and curriculum guides are available online, from Advising Services and from each student's theatre adviser. The Degree Checklist and Curriculum Guide for the BA: Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology) are provided in *Appendix E 5*.

Content, Methodology and Levels of Achievement

Content and methodology for the Bachelor of Arts: Theatre (Concentration in Design and Technology) degree meet NAST Standards, are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes. The varied contents and methodologies are best discussed by examining the theatre studies core then the design and technology emphasis.

The theatre core is foundational and addresses all five of the program's learning outcomes as it provides information on, and exercise and practice for the basic aspects of theatre. THTR 1223 - Introduction to Theatre provides hands-on experience in the artistic and technical aspects of theatre. Playwriting, directing, acting and design principles are discussed. Analytical, conceptual, and critical approaches to dramatic texts as well as genre identification are covered by lecture, discussion, writing and research in THTR 1423 – Script Analysis. The principle eras, major cultural forces, artistic movements, styles, playwrights (their influences and processes) and artists of the past are covered by lecture, discussion, writing, examination and research in the two theatre history surveys: THTR 4233 and THTR 4333. The elements of design and basic design

concepts are covered by demonstration, research, creative projects, practice and presentation in THTR 2313 – Fundamentals of Theatrical Design, THTR 1313 - Stage Technology I: Costumes and Makeup provides basic costume construction and basic principles of theatrical makeup application, THTR 1323 – Stage Technology II: Scenery and Lighting introduces students to the basics of scenic construction, shop tools and shop safety as well as basic stage lighting principles. Both Stage Tech I and Stage Tech II have a laboratory component, THTR 1311L and THTR 1321L respectively. Students apply their stage technology skills in the scene and costume shops and complete crew assignments in departmental productions. THTR 1883 - Acting I for Theatre Majors explores the physical, vocal, and imaginative processes required for performance of dramatic texts. Basic production skills and practices are demonstrated, supervised, practiced and synthesized during Production Practicum (THTR 3001) which guarantees each student's exposure to and involvement with the theatre production process. The final course that rounds out the Theatre Core is THTR 3683 Stage Management which relates issues of management and producing to the academic and professional process. Additionally, all theatre majors are subject to a Fulbright College writing requirement that can be fulfilled in THTR 4233, THTR 4333, THTR 4453 or THTR 4733.

Advanced coursework in Design and Technology begins with THTR 2513 - Drafting for the Theatre which covers basic technical drawing and graphic skills necessary to communicate design ideas to fellow artisans. Both production and design-oriented drafting will be explored using both hand drafting and computer techniques. THTR 3903 - Theatrical Makeup offers the techniques and skills of theatrical makeup and design involved in the creation and execution of character makeup for the stage. THTR 4123 - Rendering for the Theatre provides the fundamentals of visual communication for theatre in a variety of media and techniques. It includes the investigation of traditional drawing and painting methods and materials used by theatrical designers and the application of computer technology and software training in creating documents necessary to the theatrical process. THTR 4833 - Scene Painting is a studio class in painting techniques for the theatre. Exercises in color, textures, styles, and execution. THTR 3733 - Lighting Design is the study of the practical application and technology of stage lighting including history, electricity, conventional and moving lighting instruments, dimming systems, consoles and control systems and related paperwork. THTR 3213 - Costume Design explores the art and practice of stage costume design. Emphasis is on the expression of character through costume and the development of rendering and research skills. Finally, THTR 4653 - Scene Design studies theory and practice in the art of scenic design, including historical and contemporary styles and procedures. The Concentration in Design and Technology prepares graduates for the competitive entertainment industry, professional design fields and graduate studies.

Senior Progress Review:

All theatre majors are required, in the semester before graduation, to successfully complete the Senior Progress Review, a faculty assessment of each student's accomplishments in performance and production. This is currently the only assessment tool used by the department to evaluate a student's readiness for graduation and to assess the fulfillment of the Learning Outcomes outlined above. The department is in the process of defining new assessment avenues and will implement them beginning in the spring of 2017.

Underclassmen Juries:

In their freshman, sophomore, and junior years, students will be invited to have a conversation with the faculty team about class work, production work and college life in general. The student will be instructed to bring their up to date degree checklist, so that the team can make sure that the student is on the correct path for graduation.

The faculty teams will consist of at least one member from each theatre discipline, i.e. Performance, Design, Technology, Analysis and Criticism.

With teams of faculty in place at each assessment session, we will effectively speak to a student's coursework, backstage and crew assignments, onstage and production work and citizenship. The following outcomes can be used as a guide to determine whether the student is on track, falling behind or should be placed on probation. The faculty can also use the information learned to determine adjustments to courses and production assignments; i.e. are we teaching what we say we are teaching?

Students will sign up online for a time slot and will be sent an email confirming the slot and giving them a room assignment. The faculty teams will use the provided form to assess the student's progress as they matriculate through the program. To achieve the greatest degree of success, the Advising Fair will be a major part of the assessment process.

Results

Enrollment in the degree program concentration is unknown as it has only been in place since the Fall of 2016. Official figures will be available Fall of 2018. Unofficially, we have reason to believe we have approximately 30% of our theatre majors pursuing the Design & Technology Concentration.

See MDP B Heads Data Report 2016-17

Strengths and Areas for Improvement

The degree is committed to a liberal arts core, electives, has a comprehensive theatre core, a well-structured emphasis, good enrollment, a quality regional presence, actively engaged students, excellent facilities, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, and working and productive alumni.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion.

- Though there are always many performance students to audition and interview, design and technology students graduating from active high school programs are few. Competition for these students is extreme. Accordingly, University of Arkansas Theatre needs the scholarship resources and recruiting funds to compete for these prospective students.
- To take greater advantage of summer and/or career opportunities in theatre design and technology, the program needs to develop consistent strategies and funding to help design and technology students overcome barriers to summer work.

- The program does not have a consistent and formal means of evaluating alumni employment, activity and perspective. The program needs to develop and apply, with consistency, an alumni survey.
 - The program does not currently have adequate laboratory spaces for the undergraduate population.
 - Currently the theatre department facilities are spread across campus building and stretch to downtown. A more facility that allows theatre practitioners to collaborate more immediately is a pressing need.
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Graduate Studies – Master of Fine Arts – Theatre

For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Acting

See Appendix F 5.

Purpose

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Master of Fine of Arts Degree is to provide professional study and training to prepare the candidate for a professional career in the field of acting, as a professional actor or teacher of acting.

The theatre faculty provides candidates with the opportunity to develop their artistic voice by equipping them with the skills and tools to create and realize characters in a broad range of genres and roles. Students are given the opportunity to practice the process of acting through project work and performing in fully supported, high quality productions. MFA acting students learn in the classroom through rigorous project work and training in a variety of techniques. The program is sufficiently flexible to meet the individual needs of the student and offers strong guidance and mentorship while providing a wide range of classes, training and experiences. We believe in the importance of well-rounded future professional theatre practitioners and educators who have artistic, intellectual and practical skills that will allow them to be life-long engaged theatre artists.

The MFA in Acting degree follows state requirements, is grounded in the missions of the institution and theatre program, is supported by its curriculum, and assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every theatre class, production, and internship towards the program's learning outcomes. We provide the graduate MFA candidate in acting with the opportunities and experiences to be competitive in the job market by helping them develop a body of acting experience and training, a headshot and resume, a website, connections and interactions with theatre professionals, opportunities to teach, and mentorship in areas of specific interest that support a professional career.

Credit Requirement

An MFA in Acting requires three years of full-time graduate study and 60 semester credit hours.

Curricular Table

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Acting

Appendix A

The combined courses in acting meet the suggested percentages of study in a major area stated in the *NAST Handbook*. Study in major area—at least 65%; advanced, analytical or academically-oriented training—at least 10%. Acting classes in basic principles, modern styles, contemporary acting, Shakespeare, and period styles all include analytical training, as do the dramatic literature courses.

General Requirements

Content and methodology for the Master of Arts in Acting degree meets NAST Standards for an MFA in Acting, are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome 1: Broad Range of Acting Knowledge and Skills

The creative and artistic ability to successfully realize a role from a wide variety of periods, approaches, and playwrights, from script analysis to final performance.

