

# Theatre Studies

AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL MAJOR

Program Director: *Hussey*

Professor: *Morley*

Senior Lecturer: *Arciniegas*

Lecturer: *Lopez, Roach*

Visiting Lecturer: *Howland*

Director of Theatre: *Hussey*

Production Manager: *Loewit*

Advisory Committee: *Ko (English), Masson (French), Genero (Psychology)*

The Theatre Studies major is both an academic field of study and a practical application of that study. The purpose of the major is to provide students with a theoretical knowledge and appreciation of the history and literature of the theatre. In addition, students are instructed and given hands-on experience in production and promotion of theatrical events. The theatre is one of the oldest art forms in existence, and students learn valuable information about the way various disparate societies have evolved throughout the ages. Students are expected to work on productions as performers and technicians. The theatre department actively tries to cultivate well-rounded theatre students who are knowledgeable in all areas of theatre.

## Goals for the Major

The ability to break down and score a scene, conduct a rehearsal and produce a play

An understanding of the development of dramatic literature from the Greeks to the present, and ability to identify major movements within that chronology

Knowledge of current theatre technologies

Problem solving independently, and within an ensemble

Basic construction skills and attention to detail in execution

Competence to compete with conservatory-trained graduates for graduate school or casting/hiring opportunities within the industry

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## THST 101 Can We Have an Argument? Understanding, Employing, and Delivering Sound Rhetoric

*Arciniegas*

This course will apply theatrical performance training to the art of public speaking or rhetoric. One of the three original Liberal Arts, the art of discourse has long been recognized as fundamental to the creation of knowledge, and the development of thought. Employing dramatic and nondramatic texts, original student-written work, and an occasional *Saturday Night Live* sketch, students will discover the power of words to change hearts and minds, as well as their ability to undercut the speaker who does not know how to use them properly. The course is intended to develop communicative and expressive skills in students, who might not be drawn to the fine arts, but who might benefit from theatrical training to become more effective thinkers, writers, and speakers.

Prerequisite: None. Open to first-years only, or by permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: Fall

Unit: 1.0

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## THST 130/JPN 130 Japanese Animation (in English)

*Morley*

What makes Japan tick? New visitors to Japan are always struck by the persistence of traditional esthetics, arts, and values in a highly industrialized society entranced by novelty. Through animation films (English subtitles) and readings on animation we will explore this phenomenon from the inside. Focus is on the works of Tezuka Osamu, Hayao Miyazaki, and others. No Japanese language required. *Students may register for either THST 130 or JPN 130 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Language and Literature or Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.0

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## THST 203 Plays, Production, and Performance

*Hussey*

This course studies the principles and practice of the related arts that make up the production of a play in the theatre. Students will analyze the dramatic script in terms of the actor, the director, the scenic, costume, and lighting designers, and the technicians. Practical applications of acquired skills integrate the content of the course. Each student participates in the creation of a fully realized "miniproduction" given as a public performance at the end of the term. Emphasis is placed on artistic and intrapersonal collaboration within the companies.

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: Fall

Unit: 1.25

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## THST 204 Introduction to Acting

*Arciniegas*

This course is intended for any and all levels of experience. Students are introduced to the fundamentals of contemporary stage performance, as devised by such stage theoreticians as Constantine Stanislavsky, Lee Strasbourg and Sanford Meisner. Instruction focuses on the proper methods for breaking scenes down into component units or "beats," staging them for clarity of purpose, and performing them

truthfully in the immediate present before a live audience. Students perform in every class with a rotating roster of partners, emphasizing group learning and mutual support in the pursuit of an individual acting aesthetic. Performance material is drawn from the work of contemporary playwrights researched by the students or recommended by the instructor.

Prerequisite: None  
Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video  
Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

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### **THST 205 Advanced Scene Study (Historic Periods)**

*Arciniegas*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** This course is intended to give the advanced theatre student experience in the performance styles of other periods. Focusing on Classical, Elizabethan, Restoration, and Victorian dramatic literature, students retrace the development of the Western European theatrical tradition in practical terms. Particular emphasis is placed upon developing the performance skills necessary for remaining faithful to the acting style of the period while ensuring relevance and accessibility to a contemporary audience.

