Theatre Arts

Professors: Berthel (Chair), Menta (Emeritus), Potts (Director of Theatre), Reeves

Dedicated to the liberal arts traditions and innovations of Kalamazoo College, the Department of Theatre Arts offers students access to the collaborative nature of drama through the integration of both creative and analytical courses, production laboratories, internships, and individualized projects. By studying the wealth of worldwide theatre traditions reflecting the pluralism in our society and the interdependence of all peoples and cultures, students gain the research tools for self-discovery; informed, critical thinking; the ability to take action on their ideas and responsibilities; and the development of the kind of self-esteem and values that will lead them as artists toward enjoying a lifelong journey of personal growth and inquiry in a climate whereby each may learn to speak with his or her own voice.

Open to all, majors and nonmajors alike, theatre arts productions emphasize both personal and skill development in acting, design, stage management, arts management, technical areas, and directing. The productions also serve as creative activities for students and enjoyable, thought-provoking entertainment for audiences. The academic program focuses upon a wide range of dramatic styles, encouraging students to understand the breadth of dramatic literature from the classical to the most contemporary. Experiential components are clearly linked with classroom studies and offer involvement with the Festival Playhouse Company, drama study in England, student projects in the experimental Dungeon Theatre, placement with regional and professional theatres, and opportunity for participation in the GLCA New York Arts Program. Students interested in these opportunities should consult with department faculty regarding options and prerequisites.

Requirements For the Major In Theatre Arts

Number of Units
Ten units are required.

Required Courses

Foundations (Two units to be completed in first year):
THEA 110 Stagecraft
THEA 120 Fundamentals of Acting

Explorations (Four units to be completed, if possible, by end of second year):
One design course (to be completed by end of sophomore year) chosen from among:
THEA 210 Stage Lighting
THEA 235 Costuming & Stage Makeup
THEA 240 Scenic Design

Two theatre histories chosen from:
THEA 155 Introduction to African-American Theatre
THEA 265 First Theatres (Sophomore Seminar)
THEA 270 Theatre of Illusionism
THEA 280 Theatre of Revolt: Modernism and Postmodernism
THEA 290 Asian Theatre

One dramatic literature course chosen from:
ENGL 154 Reading the World: Global Stages
ENGL 264 Global Shakespeares
ENGL 265 Shakespeare
THEA 255 Playwriting
(Another option is that a third theatre history course may substitute for the one dramatic literature course. Appropriate courses taken at Study Abroad Centers may also be eligible.)

Connections (three units to be completed in junior and senior year):
THEA 380 Directing I
THEA 490 Senior Seminar

And at least one course chosen from among:
THEA 115 Community Dialogue Techniques
THEA 210 Stage Lighting
THEA 225 Developing a Character
THEA 235 Costuming & Stage Makeup
THEA 240 Scenic Design
THEA 305 Voice & Diction
THEA 420 Advanced Acting
THEA 445 Advanced Design
THEA 480 Advanced Directing

THEA 200 Production Practicum (one unit of four different 1/4 units)
Throughout their four years, theatre arts majors must distribute each 1/4 unit in a different area of production (acting, stage management, costuming, lighting, scenery, sound, properties, etc.)

The department believes strongly in the importance of interdisciplinary studies as a means of directly enriching a theatre focus and highly recommends cognate courses in the arts, literature, history, international area studies, writing, and women and gender studies. With the exception of the dramatic literature course, all courses for the theatre major must be taken on campus. All majors and minors must complete one unit of THEA 200 as a graduation requirement, which is a regular part of their theatre production involvement. Please see the department faculty for specific instructions to complete the THEA 200 unit.

Requirements for the Minor in Theatre Arts

Number of Units
Six units are required.

Required Courses
One unit of THEA 200 (see THEA 200 requirement for major)
One unit from each of the following areas:
Performance
THEA 115, 120, 225, 305, 380, 420
Design/Technical
THEA 110, 210, 235, 240
Theatre History
THEA 155, 260, 265, 270, 280, 290

Electives
Any two additional units in theatre arts.
Students should meet with department faculty when selecting this minor.