Learning Outcome 2: Dramatic Analysis

Ability to analyze a play and character, and understand the ways that historical, economic, political, and social factors inform acting choices in creating a role.

Learning Outcome 3: Advanced Capability in Voice, Speech, and Movement

Ability to work specifically and healthily in creating the physical and vocal life of a character.

Learning Outcome 4: Working Knowledge of Historical, Critical, and Theoretical Content

The ability to apply theatrical research to the creation of a role.

Learning Outcome 5: A Body of Performance Work

Ability to successfully realize a role through numerous performance and production opportunities. Many students are provided an opportunity to perform at TheatreSquared, an Equity professional theatre, in either the regular season or in the summer new play festival.

Program Components and Curricular Structure

The candidate pursuing the MFA degree in Acting is required to take graduate level coursework that focuses on developing acting skills, as well as coursework that includes script and character analysis, voice and speech, movement, and a variety of periods, genres, and approaches. MFA acting candidates may also take classes that support their acting training in specific areas of interest, such as playwriting and directing. Interested and qualified MFA acting candidates get the opportunity to teach Acting I in their 2nd and/or 3rd year of study. Select students may also get the opportunity to teach intro level classes in areas of specialization. A typical candidate pursuing the MFA in Acting will have the opportunity to perform in one-to-two productions each semester. Students sometimes do public presentations of work developed in classes.

In the first year of study all acting MFA candidates enroll in Acting Studio: Principles (THTR 524v) which provides the foundation for Stanislavski based acting technique and script and character analysis; Voice and Speech I (THTR 5432) which focuses on building clear vocal production using proper breath support, the connection between breath and thought, learning to undo inadequate vocal habits, and vocal hygiene; Voice and Speech II (THTR 5552) which explores more closely the connection between breath support and volume, pitch, range, resonance and articulation; Alexander Technique, and study movement each semester through Alexander Technique and/or specific approaches such as Viewpoints, Stage Movement, or Period Styles of Dance. Students also take specialized acting studio courses that offer training in specific periods, genres and approaches, such as Modern Styles of Acting (Chekhov, Pinter, Brecht) or Contemporary Acting, which explores the ten most produced plays of the last year. Generally, in either the fall or spring semester, students take a one-hour dramatic literature course.

In the second year of study all acting MFA candidates take two semesters of Meisner Technique (THTR 548v and 549v), Voice and Speech III (THTR 5562) focusing on the International Phonetic Alphabet, and Voice and Speech IV (THTR 5572) an extension of the application of the IPA to the analysis of different accents of individuals for whom English is a second language; and study movement each semester through Alexander Technique and/or specific approaches such as Viewpoints, Stage Movement, Musical Theatre Dance, or Period Styles of Dance. Students also take specialized acting studio courses that offer training in specific periods, genres and approaches, such as Period Styles of Acting and Performing Shakespeare. Generally, in either the fall or spring semester, students take a one-hour dramatic literature course.

In the third year of study all acting MFA candidates take Voice and Speech V (THTR 591v), three hours of thesis focused on creating a one-person show, and three hours of capstone thesis focused on preparing the student to pursue professional goals through creation of a web-site, audition skills preparation, equipping them with headshot and resume, and interviews with industry professionals. Students also take specialized acting courses that offer training in specific periods, genres and approaches, such as Acting for the Camera. Students also have opportunities to take elective courses such as Directing, Playwriting, and Musical Theatre Performance. Third-year acting students are assigned a thesis role and work on an additional performance project. Generally, in either the fall or spring semester, students take a one-hour dramatic literature course.

Results

The MFA in Acting has been awarded to 61 candidates. Currently, 31 of these alumni are working full-time in acting and/or teaching. An additional 25 are working at least part-time as professional theatre artists. Five appear to have moved on to other careers.

Damian Dena (MFA Acting 2016)

Freelance Actor, Northwest Arkansas. Trike Theatre, The Classical Edge Theatre

Stephanie Faatz-Murry (MFA Acting 2016)

Assistant Professor of Movement/Musical Theatre at the University of North Dakota. Producing Artistic Director/Founder of North Dakota Shakespeare; Regional: Playhouse on the Square,

Charleston Stage, Black Hill Playhouse, Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival, Hampstead Stage, Nebraska Theatre Caravan, International: Gyeonggi English Village in South Korea.

Chris Hecke (MFA Acting 2016)

Regional: Synchronicity Theatre (*The One and Only Ivan*), Atlanta Shakespeare Company (*Comedy of Errors*).

Bill Rogers (MFA Acting 2016)

Regional: TheatreSquared (*Sons of the Prophet, Sundown Town, All The Way, Amadeus, Superior Donuts, Detroit*). Film: *Neapolitan, Gordon Family Tree*.

Britney Walker-Merritte (MFA Acting 2016)

Guadalupe Campos (MFA Acting 2016)

National: National Players Company Tour 68 (*The Giver, Hamlet, Grapes of Wrath*); Regional: TheatreSquared (*Amadeus, Hamlet*).

Laura Shatkus (MFA Acting 2015)

Chicago: 16th Street Theatre (*Accidental Rapture*), Muse of Fire (*Lady Macbethin Macbeth*), The Gift Theatre (*The Last Days of Judas Iscariot, Talk Radio*), *Beggars in the House of Plenty*. Regional: TheatreSquared (*Fall of the House, Amadeus, Intimate Apparel*), Arkansas New Play Festival (*Just Like Us, Don Chipotle*), Artist's Lab Theatre (*The New Now*), Trike Theatre (*The Case of The Missing Melody*) Founder of the all-girl improv group: 5 Months Pregnant, which performs regularly in Fayetteville. Founding member of ArkansasStaged, a group of professionals who perform at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville Arkansas (*Art Out Loud: Gertrude Stein, Picasso at the Lapine Agile*). Film: *Valley Inn* and *Gordon Family Tree*.

Stephanie Bignault (MFA Acting 2015)

Regional: TheatreSquared (*Great Expectation, Rapture, Blister, Burn,*); Film: *1 Corinthians 13* (documentary film – official selection Sundance Film Festival, Best Documentary winner at Seattle Int'l Film Festival, Audience Award SXSW Film Festival); *Speak Freely* (national commercial).

James Taylor Odom (MFA Acting 2015)

Actor in *God of Carnage* (Shadowland Stages); Sherlock in *Baskerville* (Cider Mill Playhouse); Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady* (Dutch Apple Theatre); *Mary Poppins* (Broadway Palm), *Murder for Two* (TheatreSquared).

Jason Shipman (MFA Acting 2015)

Debbie Banos (MFA Acting 2014)

Chicago: Urban Theatre Company (*Adoration of the Old Woman*), Halcyon Theatre (*Fefu and Her Friends*), Pulse Theatre (*A Streetcar Named Desire*), *Babes with Blades (Titus Andronicus)*, Eleusis Collective Theatre (*King Lear*), Juan Francisco Villa's *Don Chipotle*.

Kieran Cronin (MFA Acting 2014)

Regional: TheatreSquared (*Good People, Around the World in 80 Days, Great Expectations*), Arkansas New Play Festival (*B Side Myself*). Film: *Brother* (short).

Melissa Maramara (MFA Acting 2014)

Instructor, Ateneo de Manila University. New York: United Solo International Theatre Festival (*Clytemnestra*, *Love Liz*). Regional: University of Missouri guest artist (*Clytemnestra*), TheatreSquared (*4000 Miles*), Arkansas New Play Festival (*Don Chipotle*); International: New Voice Company (*Stop Kiss*, *The Vagina Monologues*), Tanghalang Pilipino (*Love's Labour's Lost*, *Hamlet*), Tanghalang Ateneo (*Othello*, *Don Juan*, *Taming of the Shrew*); Film: *Bitukand Manok*, *Maging Akin Muli*, *Pepot Superstar*. TV: *Rosalka*, *Lobo*, *Kay Tagal Kang Hinintay*, Interviewed on CNN Philippines' *Leading Women*; actor: *The Dressing Room*, *Purgatorio*, and *People's Improv Theater* (director: *Iphigenia and Other Daughters*, *Macbeth*, and *Tartuffe*)

Echo Sibley (MFA Acting 2014)

International: Festival Internazionale di Valle Christi, Italy (*The Tempest*, *Broadway Night*, *Amore in Musica Sotto le Stelle*). *Flippin' Channels in the Estrogen Zone*—original one person show performed at the Crisis Art Festival, Lawrence Arts Center, Chicago Sketchfest, Public House Theatre, Chicago.