Prerequisite: 204  
Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video  
Semester: N/O Unit: 1.0

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### **THST 206 Directing and Dramaturgy**

*Hussey*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** This course studies the creative skills of the director in conjunction with the analytical skills of the dramaturge. Particular emphasis will be placed on communicating on a "moment-to-moment" basis with an actor. Students will be encouraged to develop their own unique "directorial vision." Students will be expected to provide probing intellectual questions to each other while collaborating. Dramatic material will be drawn from a variety of world literatures with emphasis placed on women playwrights. Students will be given opportunities to work each week with professional actors in a guest-artist "lab" format.

Prerequisite: None  
Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video  
Semester: N/O Unit: 1.0

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### **THST 207 Stagecraft for Performance**

*Loewit*

This course studies the craft and theory of the production arts in the theatre. The course will cover the process and will analyze the designers' function in the production: creating working drawings, problem-solving, and use of theatrical equipment and alternative media for the realization of sound, set, and lighting designs. There will be additional time outside of class scheduled for production apprenticeships.

Prerequisite: 203 or permission of instructor.  
Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video  
Semester: Spring Unit: 1.0

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### **THST 208 Introduction to Stage Management**

*Loewit*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** This course examines the role and duties of a stage manager in the collaborative process and the stage manager's relationship to the director, designers, and actors. Students will learn to write rehearsal reports, call cues, assemble rehearsal schedules, call scripts, etc. Students will also be taught the importance of technical script analysis. Emphasis will also be placed on a number of transferable skills, including leadership, organization, delegation, effective communication, and attention to detail. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to complete a THST 250H by stage managing either a Wellesley College Theatre or an Upstage production during the academic year in order to complement the material learned in class.

Prerequisite: None  
Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video  
Semester: N/O Unit: 0.5

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### **THST 209 Introduction to the Art of Scenic Design**

*Howland*

Think outside the box! Learn visual communication skills in this basic art of scenic design course. After reading assigned plays, students will learn how to develop their concepts through analysis of the action of the play. Visual research, sketches and basic drafting skills will be developed in addition to the idea of a basic "concept" for each script. In addition to teaching artistic and technical skills, this course will emphasize the importance of collaboration with the director and fellow designers.

Prerequisite: None  
Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video  
Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

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### **THST 210 Echoes of the Homeland**

*Hussey, Lopez, Roach*

Have you ever wondered what is lost in the process of assimilation into American culture? In this interpretation class, students are introduced to the literature of Hispanic, Celtic, and African American cultures. Through prose, poetry, and drama, stories and characters are brought to vivid life. Students will hone their interpretive skills while exploring issues of identity, immigration, and the female experience. Material will be taken from folklore, mainstream literature, and emerging writers of today. Students will also have the opportunity to write about their "homeland" as part of a final exercise.

Prerequisite: None  
Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

**THST 212 Representations of Women on Stage***Lopez*

This course looks at specific examples of the representation of women on the dramatic stage during various eras in a variety of cultures, focusing primarily on what a public and popular art says and implies about women: their "nature," their roles, their place in the society reflected. Consideration is given to the male dominance in both playwriting and performance in historic cultures. Texts will be chosen from a broad spectrum of dramatic world literature.

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.0

**THST 214 Inside Out: A Study of Character Through Voice and Movement***Rainer*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** This course will give students the tools and skills to develop a character either from the outside in, using movement, or from the inside out, using the voice. Utilizing the techniques of Kristin Linklater, students will move towards "freeing their natural voice" and developing range, color, and texture for effective stage use. Concurrently, students will work on "freeing their bodies" and using physicality to flesh out a character. Class work will focus on both individual and group work with particular attention given to layering voice and movement with text to create vivid, fully developed characters. *Not offered every year. Subject to Dean's Office approval.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: N/O

Unit: 0.5

**THST 220 Classic Plays and Players***Lopez*

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** This course, taught by playwright Melinda Lopez, surveys dramatic texts as realized in performance (including the plays of Shakespeare). Films and video recordings of live performances approximating the original production style will be utilized along with modern interpretations. Class discussion will also incorporate analysis and comparison of women and minorities who have shaped and created the theatre as actors, directors, designers, and producers. Analytical and critical writing skills are emphasized in the development of written critiques. Students will contrast and compare contemporary events with the events in dramatic texts and will incorporate that knowledge into class projects, such as adaptations, research papers, or original plays. Guest artists from the theatre world occasionally visit to illuminate other perspectives.

