The Master of Fine Arts in Theatre provides a course of advanced studies within the areas of acting, directing, design, and playwriting. It aims to develop in students a high level of understanding and competence in the chosen degree concentration, leading to professional-level employment in performance and design. Considered to be the terminal degree in the creative aspects of theatre, the M.F.A. program provides a 60-hour concentration in a chosen specialty. The degree is awarded following successful fulfillment of a series of academic and performance/production requirements.

M.F.A. in Theatre

Prerequisites to the M.F.A. Program: A student entering graduate studies in the Department of Theatre should have a minimum of 24 semester hours in undergraduate drama/theatre credit. In the event a student does not satisfy this requirement, the student and an adviser will assess the student’s needs and establish a plan of study that will prepare the student for advanced degree work. The GRE may be required based on the student’s undergraduate GPA in accordance with Graduate School policy.

Admission Procedures: In addition to complying with all Graduate School admission procedures, M.F.A. degree applicants will present an audition and/or portfolio for assessment and evaluation prior to consideration for acceptance.

Degree Requirements: The Master of Fine Arts degree requires 60 hours of approved graduate-level coursework that is focused in one of three study tracks: Performance (Acting and Directing), Playwriting, or Design. Specific course requirements and related production requirements are determined in conference with the particular track adviser. All students will produce a thesis (6 hours credit) prior to graduation. This thesis will take the form of a performance, design or playwriting project with appropriate written research and documentation to support it. Both the proposed thesis project and the final product shall be subject to review and approval by the student’s thesis committee.

Each student will be reviewed annually. Departmental faculty will determine whether sufficient progress has been made to warrant continuation into the subsequent year of study and eventual graduation.

A final examination will be administered to all graduating M.F.A. students. This examination will allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of theatre at a level appropriate to those who have reached the end of their particular course of studies.

All course credits presented for graduation must be graded “C” or better.

However, a minimum of 42 hours of graduate-level courses and four regular semesters must be completed on the Fayetteville campus.

Departmental requirements may be waived by the faculty in theatre only upon receipt of evidence of equivalent learning or skill resulting from earlier education or experience. Students not holding a bachelor’s degree in drama may be required to take supplemental coursework and/or demonstrate proficiency in the creative areas of drama.

Graduate Faculty

Burrow, Jason E., M.M. (Ohio University), B.M. (University of Arkansas), Assistant Professor, 2015.


Dwyer, Mavourneen, M.F.A. (University of Texas at Austin), B.A. (University of Montreal), Associate Professor, 1998.

Frank, Kate L., M.F.A. (University of Arkansas), B.F.A. (California State University-Los Angeles), Lecturer, 2006.


Hicks, Morgan, M.F.A. (University of Arkansas), M.A. (Missouri State University), B.F.A. (Arkansas State University), Assistant Professor, 2007.

Irish, Shawn D., M.F.A. (University of Arkansas), B.A. (Missouri Southern State University), Assistant Professor, 2013.

Landman, Michael, M.F.A. (Columbia University), B.A. (State University of New York at Binghamton), Associate Professor, 2004.


Leftwich, Gail, B.S. (University of Arkansas), Lecturer, 1997.

Martin, Patricia, M.F.A. (Purdue University), B.A. (Rollins College), Professor, 1995.

Marzolf, Steven, M.F.A. (University of San Diego), B.A. (University of Wisconsin–Green Bay), Lecturer, 2015.


Millett, Joseph D., M.F.A. (University of Southern California), B.A. (Union College), Visiting Assistant Professor, 2015.


Wade, Les, Ph.D. (University of California-Santa Barbara), M.F.A. (University of Georgia), M.A. (Duke University), B.A. (Tulane University), Professor, 2011.

Walch, John S., M.F.A. (University of Texas at Austin), B.A. (Colorado College), Assistant Professor, 2016.

Wilkerson, Weston, M.F.A. (University of Tennessee), B.A. (Texas A&M University), Assistant Professor, 2014.

Courses

THTR 5123. Theatrical Design Rendering Techniques. 3 Hours.
Investigation of drawing and painting methods and materials useful to theatrical designers. Integration of graphic communication with overall production conceptualization will be explored through examination of various theatre styles and periods. May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5143. History of Decor for the Stage. 3 Hours.
An overview of architectural decoration and its application to theatrical design from the Predynastic Period (4400-3200 B.C.) through the Art Deco period with references to contemporary decor. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.
THTR 5163. Scene Design Studio. 3 Hours.
Individual and advanced projects in designing scenery for various theatrical genres as well as non-theatrical applications with emphasis on the design process involving playscript analysis, text analysis, and research. Collaboration skills and advanced rendering techniques will be explored. Contributes to on-going portfolio development. Prerequisite: THTR 4653 or instructor consent. May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5193. Scene Technology Studio. 3 Hours.
Individual and advanced projects in scenic techniques with emphasis on scene painting, drafting, rendering, properties design, or scenic crafts as determined by student need. Contributes to on-going portfolio development. Prerequisite: Graduate standing or instructor consent. May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5213. Costume Design. 3 Hours.
Advanced study of the art and practice of stage costume design. Emphasis on the expression of character through costume. Development of rendering and research skills. Portfolio development.

