

# Theatre (THTR)

Weston Wilkerson  
Department Chair  
619 Kimpel Hall  
479-575-2953  
Email: theatre@uark.edu

Department of Theatre Website (<http://fulbright.uark.edu/departments/theatre/>)

## Degrees Conferred: M.F.A. (THTR)

The Master of Fine Arts in Theatre provides a course of advanced studies within the areas of acting, directing, design, and playwriting. It provides the student with a high level of understanding and competence in the chosen degree concentration, leading to professional employment in performance and design. The M.F.A. program provides tracks in a chosen specialty and is the terminal degree for theatre practitioners. 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.

Up to 18 hours of credit may be waived for those students entering the M.F.A. program and already holding the M.A. degree in theatre or drama.

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), Associate Professor, 2015, 2021.

**Herzberg, Amy**, M.F.A. (California Institute of the Arts), B.A. (Arizona State University), Distinguished Professor, 1989, 2015.

**Hicks, Morgan**, M.F.A. (University of Arkansas), M.A. (Missouri State University), B.F.A. (Arkansas State University), Assistant Professor, 2007, 2023.

**Irish, Shawn D.**, M.F.A. (University of Arkansas), B.A. (Missouri Southern State University), Associate Professor, 2013, 2020.

**Lane, Valerie Jean**, M.F.A. (Pennsylvania State University), B.F.A. (University of Memphis), Instructor, 2008.

**Marzolf, Steven**, M.F.A. (University of San Diego), B.A. (University of Wisconsin-Green Bay), Teaching Assistant Professor, 2015, 2017.

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

**Reed, David**, M.F.A. (Baylor University), M.A. (Louisiana Tech University), B.A. (Saint Mary College), Associate Professor, 2023.

**Riha, Michael**, M.F.A. (Indiana University at Bloomington), B.F.A. (University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point), Professor, 1992, 2008.

**Siebrits, Helene**, M.F.A. (University of California, Los Angeles), B.A. (University of California, Los Angeles), Associate Professor, 2020.

**Smith, Benjamin C.**, M.F.A. (University of Pittsburgh), B.A. (University of Dallas), Assistant Professor, 2019.

**Spencer, Cara**, M.F.A. (University of North Carolina School of the Arts), B.A. (Sterling College), Instructor, 2023.

**Walch, John S.**, M.F.A. (University of Texas at Austin), B.A. (Colorado College), Associate Professor, 2016, 2022.

**Wilkerson, Weston**, M.F.A. (University of Tennessee), B.A. (Texas A&M University), Associate Professor, 2014, 2020.

## Courses

### THTR 51203. Theatrical Design Rendering Techniques. 3 Hours.

Investigation of drawing and painting methods and materials useful to theatrical designers. Integration of traditional and digital technology and tools in creating the documents necessary to communication in the theatrical process. (Typically offered: Irregular)

### THTR 51303. Design Portfolio Development. 3 Hours.

Development of the skills and techniques used to prepare and present a professional design portfolio in order to successfully interview for a career in the theatre. Traditional and digital output including portfolio, website and marketing materials are created. Prerequisite: Graduate Standing in Theatre or by instructor permission. (Typically offered: Irregular) May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

### THTR 51403. 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. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 51501. Singing for Musical Theatre. 1 Hour.**

Private study of the singing voice focusing on musical theatre vocal technique and repertoire. (Typically offered: Irregular) May be repeated for up to 3 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 51703. Drafting for the Designer. 3 Hours.**

Focuses on industry standard practices of drafting. Students will study and execute design drafting packages for the theatre, including but not limited to Designer Drawings, Painter's Elevations, Props Packages, Lighting Plots and Sections. Prerequisite: Graduate Standing in Theatre or by instructor permission. (Typically offered: Irregular) May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 51803. 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: Graduate standing as an MFA Candidate in Theatre or instructor consent. (Typically offered: Fall) May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 51903. 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. (Typically offered: Spring) May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 52103. Costume History I: Pre-Historic Through 15th Century. 3 Hours.**

Introduction to the History of Costume. Begins with Pre-historic societies, the earliest Mediterranean cultures, and continues throughout the 15th century. Uses primary resources to explore historic garment elements, their use, and the reasons for fashion changes. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 52203. Costume History II: 16th through 19th Century. 3 Hours.**