Theatre Arts courses

THEA 110 Stagecraft
Introduction to the principal topics and practices of technical support for theatre production: construction of stage scenery, scene painting, properties, rigging/focusing of lights, sound techniques, basic technical craft skills, and production communication practices. Fifteen-hour production lab required.

THEA 115 Activating Theatre Techniques for Community Dialogue
A workshop course based on the Activating Theatre techniques of Augusto Boal. A developmental skills course in creating
forum theatre for community and social change, and for moderating effective group dialogue. Interdisciplinary links with psychology, sociology, women and gender studies, and education with a focus on both experiential education and interpersonal communications.

THEA 120 Fundamentals of Acting
Introduction to the skills necessary for performing on stage. This course is an exploration of the fundamental techniques necessary for beginning scene and monologue study in modern and contemporary realism. Through physical and vocal exercises, text and character analysis, scene and monologue studies, the student is introduced to the process of acting preparation and performance. Excellent course for nonmajors seeking an introduction to the art of acting.

THEA 155 Introduction to African-American Theatre
Survey/lecture course from an African-American perspective, examining the activities and developments of Black American life as evidenced through its theatre, with emphasis on history, philosophy, dramatic creations, criticism, and socio-psychological concerns. Includes lectures in theatrical contributions of Western and African civilizations.

THEA 200 Theatre Production Practicum
Each student involved in a significant role on regular theatre productions is a participant in the Festival Playhouse Company and shall thereby earn 1/4 unit of credit per production. Students may earn a maximum of two full units through THEA 200. Theatre Arts majors and minors must distribute each 1/4 unit in a different area of production (acting, stage management, costuming, lighting, scenery, sound, properties, publicity, etc.). Students must register themselves into Theatre 200 by then end of second week of the quarter in which they are participating. Instructor permission may be required.

THEA 210 Lighting Design
Studies in the ideation and communication techniques of stage lighting; emphasis on play analysis, sculpting and painting with light, color theory, drafting, projection, and practical laboratories. Fifteen-hour production lab required.

THEA 225 Developing a Character
Advanced work in characterization with emphasis placed on building a character through various acting techniques, including Stanislavski, Suzuki, Viewpoints, and improvisational exercises. A continuation of THEA 120, this course is designed to deepen the student's understanding of their acting process combined with the discovery of voice and body in relation to character development. The course includes partner and monologue work, as well as written assignments.
Prequisite: THEA-120

THEA 235 Costuming and Stage Makeup
This course is split into two sections: stage makeup and costuming. The makeup section will introduce the student to the basic principles of makeup application and design for the stage. The costume section will introduce the student to the basic techniques, tools, and materials used in costume construction along with an introduction to costume shop organization. Fifteen-hour production lab required.

THEA 240 Scenic Design
Practical application and study of scenic design, including play analysis and historical research, followed by sketches, decor, drafting, construction of models, and color renderings. Focus upon the principles of movement, scale, color, light, silhouette, environment, and composition. Fifteen-hour production lab required.

THEA 255 Playwriting
An introduction to playwriting, examining such topics as script analysis, dramatic structure, characterization, rhythm, and imagery. In addition to specific writing projects, students will also read and analyze representative plays.

THEA/SEMN 265 First Theatres
This sophomore seminar will survey the "first theatres" of many different areas of the pre-modern world -- including the Abydos Passion Play of ancient Egypt, Yoruba ritual, ancient Greek &amp; Rome, Japanese Noh Theatre, early Chinese music drama, Sanskrit theatre of India, and European Medieval theatre. Through research, discussion, and critical thinking exercises, students will be encouraged to view performance as an intercultural and continually developing phenomenon in both art and daily life. This course is a Shared Passages Sophomore Seminar.
Prequisite: Sophomores Only

THEA 270 Theatre of Illusionism: Western Theatre From the Renaissance to Early Film
Study of Western theatre history from the Italian Renaissance to the evolution of early film, emphasizing the trend of the theatre to simulate the details of everyday life and the growth of theatre as an entrepreneurial institution that informed developments in audience, playwriting, acting, and design.