Published Objectives

All objectives for the degree is published on the University of Arkansas website. All objectives for graduate courses is available through UA Connect and found in all course syllabi. See <https://uaconnect.uark.edu/>

Advisement

Each semester, students are advised on required courses for the MFA in Acting, as well as possible electives, in accordance with a six semester Plan of Study implemented by the head of acting. Consideration is also made for the professional and personal goals of the MFA candidate. See Appendix F 5.

Student Evaluation and Retention

At the end of each semester, the performance faculty evaluates each MFA Acting candidate in the areas of performance-work, class-work, professional conduct, and progress. Students are given both oral and written critiques in private meetings.

See Appendix F 8.

Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Strengths:

- A high percentage of our MFA acting alumni are working professionally in the field.
- Our program offers strong acting training that prepares the student in a wide array of periods and approaches.
- We closely mentor and evaluate each student.
- We have a strong guest artist series that augments the normal course offerings.
- Our program offers an intimate and supportive environment that encourages artistry and growth.
- We have devoted and talented faculty members.

Areas for Improvement:

- Facilities are lacking. We don't have enough space for classes or productions. Access to facilities we do have is limited.
 - MFA acting candidates are often over-extended between classes, assistantship responsibilities, and productions.
 - We would benefit by formalizing relationships and performance opportunities for our students with professional theatres.
 - We do not have a diverse faculty that can serve as role-models and provide structure for a diverse student body.
-

For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Directing

See Appendix F 5.

Purpose

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Master of Fine of Arts Degree is to provide professional study and training to prepare candidates for professional careers in theatre directing. While we welcome students who ultimately pursue teaching careers, we're particularly interested in training talented and committed directors as future leaders of the American theatre, potentially becoming artistic directors of their own companies or regional theatres, as well as spearheading original works and adaptations in collaboration with other theatre artists. As our student directors collaborate with their peers as well as with our faculty, we seek articulate, educated, and introspective students who bring a body of directing, theatre, and/or performing arts experience. We actively recruit students from around the nation and the world, with recent students hailing from Virginia, New York, Syria, Arkansas, Texas, Italy, Colombia, South Korea, and Kansas. Our directors are passionate to learn, grow, and embrace challenges. They are engaged, curious citizens, eager to create art that awakens our daily lives and challenges the status quo.

The theatre faculty provides directing candidates opportunities to develop their unique artistic voices, equipping them with the skills and experiences to become confident and imaginative storytellers. Directors prepare for production work by learning and practicing script analysis and research, communication methods for collaborating, organization and time management of rehearsals, and exploring the visual and aural tools of our art form. The student directors' primary focus here is on their work with actors, helping them to discover, distill, and communicate story, relationships, and character. To that end, directors take many of the classes offered in the graduate acting track and lead our M.F.A. actors in directing studio classes throughout their three years of study. In classroom and production experiences we also train directors to collaborate with an array of theatre artists, including: scenic, costume, lighting, sound, properties, and projection designers; playwrights; dance and fight choreographers; music directors; stage managers; technical directors; and business managers.

It is our hope that artistic relationships forged with their peers here will endure well beyond their graduate studies.

Students practice the process of directing a play with focused, rigorous classes that cover a wide range of historical and contemporary genres and styles. They helm productions that include new plays, devised theatre, and extant scripts, in our studio, black box, and proscenium spaces.

We value the flexibility of our program, striving to meet the individual needs and future goals of our students and offering strong guidance and mentorship, while providing a wide range of classes, training and production experiences.

The MFA in Directing degree follows state requirements, is grounded in the missions of the institution and theatre program, is supported by its curriculum, and is assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty.

Credit Requirement

An MFA in Directing requires three years of full-time graduate study and 60 semester credit hours. As part of this course, they are required to assistant direct and/or stage manage, and direct at least one production in each of their three years of study, at least one of which is a new work in collaboration with a graduate playwright, and at least one of which is a fully-supported and designed show.

Curricular Table

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Directing

See Appendix A

The combined courses in directing and affiliated areas meet the suggested percentages of study in a major area as stated in the *NAST Handbook*, with the exception of the history of theatre and critical analysis.

Studio or related classes: 60%; Other studies in theatre: 40%.

General Requirements

Content and methodology for the Master of Arts in Directing degree meets NAST Standards for Directing and are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome 1: Develop and Guide Productions

The creative and artistic ability to develop an approach to directing a production from concept to finished product. The ability to develop and guide fully mounted productions on a wide variety of plays from statement of concept through public performance.

Learning Outcome 2: Dramatic Analysis

Ability to analyze a play and understand the ways that a playwright uses structure, language, images, metaphors, relationships, and characterizations to lead to three-dimensional choices in theatrical storytelling. Ability to integrate advanced understanding and capabilities in play analysis, performance, and design in creating the concept of a production.

Learning Outcome 3: Dramatic Literature and Theatre History

A broad knowledge of dramatic literature and theatre history, including a demonstrated ability to undertake inquiry, investigation, or research associated with various aspects of performance and production.

Ability to use appropriate resources to research text references, cultural and political world of the play, critical commentaries, production history and reviews, in service of making production choices.

Learning Outcome 4: Theatre Collaborative Skills

Application of effective, creative and collaborative production skills through working with actors, designers, and theatre technicians, and observing peer, faculty, and professional directors in creating theatrical productions. The ability to work with actors and designers in the processes of production, including the ability to conduct rehearsals effectively.

Learning Outcome 5: Technical Skills in Staging and Design Principles

The ability to use picturization and composition to create three-dimensional stories and relationships unfolding in time and space. An understanding of basic design principles and of aural and visual comprehension in the theatre and other dramatic media.

Learning Outcome 6: Communication Skills

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively through spoken, written, and visual presentations. An understanding of all of the theatre arts and crafts at a sufficient level of knowledge to communicate with other artists and producers and to make informed critical judgments in all areas of the theatre.

Program Components and Curricular Structure

The candidate pursuing the MFA degree in Directing is required to take graduate level coursework that focuses on developing analytical, staging, communication, and collaborative skills. A typical candidate pursuing directing will have the opportunity to direct a minimum of four mounted productions. MFA directing candidates also serve as a stage manager and/or assistant director.

Throughout their six semesters study, MFA directing candidates take either the directing studio (five times) or musical theatre directing course (once), which provide the foundation for understanding the process of analyzing scripts, conceiving an approach, practicing the art of collaborating with actors, and staging historical and contemporary styles of theatre. Realism is taught in the first semester of training, with subsequent coursework selected from Shakespeare, Absurdism, Brecht, Greek or Roman Theatre, and contemporary theatre, along with occasional specialized offerings such as adapting non-theatrical material, and Italian or Spanish Theatre. Courses in acting, including the first-year acting studio, help directors learn the actors' process. Directors are invited to take classes in Stage Speech, Meisner, and other acting and design classes that might meet their needs and future goals. In addition, directors take symposium classes in rotating collaboration with their peers in various design specialty areas (lighting, scenery, and costume design).

Over their 3-year course of study, the directors will also take Creating a One-Person Show, the History of Décor, Viewpoints, Devised Theatre, and electives that meet individual needs and goals, as determined by the head of directing with input from the student.

In their first year, directors typically direct a one-act or full-length realistic play with limited production support; the focus is on script interpretation and analysis and collaborating with actors. In their second year, directors expand their horizons to more complex styles, directing a full-length play that typically includes a collaborative process with two or more designers, along with a limited production budget and technical support. In their third year, directors mount a full-length thesis production, usually on our mainstage, with a full collaborative process and department support. The thesis production requires extensive research, analysis, and subjective journaling about the artistic experience, all of which result in a thesis paper. In addition, in their second and/or third year, directors work with a playwright on the production of a new play and/or a staged reading. As time permits, directors are encouraged to work on independent projects both within our department and in the community.