Introduction to the relationship between human social behavior and the development of body coverings from the 15th through 19th centuries. Uses primary resources to explore historic garment elements, their use, and the reasons for fashion changes. Involves intense study of silhouette, line, and detail for historic fashion looks. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 52703. Costume Crafts. 3 Hours.**

Introduction to costume crafts, materials, and techniques. Projects include creation of hats and headpieces, whisks/collars, and paper creations. Focuses on specific attention to pattern drafting, construction methods, crafts materials, techniques, and attention to detail. Corequisite: Lab component. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 52803. 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 32103 or instructor consent. (Typically offered: Fall) May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 52903. 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. (Typically offered: Spring) May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 53803. Lighting Design Studio. 3 Hours.**

Individual projects in lighting design with an emphasis on stage lighting as an art form. Investigates the design process involving script interpretation, design aesthetics, research and storytelling. Contributes to ongoing portfolio development. Prerequisite: Graduate standing or instructor consent. (Typically offered: Fall) May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 53903. Lighting Technology Studio. 3 Hours.**

Individual and advanced projects in lighting technology with emphasis on programming, equipment, advanced control, lighting software, methods of digital rendering and computer visualization. Contributes to ongoing portfolio development. Prerequisite: Graduate standing or instructor consent. (Typically offered: Spring) May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 54103. African American Theatre History -- 1950 to Present. 3 Hours.**

A chronological examination of African-American theatre history from 1950 to the present through the study of African-American plays and political/social conditions. Students will become 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 44603 and THTR 54103. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 5420V. 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 Theatre. (Typically offered: Irregular) May be repeated for up to 18 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 54302. 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 Theatre. (Typically offered: Fall) May be repeated for up to 4 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 54403. 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 Theatre. (Typically offered: Spring)

**THTR 5450V. 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 Theatre. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 5480V. 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. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 5490V. 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 5480V. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 55101. Alexander Technique Lessons. 1 Hour.**

Students will become aware of habitual patterns of tension and how these patterns interfere with performance, learning, and overall health. The Technique offers practical skills for improving coordination and for re-gaining a sense of ease of movement in all activities. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring) May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 55203. Writing for Television and Screen. 3 Hours.**

Advanced study and practice in writing for the small and big screen, with focus on writing for television. This writing workshop is an investigation into the form, structure, and vocabulary of writing for television, designed to give students tools, strategies, and practice in writing for television. (Typically offered: Irregular) May be repeated for up to 9 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 55303. 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. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring) May be repeated for up to 18 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 55502. 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 54302. (Typically offered: Spring)

**THTR 55602. 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 55502. (Typically offered: Fall)

**THTR 55702. 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 55602. (Typically offered: Spring)

**THTR 56303. 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 Theatre. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 56403. Devised Theatre. 3 Hours.**

Explores performer-created works developed through group dynamics, with emphasis on innovative source materials and inventive theatrical approaches. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 56603. 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, Absurdism, post-Modernism and Epic Theatre. Topics vary each semester. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Theatre. (Typically offered: Irregular) May be repeated for up to 12 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 56703. 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 Theatre. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 56803. 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. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring) May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 57103. 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 Theatre. (Typically offered: Irregular) May be repeated for up to 12 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 57203. History of the Theatre I. 3 Hours.**

A survey of dramatic literature, theatre practices and cultural contexts for dramatic presentation from classical Greece through the 19th century. (Typically offered: Fall)

**THTR 57303. History of the Theatre II. 3 Hours.**

A survey of dramatic literature from the rise of realism to the present, designed to examine historical context, theatrical convention, modes of storytelling and questions of diversity and inclusion in the theatrical cannon. (Typically offered: Spring)

**THTR 57503. Collaborative Strategies for Theatre Artists. 3 Hours.**

Designed for theatre artists to focus on how we work together, examine the collaborative process, and discover and practice the strategies, skills, and mindsets that make creative, strong, resilient, and mindful collaborators in the theatre making process. Corequisite: Lab component. Prerequisite: Current standing as a MFA Theatre candidate or with instructor permission. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 57703. Script Analysis. 3 Hours.**