THEA 280 The Theatre of Revolt: Modernism and Post Modernism
A study of the Theatre of Revolt, an overview of Western theatre history and dramatic literature over the last 150 years including Brecht, Artaud, and Beckett. Emphasis on comparing realism and various forms of nonrealism, such as expressionism and absurdism, through the plays and trends in acting, directing, and design, and an examination of what constitutes the modern theatre and our current age of post-modernism.

THEA 290 Asian Theatre
A survey of selected topics in classical Asian theatre and performance from among the Noh, Kabuki, and Bunraku Theaters of Japan; Yuan Drama and Classical Opera of China; Sanskrit Drama and Kathakali Dance Theatre of India; and some other historical and current performance trends and styles. A study of theories of intercultural performance and Asian theatre influences on the West.

THEA 295 ST: Science & Theatre
This course examines the intersection of science and theatre. After examining ways in which theatre has constructively (or destructively) interacted with the scientific world, we will write our own science plays.

THEA/SEMN 295 Live Media, Virtual Performance
For the last century, an ongoing argument over the value of live performance has dominated the discourse about the conflict between live theatre and other forms of mediatized performance. In this course, we will talk about these various forms of performances and their differing degrees of liveness, from theatre and film to TV and radio to Twitch and social media. In doing so, we will see the intersections between digital culture and high culture across virtual and real boundaries.
Prerequisite: Sophomores only

THEA 305 Voice and Diction
Study of techniques for actors to develop the vocal production necessary for stage performance. Training in Fitzmaurice Voicework, Standard American English for neutralized dialect, and phonetic ear training. Class exercises, monologues, vocal physiology, proper warm-up techniques, and care for the professional voice.
Prerequisite: THEA-120 and sophomore standing or with instructor permission.

THEA 380 Directing I with Lab
Introduction to the art of stage direction including its history, development, functions, and components; study of script analysis, composition, working with actors, and the organization of a production. Weekly rehearsal lab required.
Prerequisite: THEA-120 & Theatre Majors Only

THEA 420 Advanced Acting
Introduction to the skills necessary to act in plays from some major periods and styles of dramatic literature: Shakespeare and Restoration. Class exercises, monologues, scene study, workshop performances, written assignments, and analysis of dramatic literature will form the basis of the course work. Specific costume pieces, including shoes, which are not provided by the department, are required to be worn during the classes and in rehearsals.
Prerequisite: THEA-225

THEA 445 Advanced Design
Advanced forms of scenery, costume, or lighting study selected in consultation with the instructor. May involve portfolio development and design of main-stage productions.
Prerequisite: THEA-210, THEA-235, or THEA-240

THEA 480 Advanced Directing
Advanced problems in directing for the upper-level student, with a focus on independent projects and directing a one-act play.
Prerequisite: THEA-380; Instructor permission required

THEA 490 Senior Seminar
Preparation for the professional working world in theatre. Résumé preparation, various workshops and professional guest speakers. Discovery and articulation of artistic goals through group activities, written assignments, and readings. Class group agenda project. Preparation for required departmental SIP presentations. This course also include Theatre Arts Departmental Comprehensive Written and Oral Exams.
Prerequisite: Theatre major with senior standing.

THEA 593 Senior Integrated Project
Each program or department sets its own requirements for Senior Integrated Projects done in that department, including the range of acceptable projects, the required background of students doing projects, the format of the SIP, and the expected scope and depth of projects. See the Kalamazoo Curriculum -> Senior Integrated Project section of the Academic Catalog for more details.
Prerequisite: Permission of department and SIP supervisor required.
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