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

**THST 221 Introduction to Playwriting***Roach, Lopez*

This course will teach basic playwriting skills implemented through in-class exercises and at-home writing assignments. This hands-on, practical approach will require writing one short play each week. Emphasis is on experimentation, innovation, risk taking, and process. A spirit of fun, innovation, and creativity will dominate this workshop format. Each class meeting will incorporate reading student work aloud with commentary from the instructor and the class. Students will listen, critique, and develop the vocabulary to discuss plays, structure, story, and content. Each student will begin to connect her dramatic voice and theatrical passion. Students will ultimately write a one-act play as the capstone experience for this class. *Mandatory credit/noncredit.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: Fall

Unit: 1.0

**THST 250 Research, Independent Study, or Apprenticeship**

Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

**THST 250H Research, Individual Study, or Apprenticeship**

Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 0.5

**THST 251/JPN 251 Japanese Writers and Their Worlds (in English)***Morley*

A study of the emerging voice of the writer in Japan from the tenth through the eighteenth centuries. Texts will include the early poetic diaries of the Heian Court ladies, *The Tale of Genji*, the *Noh* plays, puppet plays and the haiku poetry of Matsuo Basho. Emphasis is on the changing world of the Japanese writer, the influence of Buddhism and Confucianism, and the role of the texts in shaping Japanese aesthetic principles. Selected films shown throughout course. *Students may register for either THST 251 or JPN 251 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: None

### **THST 255/JPN 255 Japan on Stage**

*Morley*

This course provides an introduction to Japanese theater with an emphasis on the development of the performance text from the eighth century to the contemporary period. Our work will be a combination of textual analysis and hands-on performance. Using videos and translated texts, as well as critiques by actors (in particular those of the medieval *noh* actor Zeami Motokiyo and the *kabuki* collection of actor's analects), and scholarly studies, we will cover three units: *noh* and *kyōgen*; *kabuki* and *bunraku* puppet theater; and contemporary theater. Students will have an opportunity to experiment with writing a modern *noh* play based on their understanding of the *noh* theatrical conventions, and to perform in a *kyōgen* play. No previous experience in Japanese Studies or Theater Studies required. *Students may register for either THST 255 or JPN 255 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.0

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### **THST 306 The Director's Art**

*Hussey*

Intended for the serious directing student, this course will focus on seeing, analyzing and critiquing the work of the director. Significant attention will be paid to the collaboration between directors, designers, and actors. The pragmatic aspects of mounting a production will be analyzed using the performances attended by the class as raw material for discussions. Students will attend five productions paid for by theatre studies; one in New York and four in Boston. Particular emphasis will be placed on the students determining how successful the productions are in engaging the audience and fulfilling the intention of the playwright. As a final presentation students will produce and direct their own 10-minute play presented at a festival for the Wellesley community.

Prerequisite: 203 or 206

Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.0

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### **THST 312/JPN 312 Literary Japanese: Reading the Classics (in Japanese)**

*Morley*

Reading and discussion in Japanese of selections from classical Japanese literature: focus on translation skills. Students will have the opportunity to sample *The Tale of Genji* and *The Pillow Book*, among others, in the original and to familiarize themselves with the classical language. *Two periods with discussion section. Students may register for either THST 312 or JPN 312 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: JPN 232 or permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Fall

Unit: 1.0

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### **THST 315 Acting Shakespeare**

*Arciniegas*

This course focuses on the study and practice of skills and techniques for the performance of scenes and monologues and the realization of theatrical characters from Shakespeare's texts. Speeches and scenes will be performed for class criticism. The class will be subdivided by instructor according to skill levels. Students are expected to rehearse and prepare scenes outside of class time.

Prerequisite: 203, 204, and 205 or permission of instructor after audition.

Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.0

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### **THST 350 Research or Individual Study**

Prerequisite: Open by permission to qualified students.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

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### **THST 350H Research or Individual Study**

Prerequisite: Open by permission to qualified students.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 0.5

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### **THST 351/JPN 351 Seminar. Theaters of Japan (in English)**

**NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10.** This course provides an in-depth study of Japanese traditional theater forms and performance theories. Students will be reading plays from the *Noh*, *Kyogen* comedies, *Kabuki*, and *Bunraku* (puppet theater) traditions. Videos of the plays for study will be viewed by the class. Comparisons will be made with Western and other Eastern theater forms where appropriate. The influence of classical theater on contemporary Japanese drama will also be examined. *Students may register for either THST 351 or JPN 351 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: One unit on Japan or by permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature or Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

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**THST 353/JPN 353 Lady Murasaki and *The Tale of Genji* (in English)**

