

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

University of Oregon

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Department of Theatre Arts

revised April, 2003

PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM DESIGN

The theatre program at the University of Oregon serves a variety of students with a wide range of needs and interests. The faculty are committed to a liberal arts approach to theatre education and to maintaining the highest academic standards, and we believe deeply in the value of theatre as a form of cultural formation and communication as well as a pathway for personal growth.. As a result, we hold high expectations for scholarly achievement from all our graduate students, believing that the best theatrical training comes from the diversity of intellectual involvement and broad-based experiences available only in a liberal arts institution. Thus our students are encouraged not just to take classes in other areas, but to develop courses of study which will lead to cross-disciplinary perspectives and new approaches to their art.

Our theatre program, therefore, seeks a balance between the study of theatre in a cultural context and the creative process of producing plays. In pursuit of these ideals, the theatre faculty have designed a graduate program that promotes intellectual independence. Each individual student designs a specific course of study in consultation with an advisory committee following a diagnostic examination. The M.F.A. requirements are somewhat more prescriptive, but even there, considerable individual choice is allowed. Because of the program's individualized nature, no two students have the same requirements and deadlines other than those imposed by the University.

As part of our commitment to a liberal arts approach, each graduate student is expected to show ability in both the practical and academic areas. As a means of achieving breadth, we encourage the students to study with each member of the faculty to receive that individual's unique perspective of our field.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admission

Admission to the graduate programs of the University of Oregon Department of Theatre Arts is competitive and granted by vote of the faculty. Application materials are available from the Department of Theatre Arts Office and are due on February 1 of each year. Applicants are notified of their status no later than April 15.

Diagnostic Examination

During "Week of Welcome" (the week preceding the start of classes), a diagnostic examination is given to all new graduate students. The purpose of this exam is to evaluate the academic and artistic background of each student. The examination includes both objective and essay questions and is designed to test both depth and breadth of preparation and to identify any areas which might need special attention.

Following the examination, a committee of three faculty members will read the answers and then meet with the student. This oral review covers personal background, academic preparation, and goals. As a result of this interview, the committee will:

1. Determine any remedial work required.
2. Specify a core group of required courses.
3. Suggest courses/areas for further exploration.
4. Suggest possible artistic projects.

The results of this examination/interview are reported in writing to the Department Head. One copy is placed in the student's file in the department office; the second copy is presented to the student. Students should make sure that their completion of requirements is noted in their official files. Since student interests and goals may change, the student may at any time ask for a reconvening of the committee to revise the diagnostic recommendations.

Academic Progress and Student Evaluation

The best barometer of academic progress is through regular meetings with the advisor or even the entire committee. During the spring term each year the advisor (the chair of the diagnostic committee or a faculty member of the student's choice), after consultation with the full faculty, will issue a letter of evaluation. This letter will summarize faculty response to the student's academic and artistic progress and address any specific issues that arise. A copy of this letter will be sent to the student and one will be placed in the permanent file.

Additional Course Credit

individual study

In addition to organized course work, students may do individual study in a specific area not already taught in a regularly scheduled class by requesting to enroll in TA 605: Reading with an individual faculty member. The content, structure, and requirements of the readings are determined by the faculty member and the student in joint consultation. In this way, detailed or unusual course work may be undertaken to enhance an individual's degree program. Students should be mindful of time demands on faculty members and make arrangements in advance for any such course work.

production credit

Production credit on a graduate level is available through TA 609: Practicum and may be granted for directing, designing, performing, dramaturgy, assistant directing and other similar assignments. For acting credit on a graduate level, students should register for TA 609: Rehearsal and Performance. Only nine credits of practicum may be applied to a graduate degree.

transfer of credit

For Master's Degree students, some courses taken for graduate credit at other schools may be transferred for credit at the University of Oregon, as long as the work has been taken within the seven year time limit and a grade no lower than B was awarded. Determination of the applicability of these credits to specific degree requirements is made by the faculty. In any case, no more than 15 credits in a 45 c credit program may be transferred. A form for this purpose may be obtained from the Graduate School. It should be approved by the student's advisor and forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies. It is then presented to the faculty for their decision and signed by the Department Head. Final approval is given by the Graduate School.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

During residency, each graduate student will demonstrate competence in three of the following: teaching, directing, dramaturgy, design, acting, management, playwriting, and technical production.

Waiver of requirements is possible through decision of the diagnostic committee or by student petition to the faculty.

At the end of the first year, the student will update the progress form on file in the office to reflect fulfillment of these requirements.

Note that a “course” is one that offers at least three credits at the 500 or 600 level, listed in the Schedule of Classes and offered as part of the curriculum. Not qualifying as “courses” in this sense are independent projects undertaken by an individual under such catalogue numbers as TA 601, 602, 603, 605, and 606.

