

Theatre Studies

AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL MAJOR

Program Director: *Hussey*

Instructor: *Hussey, Loewit*

Senior Lecturer: *Arciniegas*

Lecturer: *Lopez, Roach, Rainer*

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. Additionally, 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.

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.

Students majoring in theatre studies must take a minimum of nine units. For students entering in the fall of 2004 and earlier these must include THST 203 and ENG 281. For students entering in the fall of 2005 or later these must include THST 203 and either THST 220 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 below). 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 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.

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.

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" which is presented for 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

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 their 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

THST 205 Advanced Scene Study (Historic Periods)

Arciniegas

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: Fall Unit: 1.0

THST 206 Directing and Dramaturgy

Hussey

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: Spring Unit: 1.0

THST 207 Stagecraft for Performance

Loewit

NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09. 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: N/O Unit: 1.0

THST 208 Introduction to Stage Management

Loewit

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: Spring Unit: 0.5

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

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

Semester: Fall Unit: 1.0

THST 212 Representations of Women on Stage

Lopez

NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09. 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 playwrighting 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: N/O Unit: 1.0

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

Rainer

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: Wintersession Unit: 0.5

THST 220 Classic Plays and Players

Lopez

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: Spring 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 306 The Directors Art

Hussey

NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09. 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 ten-minute play presented at a festival for the Wellesley community.

Prerequisite: 203 or 206

Distribution: Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Video

Semester:N/O Unit: 1.0

THST 315 Acting Shakespeare

Arciniegas

NOT OFFERED IN 2008-09. 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: N/O Unit: 1.0

THST 350 Research or Individual Study

Prerequisite: Open by permission to qualified students.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

THST 350H Research or Individual Study

Prerequisite: Open by permission to qualified students.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 0.5

THST 360 Senior Thesis Research

Prerequisite: By permission of department. See Academic Distinctions.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

THST 370 Senior Thesis

Prerequisite: 360 and permission of department.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring Unit: 1.0

Related Courses

For Credit Toward the Major

AFR 207 Images of Africana People through the Cinema

AFR 222 Images of Women and Blacks in American Cinema

AFR 266 Black Drama

ARTH 364 Women Filmmakers: History and Theory of Subversion

ARTS 165 Introduction to Video Production

ARTS 265 Intermediate Video Production

CAMS 175 Introduction to Cinema and Media Studies

CAMS 231 Film as Art

ENG 112 Introduction to Shakespeare

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: Contemporary Theatre and Performance.

FREN 213 From Myth to the Absurd: French Drama in the Twentieth Century

FREN 222 French Cinema

FREN 226 Speaking Through Acting

FREN 303 Advanced Studies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.

GRK 304 Greek Tragedy

GRK 305 Greek Comedy

ITAS 212 Italian Women Directors: The Female Authorial Voice in Italian Cinema (in English)

ITAS 261 Italian Cinema (in English)

ITAS 311 Theatre, Politics, and the Arts in Renaissance Italy

JPN 251 Japanese Writers and Their Worlds (in English)

JPN 256 Modern Japan through Cinema (in English)

PHIL 203 Philosophy of Art

SPAN 300 Seminar. Honor, Monarchy, and Religion in Golden Age Drama