*Morley*

Shortly after 1000 AD in the imperial court of Japan, Murasaki Shikibu, a court lady of middle rank, completed what is arguably the first novel in the history of world literature, *The Tale of Genji*. Who was she? How did she come to write a novel of such surprising psychological subtlety? Who is the hero? Why is he still appealing a millennium later? Focusing on *The Genji* and Murasaki's diary, we examine the culture of the Heian court, Buddhist beliefs, the esthetic of *mono no aware* (a beauty evocative of longing), and the literature (poetry, prose, and ladies' diaries) of the court salons. Films, plays, animation, and modern novels modeled on *The Genji* will also be discussed in class. No Japanese language required. *Students may register for either THST 353 or JPN 353 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: One course on Japan or by permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Fall

Unit: 1.0

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**THST 360 Senior Thesis Research**

Prerequisite: By permission of department. See Academic Distinctions.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

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**THST 370 Senior Thesis**

Prerequisite: 360 and permission of department.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

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**Related Courses**

*For Credit Toward the Major*

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**AFR 207** Images of Africana People Through the Cinema

**AFR 222** Blacks and Women in American Cinema

**ARTH 364/CAMS 328** Women Filmmakers: History and Theory of Subversion

**ARTS 165/CAMS 135** Introduction to Video Production

**ARTS 265/CAMS 235** Intermediate Video Production/The Documentary Form

**CAMS 101** Introduction to Cinema and Media Studies

**CAMS 135/ARTS 165** Introduction to Video Production

**CAMS 205/JPN 256** History of Japanese Cinema (in English)

**CAMS 221** Cinema: Art and Theory

**CAMS 235/ARTS 265** Intermediate Video Production/The Documentary Form

**CAMS 328/ARTH 364** Women Filmmakers: History and Theory of Subversion

**ENG 223** Shakespeare Part I: The Elizabethan Period

**ENG 224** Shakespeare Part II: The Jacobean Period

**ENG 281** American Drama and Musical Theatre

**ENG 324** Advanced Studies in Shakespeare

**FREN 209** Studies in Literature. Topic for  
2009-10: Contemporary Theatre and Contemporary Issues

**FREN 222** French Cinema

**FREN 226** Speaking Through Acting

**FREN 333** French Classical Tragedy: Corneille Versus Racine: Rethinking the Parallel

**JPN 256/CAMS 205** History of Japanese Cinema (in English)

**PHIL 203** Philosophy of Art

**Requirements for the Major**

Students majoring in Theatre Studies must take a minimum of nine units. For students entering Wellesley in the fall of 2009 or later these must include THST 203 and either THST 220 or 212. For students who entered prior to fall of 2009, these must include THST 203 and either THST 220 or 212 or ENG 281. Two of the nine must be at the 300 level. At least five of the nine must come from within the theatre studies department. The remaining four may be drawn from any related department (see list above). Developments in the theatre arts are a result of stage experiments, and because the theatre performance is an expression of theatre scholarship, it is expected that students planning a major in theatre will elect to complement formal study of theatre with practical experience in the extracurricular production program of the College Theatre and related on-campus producing organizations. Students may also remain on campus over the summer or Wintersession (depending on housing availability) to gain experience with Wellesley Summer Theatre Company (the professional wing of the academic department) for credit. All students are encouraged to participate in 250 and 350 individual study offerings in order to pursue their particular area of theatrical interest.

Early consultation with the director is essential, because some of the relevant courses are not offered every year and careful planning is necessary. In addition to working with the director of the theatre program, students will be encouraged to consult with other members of the faculty familiar with the interdepartmental theatre major.

## **Exchange and Study Abroad**

Students majoring in theatre studies may elect to take at least one resident semester of concentrated work in the discipline to supplement and enrich their work at Wellesley. They may attend the National Theatre Institute at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, another institution in the Twelve College Exchange Program, or one of the many London programs offering intensive study in their discipline. On occasion a student may elect to take a relevant course in the program at MIT.

## **Honors**

The theatre program offers a variety of opportunities for honors. After consultation with the director, the candidate will devise a proposal that incorporates both the academic and the practical aspects of the thesis. Normally the candidate completes the research and writing segment of the thesis in the first semester. In the second semester, the candidate produces the practical/theatrical component for public performance. Applicants for honors should have a minimum 3.5 GPA in all work in the major field above the 100 level; the department may petition on her behalf if her GPA in the major is between 3.0 and 3.5. See Academic Distinctions.