

THEATRE AND DRAMA, MFA

Admissions to the Theatre and Drama MFA have been suspended as of fall 2017. If you have any questions, please contact the department (gradsec@theatre.wisc.edu).

The department offers the MFA advanced degree. The master of fine arts degree in Theatre and Drama offers specializations in Acting, Costume Design, Lighting Design, Scene design, and Theatre Technology. Currently the MFA program admission is on hiatus but we will be accepting applications for the fall 2021 semester.

The faculty in Theatre and Drama are leaders in their field. Together, they have many credits in all facets of the profession, working within their field of theatre research and practice both nationally and abroad. They are recognized for their critically acclaimed publications and production work and have won major awards and fellowships for scholarship, creative work, and teaching.

Graduate students at UW–Madison come from around the country and the world. Many have been working theatre professionals returning for advanced degrees. Some graduates go on to teach in the academy; others work in the profession as actors, directors, designers, and technologists.

Coursework and specializations are organized around two areas: acting and design and technology. Students in all specializations are encouraged to complement their major area of study by taking courses from other areas in the department.

University Theatre, the producing arm of the Department of Theatre and Drama, provides students with opportunities to complement work begun in the studios and classrooms. At UW–Madison, the stage is our laboratory. Coursework and discussions regularly connect theatre practice and study with larger issues of cultural and intercultural representation.

The MFA offers specialized preparation for careers in professional theatre.

The MFA specialization in scene design, costume design, lighting design, or theatre technology strives for a balance of professional training and the practical application of skills through numerous collaborative experiences, both onstage and in the classroom. Students in all four disciplines are encouraged to be creative problem solvers through both an appreciation of the history of their craft and a curiosity about the contemporary world of theatre, design and the application of new technologies. Numerous opportunities for realized work, studio collaborations and individualized mentoring affords the MFA student the opportunity to grow and develop as an articulate and collaborative theatre artist.

ADMISSIONS

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FUNDING

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (<https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/>) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Funding opportunities for graduate work vary, but tend to be highly competitive. Please contact the department for more information on student financial support.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirements>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students are able to complete a program with minimal disruptions to careers and other commitments.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW-Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirements Detail

Minimum 75 credits
Credit Requirement

Minimum 33 credits
Residence
Credit Requirement

Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement Half of degree coursework must be completed graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university's Course Guide (<https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide/>).

Overall Graduate GPA Requirement 3.00 GPA required.

Other Grade Requirements No other specific grade requirements.

Assessments and Examinations Design and Technology students must pass two candidacy portfolio examinations in the first year of residency. They must pass two comprehensive-progress, portfolio examinations in both the second and third years of residency.

A research or creative thesis is required for Design and Technology candidates.

Language Requirements No language requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES

Code	Title	Credits
Core Program Coursework		
Theatre History/Literature/Criticism courses		6
Production courses		12
Select 6 credits of the following: ¹		6
THEATRE 367	Script Analysis	
	or THEATRE 501 The Business of Acting	
	or THEATRE 619 Special Topics in Theatre and Drama	
THEATRE 699	Directed Study	6
THEATRE 368	Fundamentals of Directing	3
Specialist Coursework (see below)		42
Total Credits		75

¹ Students take 6 credits of either THEATRE 367, THEATRE 501, or THEATRE 619 with the topic "The Business of The Business" depending on their specialist area.

Specialist Coursework

Acting ¹

Code	Title	Credits
Acting courses		12
Movement courses		12
Voice courses		12
Electives		6
Total Credits		42

¹ These tracks are internal to the program and represent different pathways a student can follow to earn this degree. Track names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.

Costume Design ¹

Code	Title	Credits
Design courses		9
Drafting courses		3

THEATRE 619	Special Topics in Theatre and Drama (Topic: Period Dress and Décor)	6
THEATRE 970	Collaborative Design & Technology Studio ²	6
Skills (Crafts) courses		6
Electives		12
Total Credits		42

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² Students must take 6 credits of THEATRE 970 Collaborative Design & Technology Studio.

Lighting Design ¹

Code	Title	Credits
Design courses		9
Drafting course		3
THEATRE 619	Special Topics in Theatre and Drama (Topic: Period Dress and Décor)	6
THEATRE 970	Collaborative Design & Technology Studio ²	6
Skills courses		6
Electives		12
Total Credits		42

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² Students must take 6 credits of THEATRE 970 Collaborative Design & Technology Studio.

Scenic Design ¹

Code	Title	Credits
Design courses		9
Drafting course		3
THEATRE 619	Special Topics in Theatre and Drama (Topic: Period Dress and Décor)	6
THEATRE 970	Collaborative Design & Technology Studio ²	6
Skills courses		9
Electives		9
Total Credits		42

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² Students must take 6 credits of THEATRE 970 Collaborative Design & Technology Studio.