In their first year of study, directors serve as either assistant directors or stage managers for one of our mainstage shows, enabling them to grow by observing experienced directors while learning about our department's production processes. Recent student directors have also had opportunities to assistant direct at TheatreSquared, our acclaimed local professional theatre. One of our students also choreographed a mainstage production there while others have served as director or dramaturg for their annual new play festival. One of our M.F.A. directors was recently TheatreSquared's resident assistant director and will be directing a mainstage show later this season. Students are encouraged to pursue assistantships and internships in alignment with their passions and needs; the graduate school provides modest financial support for some opportunities, including select directing labs and workshops.

Directors are given regular, in-depth feedback on all aspects of their work, including scenes directed in ongoing studio classes. The faculty directing mentor typically attends two or three rehearsals at various phases of each production process and provides written notes and oral feedback. Following the productions, the faculty mentor discusses the processes and end results, as well as student accomplishments and potential growth areas. In addition, the directing mentor requests and collates anonymous, aggregate feedback from the participating actors and stage manager, which is then shared in writing with the student director and reviewed with the mentor. This candid assessment provides invaluable, immediate, and direct feedback, often suggesting areas for future growth. Following the second and third year projects there are also post-mortems with the design and production teams. In addition, student directors are urged to visit privately with design and production collaborators and their mentors to glean further insights on their collaboration processes.

In preparation for initial design presentations for their second and third year projects, students meet with the directing mentor to share and explore the play's themes, ideas, challenges, and artistic possibilities, practicing aloud how they might inspire collaborators, getting peer and mentor feedback, revising their approach, and then practicing aloud again. Students review audition and callback methods and game plans with the faculty mentor. Cast lists are reviewed by the head of acting and the department chair prior to posting, to ensure departmental needs are appropriately met.

All directors are awarded half-time assistantships, covering tuition and providing a generous stipend. In addition, academically qualified directors are eligible to apply for a three-year

fellowship. When students are directing, production preparation and rehearsal time are counted as a significant part of their assistantship hours, as their work provides opportunities for other students to engage in productions. Additional assistantship work required of the directors has typically included helping with grading and attendance for large Introduction to Theatre sections and, more recently, helping with show house management. In the past, directors occasionally taught Directing 1 or Stage Combat.

Our faculty meets at the end of every semester to evaluate student learning and achievement in every theatre class and production, which results are then shared with directing students in writing and reviewed in private with the directing mentor.

Results

The following are the MFA directing students and graduates since 2004, with select credits:

Jeremiah Albers (current directing student; anticipated graduation 2018)

- Assistant Director, TheatreSquared, *Fun Home*, 2017
- Artistic Director, Generic Theatre, Norfolk, Virginia
- Theatre Editor and Critic, *AltDaily*
- Producer, Collaboration for the Advancement of Secondary Theatre
- Playwright (book and lyrics), *Cuff Me: The Unauthorized Fifty Shades of Grey Musical*

Cole Wimpee (current directing student; anticipated graduation 2018)

- Assistant Director, *Detroit*, TheatreSquared, 2017
- Artistic Director, Aztec Economy, New York
- Freelance Director and Actor
- Member & Participant: Lincoln Center Directors' Lab; Directors' Lab Chicago; Directors' Lab West
- Associate, Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers

Kholoud Sawaf (M.F.A. in Directing, 2015)

- Director, *Vietgone*, TheatreSquared, 2018
- DramaLeague Fellowship Recipient, 2017 Classical Director Fellowship for Artists of Color
- Resident Assistant Director, TheatreSquared, 2016-2017
- Directing Fellowship, Manhattan Theatre Club, 2016
- Artistic Assistantship in Directing, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 2016
- Recipient, \$250,000 grant from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Arts, in conjunction with TheatreSquared,
to develop her vision for a new adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*
- Associate, Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers

Brandyn Smith (M.F.A. in Directing 2015)

- Assistant Professor of Dance, Southern Arkansas University, 2017-Present
- Assistant Professor and Director of Theatre, University of Arkansas – Pine Bluff, 2016-2017
- Choreographer, *Next to Normal*, TheatreSquared, 2013
- Freelance Director and Choreographer

Esteban Arevalo Ibañez (M.F.A. in Directing 2012)

- Artistic Intern, Collaboration Theatre, Chicago
- Freelance Director, including: *Washed Away*, Chicago Fringe Festival; *Hell's Kitchen*, arc/TEXT Festival;
- American Theatre Company; Prologue Theatre Company
- Fulbright Scholar in Spain (from Colombia)

Kiara Pipino (M.F.A. in Directing 2012)

- Assistant Professor of Theatre, King University
- Artistic Director, Festival Internazionale Valle Christi
- Freelance Director, including SOLO Festival, NYC
- Playwright, *After All* (fully produced reading at Playwrights Horizons) & *Washed Away* (Chicago Fringe Festival)

Published Objectives

All objectives for the degree are published on the University of Arkansas website. All objectives for graduate courses are available through UA Connect and found in all course syllabi.

Advisement

All required courses are documented for students and mentor by following a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study is plotted over six semesters. Each semester the graduate directing candidate meets with the head of directing to review artistic and educational progress. The Plan of Study is reviewed and adjustments may be made to reflect the students' needs and future goals.

Student Evaluation and Retention

At the end of each semester all MFA directing candidates are evaluated by the faculty, whose thoughts, concerns, and praises are shared by the head of directing in a private meeting with the student. Students are given both oral and written critiques. As noted above, directing students are provided on-going classroom and production evaluations for all of their studio classes and productions.

Strengths and Areas for Improvement

The degree is committed to providing professional training in directing extant historical and contemporary scripts, with additional training and practice in collaborating on new works with playwrights, creating devised theatre, and adapting non-theatrical material for the stage. It has a well-structured selection of directing and acting courses, process classes with designers, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, synthesis with our colleagues in other departments, and working and productive alumni. Great strengths of the program include individualized feedback and instruction, and flexible classes and course content.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion:

- We currently do not have sufficient rehearsal spaces to stage productions on a floor plan that's the same footprint as the performance venue, which differs from a professional model and inhibits training.
- We expect that the current renovation of our Global Campus Theatre will significantly improve rehearsal space access and serve as a focal point for MFA directing training and productions;
- Our directors historically have had insufficient numbers of collaboration & process classes with designers and playwrights. This has recently improved, and we're currently in the process of strategizing how we might continue to make inroads.
- Directors occasionally have insufficient numbers of peer actors available to collaborate in studio scenes; while we're experimenting with new techniques, such as actors' assistantships enabling them to serve directing studio classes, opportunities to practice staging scenes with 3 or more actors remains limited. In addition, there's no successful strategy yet for how to recruit experienced, undergraduate upperclassmen to participate in studio scenes.
- We do not yet offer sufficient numbers of classes in theatre history and critical analysis.

We're exploring the pros and cons of admitting an average of three rather than two directors, which was our model until 2012. Prior to then, we recruited two directors every other year.

For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Playwriting

See Appendix F 5.

Purpose

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Master of Fine of Arts Degree in Playwriting is to prepare the candidate for a professional career in playwriting—as a playwright writing for the theatre, the small or big screen, and as a dramaturge working to support the creation of new work for the American stage.

The theatre faculty provides candidates with the opportunity to grow and amplify their artistic voice by equipping them with the skills and tools to become master storytellers and bold dealers in personal truth. Students are given multiple opportunities to practice the process of building a new play from conception to completion, working peer-to-peer with fellow collaborators including: directors, actors, and designers. This process is repeated throughout the writer's three-year course of study at varying levels, from concert- and staged-readings through to full production. Building foundational knowledge in dramatic form and structure is a key component to a playwright's education, including exposure to a diverse array of approaches to dramatic theory and script analysis. MFA Playwrights learn through rigorous writing workshops on a variety of special topics to build personal resiliency, develop the core strength to overcome inhibition and self-doubt, and embrace a fearless form of personal expression—one rooted in fierce personal investment while engaging with the larger cultural dialogue in which their work challenges and confronts. The program is intentionally intimate, allowing for flexibility to meet

the individual needs of each student and for intensive and individualized mentorship. Through a wide-range of topical classes, collaborative experiences, and professional development opportunities we prepare our students for the unknowns of the professional world, by making them confident in the power of their voice, while being capable to articulate their vision, triage critical feedback, and effectively improvise with collaborators. We believe the next generation of playwrights are instigators of action and engagement artists, with a mix of practical skills and personal prowess to be artistic leaders on a mission to transform hearts and minds.