Master of Arts and Master of Science

time line

first year — complete a total of at least nine courses, with at least one course in each of the following areas:

- research methods (TA 611)
- literature
- history
- theory
- design
- performance

Pedagogy or GTF experience in any of these areas may be counted as fulfilling the requirements.

end of first year — present a preliminary prospectus for the thesis.

during second year — complete at least nine courses to fulfill a program approved by the advisor, with additional credits in Research and Thesis; also satisfy foreign language requirement

end of second year — complete thesis and finish degree

requirements

- 45 graduate credits + 9 credits of TA 503: Thesis
- TA 611: Research Methods
- At least 30 graduate credits in Theatre Arts courses
- At least 24 credits in graded University of Oregon course work
- At least 9 credits of 600-level course work
- Completion of conditions stipulated in the diagnostic letter
- A minimum grade point average of 3.0
- Successful completion of the second year of a foreign language.
- Completion of an approved thesis
- Participation in 3 areas chosen from: teaching, design, acting, directing, management, technical production, dramaturgy, and playwriting.

Note: No more than 9 credits of TA 609: Practicum will be applied toward degree requirements.

language proficiency/research tool

The M.A. requires successful completion of the second year or better of a foreign language at the college level within the past 10 years.

In place of the foreign language requirement, the M.S. requires that the student demonstrate competence in a collateral field of study or an alternate research tool.

thesis

The M.A. and M.S. degrees both require a written thesis. This work is an extended study of a particular issue of interest to the individual student. Master's theses may focus on any aspect of theatre ranging from theory to pedagogical concerns. The topic is developed in consultation with the advisor and the project is guided by the advisor and two other committee members selected by the student. M.A./M.S. students are required to determine a thesis topic at the end of their first year of study. Research extends throughout the second year and the document is typically written during Winter and Spring terms. Typically a master's thesis ranges from 60 to 100 pages.

The role of the two additional committee members varies from case to case (ranging from participation and critique throughout the process to simply reading and evaluating the finished product) and this relationship should be clearly understood from the beginning. Upon completion of the thesis, an oral defense is held with the committee members. Graduate School requirements and deadlines for procedure and format are extensive and are available on the Graduate School web site. Students need to be aware of all Graduate School deadlines that apply to many steps of this process. Students register for credit under TA 603: Thesis

Master of Fine Arts

The Master of Fine Arts is typically a three-year program requiring a total of 81 credits beyond the bachelor's degree, of which no more than 12 may be practicum credits (TA 609). Areas of specialization are scenic design, lighting design, and costume design. Usually, course work is substantially completed during the first six to eight terms of study, and students work on their terminal artistic projects during subsequent terms. An oral review of the project is held following completion of the project performances. A written report on the project follows the review. All M.F.A. projects are juried by the full faculty and must demonstrate high artistic ability.

requirements

The M.F.A. degree requires the following:

- At least 24 credits in graded University of Oregon course work
- At least 9 credits of 600-level course work.
- A minimum grade point average of 3.0
- At least 20 credits in design and technology courses, including at least one each in lighting, scenery and costumes
- 8 credits in a related area outside of the department.
- At least 8 credits in Theory of Dramatic Production (TA 651, 652, 653) and/or Theatre and Culture (TA 571)
- Completion of an approved final project.

See the M.F.A. handbook for more detailed information. Note that the M.F.A. does not require a foreign language.

M.F.A. document

The final document for the Master of Fine Arts degree is somewhat unique for each project and format needs to be decided with the faculty adviser. Essentially it is a complete record of the final product including background research, preliminary ideas, refinements, final designs, evaluation of the working process, and evaluation of the final project. Upon completion, the work is reviewed by the adviser and two additional faculty members and an oral defense is held.

The M.F.A. document is not considered a thesis and certain Graduate School deadlines do not apply. Students need to be aware of all deadlines that do apply. See the Graduate School for details. Students register for credit under TA 601: Research.