Theatre Technology¹

Code	Title	Credits
Technical Design courses		12
Drafting course		3
Technical Management courses		9
THEATRE 970	Collaborative Design & Technology Studio	3
Electives		15
Total Credits		42

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POLICIES**GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES**

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES**PRIOR COURSEWORK****Graduate Work from Other Institutions**

With program approval, students may count no more than 18 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions.

UW–Madison Undergraduate

With program approval, students may count up to 7 credits numbered 300 or above.

UW–Madison University Special

With program approval, students may count up to 15 credits numbered 700 or above.

PROBATION

Each of the MFA Specializations in Costume Design, Lighting Design, Scene Design, and Theatre Technology conducts separate reviews of students each semester by portfolio and/or oral examination. Students may be placed on probation if program faculty determines that they are not meeting the expectations of their specific degree requirements.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

A thesis or final creative project must be prepared under the direction and guidance of a major professor.

Committee consists of four members—advisor and three other committee members.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

TIME CONSTRAINTS

The MFA Specializations in Costume Design, Lighting Design, Scene Design, and Theatre Technology generally follow a three-year timeline and variations from this must be approved by the degree program head.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
 - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Dean of Students Office (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employee disabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

Any student who feels that they have been treated unfairly by a faculty or staff member has the right to complain about the treatment and to receive a prompt hearing of the grievance, following these grievance procedures. The complaint may concern course grades, classroom treatment, program admission, or other issues. To insure a prompt and fair hearing of any complaint, and to protect both the rights of the student and the person at whom the complaint is addressed, the procedures below are used in the School of Education.

The person whom the complaint is directed against must be an employee of the School of Education. Any student or potential student may use these procedures unless the complaint is covered by other campus rules or contracts. The following steps are available within the School of Education when a student has a grievance:

1. The student should first talk with the person against whom the grievance is directed. Most issues can be settled at this level. If the complaint is directed against a teaching assistant, and the student is not satisfied, the next step would be to talk to the TA's supervisor, who is usually the course professor. If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, the student may continue to step 2.

2. If the complaint does not involve an academic department, the procedure outlined in Step 4 below should be followed. If the complaint involves an academic department, the student should contact the chair of the department. The chair will attempt to resolve the problem informally. If this cannot be done to the student's satisfaction, the student may submit the grievance to the chair in writing. This must be done within 60 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment.
3. On receipt of a written complaint, the chair will refer the matter to a departmental committee, which will obtain a written response from the person at whom the complaint is directed. This response shall be shared with the person filing the grievance. The chair will provide a timely written decision to the student on the action taken by the committee.
4. If either party is not satisfied with the decision of the department, they have five working days from receipt of the decision to contact the dean's office (at the number below), indicating the intention to appeal. If the complaint does not involve an academic department in the school, the student must contact the dean's office within 60 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment.
5. In either case, there will be an attempt to resolve the issue informally by the associate dean. If this cannot be done, the complaint can be filed in writing with the dean's office. This must be done within 10 working days of the time the appealing party was notified that informal resolution was unsuccessful.
6. On receipt of such a written complaint, the associate dean will convene a subcommittee of the school's Equity & Diversity Committee. This subcommittee may ask for additional information from the parties involved and may hold a hearing at which both parties will be asked to speak separately. The subcommittee will then make a written recommendation to the dean of the School of Education who will render a decision. Unless a longer time is negotiated, this written decision shall be made within 20 working days from the date when the grievance was filed with the dean's office.

Questions about these procedures can be directed to the School of Education Dean's Office, 377 Education Building, 1000 Bascom Mall, 608-262-1763.

State law contains additional provisions regarding discrimination and harassment. Wisconsin Statutes 36.12 reads, in part: "No student may be denied admission to, participation in or the benefits of, or be discriminated against in any service, program, course or facility of the system or its institutions or center because of the student's race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, disability, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status or parental status." In addition, UW–System prohibits discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression. Students have the right to file discrimination and harassment complaints with the Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>), 361 Bascom Hall, 608-265-6018, uwcomplianceoffice@wisc.edu.

OTHER

Qualified candidates are considered for 33% TA positions as the budget allows.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Exhibit exceptional skill and professional competence in theatre practice exemplified by a knowledge and achievement signified by a large body of work.
2. Applies advanced analytical levels of inquiry and investigation in the creation, performance, production, or communication of theatre practice.
3. Possesses a broad knowledge of theatre literature as well as visual and cultural history and applies that knowledge to the production process.
4. Demonstrates the requisite artistic and technical skills to meet professional standards.
5. Formulates ideas, concepts, designs, performances and/or techniques that advance the field.
6. Articulates complex ideas in a clear and understandable manner.
7. Recognizes and applies principles of ethical and professional conduct.
8. Collaborates effectively, creatively, and generously through respect for the contributions of others.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Associate Professor Dan Lisowski (chair), Professors Patricia Boyette, David Furumoto and Patrick Sims, Associate Professor Gail Brassard, Assistant Professors Shuxing Fan and Colleen Conroy