THTR 5243. Costume Technology I. 3 Hours.
Advanced methods of costume construction techniques and the practice of theatrical pattern drafting will be explored through project work.

THTR 5263. Costume Design Studio. 3 Hours.
Individual and advanced projects in designing costumes for various theatrical genres with emphasis on the design process involving text interpretation, character analysis, and research. Collaboration skills and advanced rendering techniques will be explored. Contributes to on-going portfolio development. Prerequisite: THTR 5213 or THTR 5243 or instructor consent. May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5293. Costume Technology Studio. 3 Hours.
Individual and advanced projects in costume construction and techniques with emphasis on flat pattern, draping, corsetry, tailoring or costume crafts as determined by student need. Contributes to on-going portfolio development. Prerequisite: Graduate standing or instructor consent. May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5353. Stage Lighting Technology. 3 Hours.
The thorough examination of the technology of equipment that supports the art of stage lighting design: theory, operating principles and specification of lamps, fixtures, control systems and special effect hardware will be explored. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

THTR 5363. Theatre Planning. 3 Hours.
A study of significant theatre buildings, modern and historical, and their relationship to contemporary theatre planning. Practical application of theory through design problems and evaluation. Graduate level research project/paper required.

THTR 5383. Lighting Technology Studio. 3 Hours.
Individual and advanced projects in lighting technology with emphasis on light sources, lighting control, equipment design and specification and the mechanics of lighting. Contributes to on-going portfolio development. Prerequisite: Graduate standing or instructor consent. May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5393. Lighting Design Studio. 3 Hours.
Individual projects in lighting design with emphasis on the design process involving script interpretation, design aesthetics and research. Lighting design applications to a variety of venues will be studied. Contributes to on-going portfolio development. Prerequisite: Graduate standing or instructor consent. May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5413. African American Theatre History — 1950 to Present. 3 Hours.
(Formerly THTR 4463.) A chronological examination of African-American theatre history from 1950 to the present through the study of African-American plays and political/social conditions. Upon completion of this course the student should be familiar with the major works of African-American theatre and have a deeper understanding of American History. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both THTR 4463 and THTR 5413.

THTR 542V. Graduate Acting Studio. 1-3 Hour.
Provides actors with intensive opportunities to explore specific aspects of their craft. Sample topics include characterization, Chekhov, Pinter, Brecht, improvisation and mask work. Topics vary each semester. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Drama. May be repeated for up to 18 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5432. Graduate Voice and Speech I. 2 Hours.
Teaches how to build clear vocal production using proper breath support, grounded in the Alexander technique. Emphasis on the connection between breath and thought, learning to undo inadequate vocal habits, and vocal hygiene. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Drama. May be repeated for up to 4 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5443. Graduate Acting: Period Styles. 3 Hours.
Styles of acting in relation to French and English Dramatic Literature (16th-19th Centuries). This course also examines the historical and cultural influences that shaped each genre. A period dance component is included. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Drama.

THTR 545V. Musical Theatre Performance. 1-3 Hour.
Theory and techniques of performing a singing role for the theatre. Integrates acting and vocal techniques and examines the relationship between score and text. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Drama.

THTR 5463. Audition Techniques. 3 Hours.
A thorough study and practical application of audition skills and techniques. This course will equip the student with prepared audition pieces and experience in cold reading, on-camera work, and improvisation. The course also explores the practical needs of the actor; from how to get an audition to how to prepare a resume. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Drama.

THTR 5473. Graduate Acting: Shakespeare. 3 Hours.
Analysis of Shakespeare for performance. Work will include the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, including cultural and theatrical contexts required for understanding the scripts. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Drama.

THTR 548V. Meisner Technique I. 1-3 Hour.
Acting theory and exercises of Sanford Meisner, including repetition work, connecting with partner, three moment game, activities, and emotional preparation.

THTR 549V. Meisner Technique II. 1-3 Hour.
Continuation of Meisner Technique I. Incorporation of theory and advanced exercises of the Meisner Technique into the playing of text. Prerequisite: THTR 548V.

THTR 5501. Research Techniques in Drama. 1 Hour.
Basic techniques of research and study in the fields of Drama and Theatre with consideration of the necessary interplay of intellectual and intuitive skills in mature artistry. Practice in the logical, semantic, and evidential work of scholarship and in the various research methodologies.

THTR 5533. Graduate Playwriting: Special Projects. 3 Hours.
Advanced study and practice in the area of playwriting. The area of concentration will be determined by the student’s specific writing project(s). Prerequisite: Graduate standing. May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5543. Creating a One-Person Show. 3 Hours.
Actors learn to use compelling personal experiences and interests in the creation of a unique one-person show. Includes exploration in characterization, staging and playwriting. Culminates in the public presentation of a short one-person show. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Drama.
THTR 5552. Graduate Voice and Speech II. 2 Hours.
A continuation of Graduate Voice and Speech I, exploring more closely the connection between breath support and volume, pitch, range, resonance and articulation. Prerequisite: THTR 5432.