The MFA in Playwriting degree follows state requirements, is grounded in the missions of the institution and theatre program, is supported by its curriculum, and assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every theatre class, production, contest and internship towards the program's learning outcomes. We provide the graduate MFA candidate in Playwriting with the opportunities and experiences to be competitive in the job market through developing a portfolio of work, a professional resume, internships and experience in dramaturgy, as well as experiences collaborating in all levels of production.

Credit Requirement

An MFA in Playwriting requires three years of full-time graduate study and 60 semester credit hours. As part of this course of study, one professional internship is required.

Curricular Table

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Playwriting

See Appendix A

The combined courses in Playwriting and affiliated areas more than meet the suggested percentages of study in a major area stated in the *NAST Handbook*. Study in major area 50% playwriting exclusively + 6 hours of thesis, 25% Script Analysis and Theory, 15% Associated Theatre Classes, and 10% Electives.

General Requirements

Content and methodology for the Master of Fine Arts in Playwriting degree meets NAST Standards for Playwriting and are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome 1: Advanced Technical Skills in Dramatic Construction

Understanding of a broad variety of dramatic strategies, forms, and structures, and the practice to put that knowledge into practice in the construction of a writer's own dramatic text.

Learning Outcome 2: Dramatic Writing

The artistic ability to write and develop new plays from inception concept through a post-production draft.

Learning Outcome 3: Script Development and Process

Provide practical hands-on experience in the development of new dramatic work, including integrating outside resources and ideas relevant to the specific work and a focus on strategies and theatrical processes to help the writer acquire the skills to evolve and grow their work.

Learning Outcome 4: Dramatic Analysis

Develop the ability to analyze a play's structure, unlock the strategies the writer uses in creating the work, and develop the dramaturgical skill to articulate how a variety of plays function and create theatrical meaning. Real-world dramaturgical opportunities provide opportunities to put this knowledge into practice.

Learning Outcome 5: History, Theory, and Criticism

Understand how the historical, critical, dramaturgical, and theoretical content informs how and why plays have been made since the inception of the dramatic form.

Learning Outcome 6: Production Opportunities

Provide writers the opportunity to understand and deepen their work through the crucible of full production, where elements are fully realized and staged with actors and designers contributing to bring the play from the page to the stage.

Learning Outcome 7: Collaboration

Develop effective, creative, and collaborative skills through working shoulder-to-shoulder with peer and professional directors, designers, dramaturges, actors, and technicians in the development of the writer's work.

Program Components and Curricular Structure

The candidate pursuing the MFA degree in Playwriting is required to take graduate level coursework that focuses on developing skills in dramatic writing, as well as coursework that focuses on script analysis, theory and history, and develop effective collaboration and communications skills through integrated classes in devising and adapting. A typical candidate pursuing playwriting will have the opportunity to have one fully mounted production of their thesis play, with multiple opportunities for development opportunities in workshop readings, staged-readings, barebones productions and crafting a solo-performance. MFA Playwriting students can also serve as co-collaborators in areas of interest, such as acting, directing, devising, or design.

In the first year of study all playwriting MFA candidates are required to enroll in THTR 5533 Playwriting Workshop, which provides the foundation for developing the skills to write a play. The Playwriting Workshop repeats every semester, and topics vary in each semester focusing on particular styles and artistic movements, as well as different types of dramatic writing. The Workshop is a combination of reading, analysis, and writing allowing writers to experiment in a variety of styles and forms. The core of the workshop focuses on the development of the Playwrights evolving work, and writers have multiple opportunities to hear the work out loud by MFA actors, receive critical feedback, and continual opportunities to revise. Other special topics including Writing for Television, Screenwriting, Solo-Performer, and Adaptation are offered within a three-year rotation. In the first year, each candidate in Playwriting, takes Dramatic Literature, to develop script analysis skills and deepen understanding of dramatic form and structure and historical and theoretical frameworks. First year Playwrights, take Devising Theatre, which gives them opportunities in researching and creating a devised piece with peer directors, writers, and performers, thus helping acquire collaboration skills and strategies.

Graduate course work in related areas, such as Acting, Directing, History occur in the first year and one elective can be taken. At the end of the first year, each MFA candidate will have a rehearsed, public reading of a new play, including critical response feedback.

In the second year of study all Playwriting MFA candidates are required to enroll in the Playwriting Workshop, which emphasis will shift by topic. The Playwriting Workshop continual focus is on furthering playwriting skills through practice of writing new work. In the second semester, the Workshop will focus on practical work on a new play with peer directors and actors, culminating in a public presentation of a barebones production of a work developed in earlier workshops. Additional Theatre History, Theory, and Dramatic Literature classes are encouraged as needed, as are related courses in design, production, and performance. One elective can be taken.

In the third year of study all Playwriting MFA candidates enroll in a third year of the THTR 5533 Playwriting Workshop which focuses on additional special topics, including writing for television and rewriting. The final year of the Playwriting Workshop focuses on developing a professional portfolio of dramatic works. MFA candidates can with the advice of their mentor can take two elective courses. Students have taken courses in script analysis, history/theory, acting/directing/design, and other areas of interest. All Playwriting candidates enroll in six hours of thesis (THTR600v) and are required to write a thesis. The fully documented thesis is a full length play with an attending process narrative, detailing their process of creating and the production of a full-length play.

At the end of the spring semester the MFA Playwriting candidates present their work both to the informally to the public and formally to the Performance Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

All MFA Playwriting candidates must complete a minimum of one professional internship.

Results

Currently approximately 80% of all MFA Playwriting candidates who have completed the program and earned an MFA degree in Playwriting are working in theatre or an allied profession.

Robert Hart (MFA Playwriting 2015)

Brittany Taylor (MFA Playwriting 2015)

Rachel Washington (MFA Playwriting 2015)

Larry Mitchell (MFA Playwriting 2014)

Clinnesha Sibley (MFA Playwriting 2014)

Published Objectives

All objectives for the degree is published on the University of Arkansas website. All objectives for graduate courses is available through UA Connect and found in all course syllabi. See <https://uaconnect.uark.edu/>

Advisement

All required courses are documented for students and mentor by following a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study is plotted over six semesters. Each semester the graduate Playwriting candidate meets with the head of Playwriting. The Plan of Study is reviewed and adjustments are made to reflect the courses offered both in the Department of Theatre as well as courses offered in other departments such as Poetry, Fiction, and Translation. Consideration is also made for the professional and personal and goals of the MFA candidate.

See Appendix F 5

Student Evaluation and Retention

At the end of each spring semester all MFA Playwriting candidates present a finished work they have completed during the academic year both informally to the public and formally to the Performance Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques. See Appendix 8

Strengths and Areas for Improvement

The degree is committed to providing professional training in playwriting with additional training in dramaturgy. It has a well-structured selection of writing and theory courses, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, synthesis with our colleagues in other departments, and working and productive alumni.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion.

- We need to grow the size of the student MFA Playwright population by 100%.
- We need more opportunities in special topics such as Screenwriting and writing for Young audiences.
- We need diverse guests to mentor MFA playwrights and provide new strategies in creating new work.
- We need flexibility in the production schedule to accommodate the development of new works by the MFA playwrights.
- We need more interaction between the design and performance area, and generally commit to meaningful interactions/connections between students in individual areas.
- We need to build meaningful connections with other disciplines where narrative is a key component: creative writing, music, game-design.
- The program does not have a consistent and formal means of evaluating alumni employment, activity and perspective. The program needs to develop and apply, with consistency, an alumni survey.

For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Costume Design

See Appendix F 5.

Purpose

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Master of Fine Arts Degree is to provide professional study and training to prepare the candidate for a professional career in the costuming field as a costume designer, costume technologist, costume shop manager or a teacher of costume design and/or technology.