Doctor of Philosophy

The Ph.D. has no minimum credit requirement, but most theatre arts students take approximately 130 credits beyond the bachelor's degree. Students seeking the Ph.D. must present two research tools or collateral fields of study, one of which must be the knowledge of a foreign language as demonstrated through an examination. Following completion of course work, students must pass a comprehensive examination and complete an approved dissertation.

time line

Note that doctoral studies may vary widely from student to student, so this time line is only ideal and may not reflect the experience of each person in the program.

first year — complete a total of at least nine courses, with at least one course in each of the following areas:

- research methods (TA 611)
- literature
- history
- theory
- design
- performance

Pedagogy or GTF experience in any of these areas may be counted as fulfilling the requirements.

end of first year — officially declare the three areas of focus for the comprehensive examination

second year — complete at least nine courses, including two additional courses in each of the three fields selected for comprehensive examinations, and two additional courses from outside of the department; also complete the foreign language requirement

end of second year or beginning of third year — take comprehensive examinations and present a preliminary dissertation prospectus to the faculty

end of third year — complete dissertation and finish degree

requirements

- TA 611: Research Methods (or equivalent)
- A minimum of 9 credits in a related field outside of Theatre Arts
- Reading comprehension in a foreign language
- Comprehensive examinations, written and oral
- At least 18 credits of TA 603: Dissertation
- Completion of an approved dissertation and oral defense.

language proficiency/research tool

The Ph.D. requires reading proficiency in one foreign language and a second tool which may be a second foreign language or approved study in a related field which applies to the student's research interests. In the past, these have included studies of law, folklore, and field research among others. Foreign language mastery is demonstrated in a translation exam coordinated by the Graduate Studies Director. For the Ph.D., competency in two research tools is required prior to comprehensive examinations.

comprehensive examinations

Each student pursuing the Ph.D. must successfully complete comprehensive examinations. There is no specific requirement concerning the number of credits earned before taking these exams. Exams are scheduled in consultation with the adviser. The exams are composed of three days of writing, each day focusing on one of the three areas chosen by the student from history, theory, literature, acting, design, and directing. Usually, a day of rest is scheduled between each day of writing.

Approximately two terms before the intended writing date, each student should form a comprehensive committee composed of one faculty member in each of the three areas of expertise, with one member serving as chair. The student meets with each of these faculty members to develop expectations and procedures for each specific exam day. Each faculty member approaches these examinations somewhat differently, so early contact is advisable.

A person wishing to demonstrate competence in an area outside of the department may arrange to include a question from an outside faculty member as part of a fourth day of examination.

Approximately one week after the completion of writing, the candidate meets with the committee for an oral review known as the defense. At this time, the committee may ask for clarification of answers or extensions of concepts presented or they may move into new areas of consideration. The student will present to the committee a proposal for a dissertation. The committee may vote to pass the student, they may ask for one or more questions to be rewritten on a specified date, or they may suggest other courses of action. A student who does not write satisfactorily on the second attempt will not be granted further opportunities. If passed, the student is officially advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. and begins preparations for the dissertation. The student who is advanced to candidacy should meet with the Office Manager to make sure all necessary forms are submitted.

Following comprehensive examinations, a maximum of two courses may be required to fulfill study in a specialty area connected with the dissertation.

dissertation

The Ph.D. dissertation is an original work of scholarship that contributes new knowledge or insight to the field of study. Topics cover the full range of theatre scholarship from actor training to dramatic theory. Typically, a minimum of one full year is devoted to the research and writing of the dissertation, and many projects require more time. Students are required to present a dissertation proposal at the comprehensive examination oral review, and a full prospectus must be approved by the dissertation committee.

Although the comprehensive committee frequently becomes the dissertation committee, this is not a requirement. Changes of adviser and membership are acceptable and the dissertation committee should be selected to best meet the needs of the individual project. A fourth committee member from outside the Department of Theatre Arts must be appointed to meet Graduate School requirements. Students are advised to begin the search for this person by taking courses related to possible dissertation topics throughout their study and identifying faculty members who would be interested in working with them on their dissertation. The Graduate School requires that a dissertation committee be proposed within one month following successful completion of the comprehensive examination and a full six months prior to the defense.

Typically a dissertation ranges from 125 to 200 pages. The roles of the three additional committee members vary from case to case, ranging from participation and critique throughout the process to simply reading and evaluating the finished product, and this relationship should be clearly understood from the beginning. Graduate School requirements and deadlines for procedure and format are extensive and are available on the Graduate School web site. Following the completion of the written document, a public defense of the dissertation is held

with all committee members in attendance. At this time the committee may ask for rewrites and/or accept the document as complete.

GRADUATE TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS

Graduate Teaching Fellows are engaged by the Department of Theatre Arts to assist in undergraduate instruction. GTFs receive a tuition waiver and stipend for the period appointed. GTF appointments are programmatically determined by the faculty. Areas needing GTF support are discussed each spring in faculty meetings, and the final number of GTFs awarded is subject to budgetary constraints. A GPA of 3.50 must be maintained for assignment as a GTF.

GTF funding for study for the M.A. is limited to two years for each student; for the M.F.A. and Ph.D., the limit is three years.

PRODUCTION POLICIES

Graduate students are encouraged to participate in theatre productions.