THTR 5562. Graduate Voice and Speech III. 2 Hours.
Continuation of Graduate Voice and Speech II, focusing on the classification of vowels and consonants according to the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Prerequisite: THTR 5552.

THTR 5572. Graduate Voice and Speech IV. 2 Hours.
Continuation of Graduate Voice and Speech III. Extension of the application of the IPA to the analysis of different accents of individuals for whom English is a second language. Approximately eight dialects of English will be examined. Prerequisite: THTR 5562.

THTR 5593. Acting and Directing Absurdist Theatre. 3 Hours.
This course focuses on a particular dramatic style that developed following World War II: Absurdist. In scene presentation projects, students will grapple with the unusual challenges acting and directing these plays, as well as explore the cultural contexts, philosophies and theatrical traditions that led to their invention. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Drama.

THTR 5613. Graduate Directing Principles. 3 Hours.
Theory and technique of directing realistic drama: script analysis; spatial considerations of composition and picturization; development in production of the Aristotelian concepts of plot, character, thought, diction, music (sound), and spectacle. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

THTR 562V. Seminar in Dramatic Art. 1-9 Hour.
Research, discussion and projects focusing on a variety of topics including theatre management, advanced acting methods, and specialized periods in dramatic literature. Prerequisite: Senior or graduate standing. May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5653. Scene Design. 3 Hours.
(Formerly THTR 4653.) Theory and practice in the art of scenic design, including historical and contemporary styles and procedures. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both THTR 4653 and THTR 5653. Prerequisite: THTR 1323, THTR 1321L, THTR 2313 and THTR 2513.

THTR 5663. Directing Modern Drama. 3 Hours.
Studio course exploring the challenges of directing post-19th Century dramatic literature. Individual projects in collaboration with actors. Sample dramatic literature includes styles such as Realism, Expressionism, Absurdist, post-Modernism and Epic Theatre. Topics vary each semester. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Drama. May be repeated for up to 12 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5673. Adapting and Directing Non-Theatrical Texts. 3 Hours.
Offers directors practice in the adaptation and staging of non-theatrical prose, poetry and current events. Individual projects in collaboration with actors. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Drama.

THTR 5683. Directing Studio. 3 Hours.
Hands-on exploration into the direction of historical and contemporary texts and styles, including Greek, Roman, Shakespeare, Realism, American and international scripts and the adaptation of non-theatrical material. Topics vary each semester. Includes discussion and investigation of the theatrical arts and collaborative and production processes. Prerequisite: MFA Directing student or instructor consent. May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5691. Scene Study for Directing Studio. 1 Hour.
Participation as an actor in scenes presented for the graduate Directing Studio course. Varying historical and contemporary texts and styles each semester. Class meets one hour each week, plus outside rehearsals, depending on casting. Prerequisite: Instructor consent. May be repeated for up to 4 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5713. Directing Classics. 3 Hours.
Explores the challenges of directing classic texts. Individual projects in collaboration with actors on a wide variety of pre-20th Century dramatic literature. Topics vary each semester. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Drama. May be repeated for up to 12 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5723. History of the Theatre I. 3 Hours.
A comprehensive study of the theatre in different cultures and ages, as an institution, as an art, and as a vision of life.

THTR 5733. History of the Theatre II. 3 Hours.
A continuation of THTR 5723.

THTR 5763. Dramatic Criticism. 3 Hours.
Analysis of critical theories from Aristotle to the present; interrelationships of theatre disciplines as well as the influence of the church, state, and press on dramatic criticism. Prerequisite: Senior or graduate standing.

THTR 5783. Viewpoints. 3 Hours.
Exploration and application of the Viewpoints movement technique. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Theatre.

THTR 581V. Theatre Production III. 1-3 Hour.
Participation in the process of production for the University Theatre mainstage at a supervisory level. Areas of involvement may include scenery, lighting, sound, makeup, marketing, etc. May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

THTR 5833. Scene Painting. 3 Hours.
(Formerly THTR 4833.) A studio class in painting techniques for the theatre. Exercises in color, textures, styles, and execution. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both THTR 4833 and THTR 5833. Prerequisite: THTR 1323, THTR 1321L and THTR 2313. May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

THTR 590V. Independent Study. 1-18 Hour.
Individually designed and conducted programs of reading and reporting under guidance of a faculty member. May be repeated for up to 18 hours of degree credit.

THTR 591V. Special Topics. 1-3 Hour.
Classes not listed in the regular curriculum, offered on demand on the basis of student needs and changes within the profession. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Theatre or Instructor consent required. May be repeated for degree credit.

THTR 592V. Internship. 1-6 Hour.
Supervised practice in the various arts and crafts of the theatre (e.g. full design responsibility for a production; box office management; actor apprenticeship in a professional company).

THTR 5953. Theatre Study in Britain. 3 Hours.
(Formerly THTR 4953.) Study of the components of stage production through attending and critiquing a wide variety of classical, modern, and avant garde theatre productions in England; includes tours of London and historical British sites and seminars with British theatre artists. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both THTR 4953 and THTR 5953.

THTR 600V. Master’s Thesis. 1-6 Hour.
Master’s Thesis. Prerequisite: Graduate standing. May be repeated for degree credit.