The theatre faculty provides candidates with the opportunity to develop their artistic voice by equipping them with the skills and tools to become visual storytellers. Students are given the opportunity to practice the process of taking a design from an idea to reality through project work and fully supported productions. Technical understanding and skills in producing costumes is also stressed. MFA costume students learn in the classroom through rigorous project work and through real world application by producing high quality productions. The program is sufficiently flexible to meet the individual needs of the student and offers strong guidance and mentorship while providing a wide range of classes, training and experiences. We believe in the importance of well-rounded future professional theatre practitioners and educators who have artistic, intellectual and practical skills that will allow them to be life-long engaged theatre artists.

The MFA in Costume Design degree follows state requirements, is grounded in the missions of the institution and theatre program, is supported by its curriculum, and assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every theatre class, production, jury and internship towards the program's learning outcomes. We provide the graduate MFA candidate in costume with the opportunities and experiences to be competitive in the job market through developing— a portfolio of work, a resume a website, internships as well as providing design and technical assignments.

Credit Requirement

An MFA in Costume Design requires three years of full-time graduate study and 60 semester credit hours. As part of this course of study, one professional internship is required.

Curricular Table

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Costume Design

See Appendix A

The combined courses in costume design and affiliated areas more than meet the suggested percentages of study in a major area stated in the *NAST Handbook*. Study in major area (costume exclusively + 6 hours of thesis) 50%, Associated design courses 25%, Script Analysis and History of Décor 10% and Electives 15%

General Requirements

Content and methodology for the Master of Arts in Costume Design degree meets NAST Standards for Costume Design and are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome 1: Design and Implementation

The creative and artistic ability to develop a costume design of a production from concept to finished product.

Learning Outcome 2: Dramatic Analysis

Ability to analyze a play and understand the ways that historical, critical and theoretical content informs the visual choices in creating costume design for a production.

Learning Outcome 3: Theatre Collaborative Skills

Application of effective, creative and collaborative production skills through working with directors, peer designers and theatre technicians in creating theatrical productions.

Learning Outcome 4: Technical Skills in Costume Production

The ability to interpret a designer's sketch and transform it from a two-dimensional idea to a three-dimensional costume through the methods of flat patterning, draping and costume construction techniques.

Learning Outcome 5: Communication Skills

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively through visual presentations, spoken and written communications.

Program Components and Curricular Structure

The candidate pursuing the MFA degree in Costume is required to take graduate level coursework that focuses on developing design skills and technical costume production skills, as well as coursework that focuses on script analysis, history and developing presentations and communication skill. A typical candidate pursuing costume design will have the opportunity to design a minimum of two mounted productions and a maximum of five. MFA costume candidates can also serve as a costume design assistant, costume shop manager, cutter/drafter, first hand or crafts artisan, or makeup designer.

In the first year of study all costume MFA candidates are required to enroll in Costume Design I (THTR 5213) which provides the foundation for understanding the process of designing costumes and script analysis as well as implementing the elements of design and historical and evocative research. The course in Costume Shop Management (THTR 5243) focuses on the organization, communication and time management skills needed by both technicians and designers when collaborating to produce costumes. In the first year of enrolling in Costume Technology Studio (THTR 5293) the graduate student focuses on the skills and techniques need to construct costumes with an emphasis on analyzing the costume sketch and creating costumes by employing the flat pattern and draping method. Graduate coursework in Script Analysis and Theatrical Makeup is also required and one elective can be taken.

In the second year of study all costume MFA candidates are required to enroll in Costume Design Studio (THTR 5283) which focuses on furthering costume design skill and artistry by concentrating on historical research and designing period costumes. (THTR 5123) Rendering for the Theatre provides the opportunity for students to improve painting and rendering skills to effectively communicate design ideas and (THTR 5913) Special Topics in Digital Tools and Concepts provides the design candidate with training in employing digital tools to do the same. The second year of Costume Technology Studio (5293) focuses on the skills and techniques need to construct period underpinnings as well as creating historical silhouettes by employing the draping method. (THTR 5913) Special Topics in Portfolio Development focuses on creating a professional quality portfolio, resume, cover letter, website, and other promotional materials as well as providing the student with opportunities to present their work in a formal interview setting. In (THTR 5143) The History of Décor the graduate design candidate studies the changing styles in art, architecture and furniture from the Greeks to modern day.

In the third year of study all costume MFA candidates enroll in Costume Design Studio (THTR 5283) which focuses on furthering costume design skill and artistry by focusing on contemporary scripts and reinterpreting period scripts. The final year of Costume Technology Studio (THTR 5293) focuses on costume craft skills which can include millinery, puppetry, armor making and fabric dyeing and painting. MFA candidates can with the advice of their mentor can take two elective courses. Students have taken courses in figure drawing, textiles, computer aided drafting and accounting. All costume candidates enroll in six hours of thesis (THTR600v) and are required to write a thesis. The fully documented thesis can focus their process of designing a mounted production or their role as a costume shop manager or cutter draper for a production. Finally, all costume graduate candidates enroll in Special Topics: Costume Exam (THTR 5913) in which the student is given the semester to independently design the costumes for a script with an emphasis on the process from initial idea to sketch. An all-day on-site exam is given in which the focus is on solving problems and finding creative solutions.

At the end of each fall semester all MFA Costume candidates present the work they have complete during the fall semester in a public jury modeled on the USITT Young Designers' Forum. At the end of the spring semester the MFA Costume candidates present their work both to the informally to the public and formally to the Design and Technical Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

All MFA costume design candidates must complete a minimum of one professional internship.

Results

Currently all MFA costume candidates who have completed the program and earned an MFA degree in Costume are working in theatre or an allied profession.

Cayla Greer (MFA Costume Design 2015)

Freelance draper & stitcher for Texas State Fair, Shakespeare Dallas' *King Lear*, SMU, The Kitchen Dog Theatre and designer for *Fame* for the Jr. Players

Nicole Thompson (MFA Costume Design 2015)

Costume Shop Manager

Kelly Henry (MFA Costume Design 2013)

Instructional Assistant costume shop manager & designer at Tarrant County College and Freelance Costume Designer

Published Objectives

All objectives for the degree is published on the University of Arkansas website. All objectives for graduate courses is available through UA Connect and found in all course syllabi. See <https://uaconnect.uark.edu/>

Advisement

All required courses are documented for students and mentor by following a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study is plotted over six semesters. Each semester the graduate costume candidate meets

with the head of costume design. The Plan of Study is reviewed and adjustments are made to reflect the courses offered both in the Department of Theatre as well as courses offered in other departments such as Art and the Apparel studies program. Consideration is also made for the professional and personal and goals of the MFA candidate.

See Appendix F 5.

Student Evaluation and Retention

At the end of each fall semester all MFA Costume candidates present the work they have complete during the fall semester in a public jury modeled on the USITT Young Designers' Forum. At the end of the spring semester the MFA Costume candidates present their work both to the informally to the public and formally to the Design and Technical Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

See Appendix F 7 & 8

Strengths and Areas for Improvement

The degree is committed to providing professional training in costume design with additional training in costume production. It has a well-structured selection of design and technology studio courses, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, synthesis with our colleagues in other departments, and working and productive alumni.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion.

- We currently do not have adequate space or room for more equipment to produce the costumes required for our productions or to teach the students enrolled in the required coursework.
- The Fine Arts Building and the costume shop space is not ADA compliant.
- We currently are woefully understaffed for the amount of costumes we produce. This is further exacerbated by our inability to attract graduate students who serve as the major workforce in the costume shop.
- Peer institutions in our region have at least 3, if not more faculty and staff members that make up their costume department: Costume Design faculty, Costume Technology faculty, Costume Shop Manager, and other specialists who focus on draping, wigs, or crafts.
- We are unable to attract a high caliber graduate student due to our limited staff and space issues.
- The program does not have a consistent and formal means of evaluating alumni employment, activity and perspective. The program needs to develop and apply, with consistency, an alumni survey.

For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Lighting Design

See Appendix F 5.

Purpose

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Master of Fine of Arts Degree is to provide professional study and training to prepare the candidate for a professional career in the entertainment design field as a lighting designer, assistant lighting designer, lighting programmer, production electrician or a teacher of lighting design and/or technology.