Pocket Playhouse

A graduate student who wishes to be considered for a directing assignment in the Second Season must demonstrate competence to the faculty. In most cases, the faculty will require that such a student direct a production in the Pocket Playhouse during the fall or winter of the year before the possible Second Season assignment. Such productions are sponsored by University Theatre and are not part of the Pocket Playhouse season. All Pocket directives concerning running time, minimal technical requirements, and limited rehearsal times do apply, however graduate students who wish to direct should submit a request to the faculty a full term prior to the desired production dates. Multiple requests will be prioritized by the faculty according to perceived merit of the proposal.

Arena Theatre

The Second Season in the Arena Theatre is intended to provide opportunities for graduate directors and designers, with undergraduates assigned as designers as needed. Typically, this venue is used for small, experimental works that would not normally be chosen for the Robinson Season. Budgets are small, and technical work is restricted by the fact that the performance space also serves as a classroom and rehearsal room.

The faculty assign directors for the Second Season on the basis of merit and need. A request for names of those interested is circulated, usually near the end of Fall term, and the directors needed for that season (based on scheduling) are announced.

After the directors are named, the graduate students as a whole manage the season selection through a process of consultation of their own device. Season selection typically begins following the completion of the Robinson Season selection, usually in March or April. When they are ready, the graduate students present for faculty consideration a proposed season, including a title for each slot plus at least one alternative. For each title, the director offers a written explanation of the anticipated approach or concept, with details regarding any departures or interpretations of the script that might affect design, technical, casting and/or budgetary considerations. The faculty will either approve the season as a whole or return it for further consideration, possibly with comments on the titles of choice as well as the alternatives.

Robinson Theatre

The faculty may, from time to time, choose to offer a Robinson Season directing assignment to a student in the Ph.D. program. Such a choice will reflect the faculty's deliberation on related issues, such as how many faculty are available and willing to direct, the value of hiring a guest director, the probable schedule for the entire season, and the educational and artistic needs of the department as a whole. In the event the faculty decide to offer such an assignment, they will invite any interested Ph.D. students to apply. The faculty will take into account prior artistic work (within the department and elsewhere) as well as the applicants' performance as students and as teachers along with their academic needs and career goals.

THEATRE ARTS FACULTY

Robert Barton, Professor

B.A. 1967, Western Michigan; M.A. 1968, Ph.D. 1977, Bowling Green State. Principal area of interest is actor training, especially Shakespeare, period styles, voice, and neuro-linguistic programming. (1980)

Alexandra Bonds, Professor

B.S. 1972, Syracuse; M.A. 1974, Denver. Principal areas of interest are costume design, period styles, historical context and Asian theatre costumes. (1979)

Joseph Gilg, Development Director / Instructor

B.A. 1969, St. Benedict's; M.S. 1975, M.F.A. 1986, University of Oregon. Principal areas of interest are actor training, directing and twentieth-century theatre. (1992)

Jerry Hooker, Assistant Professor

B.A. 1978, Puget Sound; M.F.A. 1985, Utah State. Principal areas of interest are scenic design, scenic painting, and rendering. (2001)

Jeffrey D. Mason, Professor and Department Head

A.B. 1974, M.A. 1975, Stanford; M.A. 1980, California State University, Sacramento; Ph.D. 1983, University of California, Berkeley. Principal areas of interest are American theatre, directing and playwriting. Robert F. and Evelyn Nelson Wulf Professor of the Humanities. Book review editor, *Theatre Survey*. (2001)

Janet Rose, Senior Instructor

B.F.A. 1977, Florida Atlantic; M.F.A. 1979, Ohio. Technical director and lighting designer. (1987)

John Schmor, Assistant Professor

B.A. 1984, Willamette; M.A. 1989, Ph.D. 1991, University of Oregon. Principal areas of interest are performance theory and new practices, especially devising, performance art, clown and other movement-based actor training. (1999)

John Watson, Associate Professor

B.A., 1964, Lewis and Clark College. Ph.D., 1987, University of Oregon. Major areas of interest are theatre history, English women playwrights (1660-1900), contemporary British theatre, and directing. (1987)

Emeritus Faculty

Faber DeChaine

B.S., 1952, University of Oregon. M.A., 1953, Michigan State; Ph.D., 1963, Minnesota. (1964)

Grant McKernie

B.A., 1964, Northwestern; M.A., 1965, Ph.D. 1972, Ohio State. .Major areas of interest are theatre and culture and contemporary European theatre. (1979)

Horace Robinson

B.A., 1931, Oklahoma City; M.A., 1932, Iowa. (1933)

Jerry Williams

B.F.A. 1964, Carnegie-Mellon; M.A. 1965, Washington. Major areas of interest are scenic design, masks, makeup and puppetry. (1973)