Introduces the fundamentals of dramatic structure, in plays from the classical era to the present, with emphasis on how a dramatic work conveys cultural meaning and how it informs the production approaches of actors, directors, and designers. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 57803. Viewpoints. 3 Hours.**

Exploration and application of the Viewpoints movement technique. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Theatre. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 57903. Script Analysis for Actors. 3 Hours.**

Introduces script analysis techniques addressing the actors' process of analyzing events, character, language, structure, and the world of the play, so that the text may be specifically realized in performance. Corequisite: Lab component. Prerequisite: Current standing as an MFA Candidate in Theatre or Instructor Permission. (Typically offered: Irregular)

**THTR 58303. Scene Painting. 3 Hours.**

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 48303 and THTR 58303. (Typically offered: Spring Odd Years) May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 5900V. Independent Study. 1-18 Hour.**

Individually designed and conducted programs of reading and reporting under guidance of a faculty member. (Typically offered: Fall, Spring and Summer) May be repeated for up to 18 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 5910V. Special Topics. 1-3 Hour.**

Classes not listed in the regular curriculum, offered on demand based on student needs and changes within the profession. Prerequisite: Graduate standing in Theatre or Instructor consent required. (Typically offered: Fall, Spring and Summer) May be repeated for degree credit.

**THTR 5920V. 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). (Typically offered: Irregular) May be repeated for up to 6 hours of degree credit.

**THTR 59503. Theatre in London. 3 Hours.**

Theatre in London Study Abroad immerses scholars in the world of theatre, culture and history in Britain. Students spend four weeks in London with excursions to Stratford-upon-Avon, Oxford and Bath. Literature, performance, design and history are all explored through lectures, field trips and writing prompts. Open to all majors. Graduate degree credit will not be given for both THTR 49503 and THTR 59503. (Typically offered: Summer)

**THTR 6000V. Master's Thesis. 1-6 Hour.**

Master's Thesis. Prerequisite: Graduate standing. (Typically offered: Fall and Spring) May be repeated for degree credit.

**THTR 63501. Improvisation and Text in Commedia dell'Arte. 1 Hour.**

Delves into the aesthetic, literary, and technical structures in which are rooted the dramaturgical components of Commedia dell'Arte. Focuses on the processes of improvisation, and makes use of sources such as scenarios, acting treatise and repertoires, lazzi, and iconographic documents. Prerequisite: THTR 67401. (Typically offered: Fall, Spring and Summer)

**THTR 64104. Basic Skills of the Physical Actor. 4 Hours.**

Designed to enable actors to develop the physical, vocal, musical and rhythmic skills necessary for their craft, including movements, contemporary dance, voice work and music. Introduces the notion of collaborative theatre and the principles of a trans-disciplinary approach to training. Students will create and perform in Italian. Prerequisite: Admission to the MFA program. (Typically offered: Fall, Spring and Summer)

**THTR 64203. Extended Skills of the Physical Actor. 3 Hours.**

Presents students with demanding work in movement and vocal skills that move towards character-building, autonomous training methods and a deeper understanding of how musicality and rhythm are a key to both individual and ensemble performance. Fundamental design principles are introduced underscoring improvisation and future composition. Prerequisite: THTR 64104. (Typically offered: Fall, Spring and Summer)

**THTR 64302. Advanced Skills of the Physical Actor. 2 Hours.**

Presents pathways towards generating work both as an ensemble and as soloists. More complex expressive skills are investigated: text work, dance choreography, movement analysis and impulse, musical "scoring" and dynamo-rhythms in performance. Students encounter advanced design principles that will inform devising. Prerequisite: THTR 64203. (Typically offered: Fall, Spring and Summer)

**THTR 66101. Professional Aspects of Theatre. 1 Hour.**

Introduction to industry through research of professional companies producing work that contains devised and physically - based material. Also covers elements of grant writing, producing on a budget, publicity and promotion. (Typically offered: Fall, Spring and Summer)

**THTR 67401. Non-Western Theatre. 1 Hour.**

Introduces students to non-Western theatrical forms, concentrating on the traditional, primarily the theatre of three Asian countries: Japan, China, and India. Explores production methods, performance styles, audiences and social milieus, and will challenge the perception of theatre forms usually not included in the Western canon. (Typically offered: Fall, Spring and Summer)