The theatre faculty provides candidates with the opportunity to develop their artistic voice by equipping them with the skills and tools to become visual storytellers. Students are given the opportunity to practice the process of taking a design from an idea to reality through project work as well as fully supported productions. The primary focus of the design program is on design training and opportunities but, the technical skills necessary to support a lighting design including programming, technology, and electrician work are all stressed. The program is sufficiently flexible to meet the individual needs of the student and offers strong guidance and mentorship while providing a wide range of classes, training and experiences. We believe in the importance of well-rounded future professional theatre practitioners and educators who have artistic, intellectual and practical skills that will allow them to be life-long engaged theatre artists.

The MFA in Lighting Design degree follows state requirements, is grounded in the missions of the institution and theatre program, is supported by its curriculum, and assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every theatre class, production, jury and internship towards the program's learning outcomes. We provide the graduate MFA candidate in lighting design with the opportunities and experiences to be competitive in the job market through developing a strong portfolio of work, a resume, a website, professional internships, as well as providing design and technical assignments throughout their 3-year residency.

Credit Requirement

An MFA in Lighting Design requires three years of full-time graduate study and 60 semester credit hours. As part of this course of study, one professional internship is required.

Curricular Table

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Lighting Design

See Appendix A

The combined courses in lighting design and affiliated areas more than meet the suggested percentages of study in a major area stated in the *NAST Handbook*. Study in major area (lighting exclusively + 6 hours of thesis) 50%, Associated design courses 25%, Script Analysis and Criticism 10% and Electives 15%

General Requirements

Content and methodology for the Master of Arts in Lighting Design degree meets NAST Standards for Lighting Design and are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome 1: Design and Implementation

The creative and artistic ability to develop the lighting design of a production from concept to finished product.

Learning Outcome 2: Dramatic Analysis

Ability to analyze a play and understand the ways that historical, critical and theoretical content informs the visual choices in creating the lighting design for a production.

Learning Outcome 3: Theatre Collaborative Skills

Application of effective, creative and collaborative production skills through working with directors, peer designers and theatre technicians in creating theatrical productions.

Learning Outcome 4: Technical Skills in Lighting Production

Ability to read, understand, and create technical drawings (Light Plot, Section, associated paperwork) using contemporary digital methods of delivery, a thorough knowledge of the technical equipment and tools, and an understanding of the systems involved in creating and executing a lighting design.

Learning Outcome 5: Communication Skills

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively through visual presentations, spoken and written communications.

Program Components and Curricular Structure

The candidate pursuing the MFA degree in lighting design is required to take graduate level coursework that focuses on developing design skills and technical production skills, as well as coursework that focuses on script analysis, history and criticism, presentation of their work and communication skills. A typical candidate pursuing lighting design will have the opportunity to design a minimum of two fully mounted productions in a variety of venues. MFA lighting design candidates will also serve as a lighting design assistant, master electrician and may serve as a sound designer, projection and/or media designer, or special effects coordinator.

In the first year of study all lighting MFA candidates are required to enroll in Lighting Design (THTR 3733), which provides the foundation for understanding the process of designing lighting including the tools and techniques of the designer. Lighting Design Studio (THTR 5393) creates individual projects in design with an emphasis in script analysis as well as implementing the elements of design and research. Lighting Technology Studio (THTR 5383) emphasizes lighting technology including fixtures, lighting control, equipment design and the mechanics of lighting. Graduate coursework in Script Analysis is also required and students enroll in (THTR 591V) Drafting for the Theatre and one elective can be taken. The Summer Internship (THTR 592V) requires students, with guidance, to find their own summer stock work as an assistant, electrician or designer.

In the second year of study all Lighting MFA candidates are required to enroll in Lighting Design Studio II (THTR 5393), which focuses on furthering lighting design skill and artistry by concentrating on the problems of lighting the play through project work. (THTR 5123) Rendering for the Theatre provides the opportunity for students to improve painting and rendering skills to effectively communicate design ideas and (THTR 591V) Special Topics in

Digital Tools and Concepts provides the design candidate with training in employing digital tools to do the same. The second year of Lighting Technology Studio (5383) brings more focused work on the lighting control console and its capabilities. (THTR 591V) Special Topics in Portfolio Development focuses on creating a professional quality portfolio, resume, cover letter, website, and other promotional materials as well as providing the student with opportunities to present their work in a formal interview setting. In (THTR 5143) The History of Décor the graduate design candidate studies the changing styles in art, architecture and furniture from the Greeks to modern day. The Director/Designer Collaboration (THTR 591V) is a 1 hour special topics course that allows designers and directors the opportunity to work on projects independent of the departmental production system.

In the third year of study all Lighting MFA candidates enroll in Lighting Design Studio (THTR 5393), which focuses on lighting musical and non-realistic theatre as well as lighting for installation. The final year of Lighting Technology Studio (THTR 5383) focuses on advanced technology such as moving lights and LED. MFA candidates can, with the advice of their mentor take two elective courses. Students have taken courses in computer aided drafting, computer game design and photography. All lighting candidates enroll in six hours of thesis (THTR600v) and are required to write a thesis. The fully documented thesis outlines their process of designing a fully mounted department production.

At the end of each fall semester all MFA Lighting candidates present the work they have complete during the fall semester in a public jury modeled on the USITT Young Designers' Forum. At the end of the spring semester the MFA Lighting candidates present their work both informally to the public and formally to the Design and Technology Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

All MFA lighting design candidates must complete a minimum of one professional internship during their 3-year residency.

Results

Currently, approximately 90% of all MFA lighting design candidates who have completed the program and earned an MFA degree in Lighting Design are working either full-time or part time in theatre or an allied profession.

Emily Clarkson (MFA Lighting Design 2017)

Freelance Lighting Designer based in New York City. Gilbert Helmsley Intern 2017.

Jacquelyn Cox (MFA Lighting Design 2016)

Freelance Lighting Designer based in New York City. Currently assisting on Broadway for *Come From Away* and *Hamilton*.

Jacob Hofer (MFA Lighting Design 2016)

Freelance Lighting Designer for theatre and dance, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Diana Kaiser (MFA Lighting Design 2013)

Freelance Lighting Designer, Chicago, Illinois.

Published Objectives

All objectives for the degree is published on the University of Arkansas website. All objectives for graduate courses are available through UA Connect and found in all course syllabi.

Advisement

All required courses are documented for students and mentor by following a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study is plotted over six semesters. Each semester the graduate candidate meets with the head of lighting design. The Plan of Study is reviewed and adjustments are made to reflect the courses offered both in the Department of Theatre as well as courses offered in other departments such as Art, Computer Science and English. Consideration is also made for the professional and personal and goals of the MFA candidate. See Appendix F 5.

Student Evaluation and Retention

At the end of each fall semester all MFA Costume candidates present the work they have complete during the fall semester in a public jury modeled on the USITT Young Designers' Forum. At the end of the spring semester the MFA Lighting Design candidates present their work both informally to the public and formally to the Design and Technical Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

See Appendix F 7. & 8.

Strengths and Areas for Improvement

The degree is committed to providing professional training in lighting design with additional training in lighting technology. It has a well-structured selection of design and technology studio courses, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, synthesis with our colleagues in other departments, and working and productive alumni.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion.

- Without a dedicated lighting laboratory space, the design students cannot experiment or work with the technology and tools outside of a production setting. There is no time for lighting to try out ideas until the lights are hung for a specific play. This compromises their educational and artistic opportunities.
- The Fine Arts Building is not ADA compliant.
- Without a dance program, the lighting designers do not have the opportunity to design dance lighting except in the rare occasion we can secure designs away from the university.
- Given that lighting design is a live art form, the lighting department relies on the cooperation of the performance and directing programs to supply us with actors to perform in projects. As these programs struggle with time and space issues as well, the lighting program is left without performers to light except in main stage productions.
- We are unable to attract a high caliber graduate student due to our staff and space issues.
- The program does not have a consistent and formal means of evaluating alumni employment, activity and perspective. The program needs to develop and apply, with consistency, an alumni survey.

**For Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing
Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Scene Design**

See Appendix F 5.

Purpose

The purpose of the University of Arkansas Master of Fine of Arts Degree is to provide professional study and training to prepare the candidate for a professional career in the entertainment design field as a scenic designer, scenic artist, properties artisan, scenic carpenter, and scenic draftsman.

The theatre faculty provides candidates with the opportunity to develop their artistic voice by equipping them with the skills and tools to become visual storytellers. Students are given the opportunity to practice the process of taking a design from an idea to reality through project work as well as fully supported productions. Although the primary focus of the design program is on design training and opportunities, technical understanding and skills in producing scenery is also stressed. The program is sufficiently flexible to meet the individual needs of the student and offers strong guidance and mentorship while providing a wide range of classes, training and experiences. We believe in the importance of well-rounded future professional theatre practitioners and educators who have artistic, intellectual and practical skills that will allow them to be life-long engaged theatre artists.

The MFA in Scene Design degree follows state requirements, is grounded in the missions of the institution and theatre program, is supported by its curriculum, and assessed on an annual basis by the theatre faculty. Faculty evaluate student learning and achievement in every theatre class, production, jury and internship towards the program's learning outcomes. We provide the graduate MFA candidate in scenery with the opportunities and experiences to be competitive in the job market through developing a portfolio of work, a resume, a website, professional internships, as well as providing design and technical assignments throughout their 3-year residency.

Credit Requirement

An MFA in Scene Design requires three years of full-time graduate study and 60 semester credit hours. As part of this course of study, one professional internship is required.

Curricular Table

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre: Scene Design

See Appendix A

The combined courses in costume design and affiliated areas more than meet the suggested percentages of study in a major area stated in the *NAST Handbook*. Study in major area (scene exclusively + 6 hours of thesis) 50%, Associated design courses 25%, Script Analysis and History of Décor 10% and Electives 15%

General Requirements

Content and methodology for the Master of Arts in Scene Design degree meets NAST Standards for Scene Design and are offered in a logical sequence for student learning and achievement, and are designed to meet the expectations of the program's learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome 1: Design and Implementation

The creative and artistic ability to develop a scene design of a production from concept to finished product.

Learning Outcome 2: Dramatic Analysis

Ability to analyze a play and understand the ways that historical, critical and theoretical content informs the visual choices in creating scenic designs for a production.

Learning Outcome 3: Theatre Collaborative Skills

Application of effective, creative and collaborative production skills through working with directors, peer designers and theatre technicians in creating theatrical productions.

Learning Outcome 4: Technical Skills in Scene Production

Ability to read, understand, and create technical drawings (drafting) using contemporary digital methods of delivery while maintaining a high level of design aesthetic.

Learning Outcome 5: Communication Skills

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively through visual presentations, spoken and written communications.

Program Components and Curricular Structure

The candidate pursuing the MFA degree in scene design is required to take graduate level coursework that focuses on developing design skills and technical scenic production skills, as well as coursework that focuses on script analysis, history and developing presentations and communication skill. A typical candidate pursuing scene design will have the opportunity to design a minimum of two fully mounted productions and a maximum of five. MFA scene design candidates can also serve as a scene design assistant, assistant technical director, properties manager, sound designer, projection and/or media designer, or special effects coordinator.

In the first year of study all scenic MFA candidates are required to enroll in Scene Design I (THTR 4653) which provides the foundation for understanding the process of designing scenery, providing technical drawings to support the design, model making skills, rendering (digital and hand drawn), script analysis, and historical and evocative research preparation and presentation. In the spring of the first year, all candidates enroll in a Scenic Technology Studio course (THTR 5193) where they focus on skills building projects that are less design focused and more related to techniques needed as a designer. Scenic painting, model making, graphic design, and web site development are all technology areas that are explored in the Scenic Technology Studio Courses. Scene design students take part in graduate level digital drafting (AutoCAD or Vectorworks) course where they perform exercises related to realized productions or theoretical projects.

In the second year of study all scene design MFA candidates are required to enroll in Scene Design Studio (THTR 5283) which focuses on furthering scene design skill and artistry by

concentrating classical theatre opportunities to include, Shakespeare, Greek, Roman, and Restoration literature. (THTR 5123) Rendering for the Theatre provides the opportunity for students to improve painting and rendering skills to effectively communicate design ideas and (THTR 5913) Special Topics in Digital Tools and Concepts provides the design candidate with training in employing digital tools to do the same. The second year of Scenic Technology Studio (THTR 5193) focuses on scenic art (scene painting) techniques and skills. (THTR 5913) Special Topics in Portfolio Development focuses on creating a professional quality portfolio, resume, cover letter, website, and other promotional materials as well as providing the student with opportunities to present their work in a formal interview setting. In (THTR 5143) The History of Décor the graduate design candidate studies the changing styles in art, architecture and furniture from the Greeks to modern day.

In the third year of study all scene design MFA candidates enroll in Scene Design Studio (THTR 5183) which focuses on furthering scene design skill and artistry by focusing on contemporary scripts and alternative performance venues and events. The final year of Scenic Technology Studio (THTR 5193) focuses on advanced scene painting and carving techniques. MFA candidates can, under advisement of their mentor, take two elective courses. Students have taken courses in figure drawing, architecture, game design, and directing.

All scene design candidates enroll in six hours of thesis (THTR600v) and are required to write a thesis. The fully documented thesis can focus their process of designing a mounted production. Finally, all scene design graduate candidates enroll in Special Topics: Scene Design Exam (THTR 5913) in which the student is given the semester to independently design the scenery for a script with an emphasis on the process from initial idea to sketch. This project can either be a theoretical project or in coordination with the MFA playwriting program whereby the scene designer works with a team to conceptualize a production for an original script. An 8 hour, on-site exam is given in which the focus is on solving problems and finding creative solutions.

At the end of each fall semester all MFA scene design candidates present the work they have complete during the fall semester in a public jury modeled on the USITT Young Designers' Forum. At the end of the spring semester the MFA scene design candidates present their work both to the informally to the public and formally to the Design and Technical Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

All MFA scene design candidates must complete a minimum of one professional internship during their 3-year residency.

Results

Currently, approximately 90% of all MFA scene design candidates who have completed the program and earned an MFA degree in scene design are working full-time or part time in theatre or an allied profession.

Joseph Farley (MFA Scene Design 2017)

Master carpenter and stage supervisor, Santa Fe Opera – Santa Fe, NM

Kiah Kayser (MFA Scene Design 2017)

Freelance scenic designer and scenic artist, New York, NY

Heather Roberson (MFA Scene Design 2014)

Properties assistant and scenic artist, Arkansas Rep, Little Rock, AR

Published Objectives

All objectives for the degree is published on the University of Arkansas website. All objectives for graduate courses is available through UAConnect and found in all course syllabi. See <https://uaconnect.uark.edu/>

Advisement

All required courses are documented for students and mentor by following a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study is plotted over six semesters. Each semester the graduate scene design candidate meets with the head of scene design to arrange a schedule for the upcoming semester. The Plan of Study is reviewed and adjustments are made to reflect the courses offered both in the Department of Theatre as well as courses offered in other departments such as Art and the Architecture programs. Consideration is also made for the professional goals of each individual MFA candidate.

See Appendix E 5.

Student Evaluation and Retention

At the end of each fall semester all MFA scene design candidates present the work they have complete during the fall semester in a public jury modeled on the USITT Young Designers' Forum. At the end of the spring semester the MFA scene design candidates present their work in a public setting where their work is formally evaluated by the Design and Technical Faculty. Students are given both oral and written critiques.

See Appendix F 7. & 8.

Strengths and Areas for Improvement

The degree is committed to providing professional training in scene design with additional training in scenic production. It has a well-structured selection of design and technology studio courses, a collaborative and talented faculty, the support of the University, synthesis with our colleagues in other departments, and a working relationship with our successful and productive alumni.

To improve the degree program, the review process has brought the following issues into discussion.

- We currently do not have adequate space for additional equipment to produce the scenery required for our productions or to teach the students enrolled in the required coursework.
- The Fine Arts Building and the scene lab space is not ADA compliant making it difficult to attract a wide range of applicants.
- Although we've seen improvements over the past 3 years, it is still challenging to attract the highest caliber graduate students due to our limited space and lack of state of the art technology concerns.

- The program does not have a consistent and formal means of evaluating alumni employment, activity and perspective. The program needs to develop and apply, with consistency, an alumni survey.