

Theatre Arts

The major and minor in theatre arts are administered by the Department of Theatre Arts: Professors Babb (*director of theatre*, on leave spring 2012), James (*chair*); Assistant Professors O’Harra (on leave fall 2011), Rundle; Guest Artists Conly, Connelly; Visiting Instructor Daniels; Lecturers/Professional Staff Bergeron, Dubin, Mauran.

Contact Persons

Barbara Bunyan, *theatre manager, senior administrative assistant*
Vanessa James, *chair*
Roger Babb, *director of theatre*

Requirements for the Major

A major must acquire a foundation in the three areas of design, performance (acting and directing), and theatre history and dramatic theory, but thereafter she is free to tailor her program to fit her particular interests. With her faculty advisor, she is expected to assume responsibility for the shape and emphasis of her theatre training, through elective courses and practical experiences, as part of an overall liberal arts education. All majors must fulfill a production card (see advisor).

Credits

- Eight courses (32 credits)
- At least 12 credits at the 300 level

Courses

- One course in design:
 - 120, Topics in Design
 - 122, Design I
 - 126, Lighting Design I
 - 128, Sound Design I
 - 220, Topics in Design
 - 222, Scene Design II
 - 224, Costume Design II
 - 228, Sound Design II
 - 320, Topics in Design
- One course in performance
 - 105, Acting
 - 115, Topics in Performance

- 205, Acting II
- 215, Topics in Performance
- 315, Topics in Performance
- Two courses in theatre history:
 - Theatre Arts 251, Histories of Performance I
 - Theatre Arts 252, Histories of Performance II
- One course in dramatic literature (offered through any department) or one theatre seminar (350)
- 12 credits of electives, of which 8 must be taken within the department (limited to 8 practicum credits)

Other

* Lab: Every 100-level theatre arts course has a lab component. Theatre labs, much like those in the sciences, consist of outside work that complements a course. Labs (also known as crew) require participation in one of the two mainstage productions of the semester. A student may choose to work on a preparation crew (3 hours per week for 4-5 weeks—building of sets, lighting, or costumes) *or* work on a running crew (a more concentrated time period over 10 days) as a vital member of the production team. Students will receive professional training in the area in which they choose to participate. A lab is a graded portion of the course.

Senior Honors Thesis Requirements and Procedures: Students wishing to write a senior honors thesis in the department must demonstrate excellence in critical writing and the desire to explore a topic in depth through extensive research. In certain cases, traditional research methods may be supplemented by creative work, as long as that work is understood to be an organic part of the written thesis, and vice versa.

The student should discuss her interest with a faculty member in the department and work closely with him or her throughout the entire process. Two additional readers should be included on the student’s committee.

By February 1 of her junior year, the student should submit a proposal to the chair of the department that includes the following:

- A brief explanation of why she wants to pursue an honors thesis.
- A three- to five-page description of the thesis. This should include an introduction to the subject, a breakdown of chapters and their contents, a tentative schedule for completion of the work, and a preliminary bibliography. If additional research outside the College is required, this must also be detailed.
- Two samples of critical writing, preferably papers from previous classes, with professors' comments included.

Note: If creative work is involved as a form of research, the proposal must include a clear explanation of the relationship between artistic practice and critical writing, the resources needed to complete the artistic work, and a schedule for doing so.

The department will meet to discuss the proposals early in the spring semester. If any revisions to the proposal are suggested, the student should submit them to the chair as soon as possible.

Final decisions will be announced by March 1, and are based on the student's demonstrated abilities, the feasibility of the particular topic, and the availability of faculty resources.

Independent Study: Independent studies are available to qualified students wishing to explore course work that is not offered at the Five Colleges. To submit an independent study proposal for department approval, the student, in collaboration with the instructor, must provide the following:

- A written outline clearly articulating the reasons for the independent study.
- A suggested schedule of study, including the number and nature of written assignments, possible reading list, and the expectations of the student and her instructor.
- A brief narrative stating the student's qualifications for independent, intensive work.

Timeline: A complete proposal should be submitted by the end of the semester before the time of proposed study.

Requirements for the Minor

Credits

- A minimum of 16 credits above the 100 level

Courses

- At least one course at the 300 level

Teacher Licensure

Students interested in pursuing licensure in the field of theatre can combine their course work in theatre arts with a minor in education. In some instances, course work in the major coincides with course work required for licensure; in other cases, it does not. For specific course requirements for licensure within the major of theatre arts, please consult your advisor or the chair of the theatre arts department.

For information about the requirements for the minor in education, please consult "Teacher Licensure" in the Other Degree and Certificate Programs chapter and Ms. Lawrence in the psychology and education department. Licensure also requires a formal application as well as passing scores on the Massachusetts Test of Educator Licensure (MTEL) in both the literacy component and the subject matter component. Licensure application information and materials and Copies of the test objectives for the MTEL are available in the Department of Psychology and Education.

Course Offerings

105fs Acting I

An introduction to performance through a variety of improvisational exercises designed for developing basic techniques. After exploring visual, aural, tactical, and literary performance sources, the students will rehearse and present two performance projects.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

R. Babb, S. Daniels

Prereq. preference to first-years and

sophomores.; 2 meetings (2hours) and lab; \$10 lab fee; 4 credits

120s Topics in Design: Costume Construction

This course will explore the evolution of costume construction, using both historical and modern methods. Commercial patterning, flat patterning, and draping methods will be covered. Students will learn skills for the construction, care, identification, and treatment of fabric and the use and maintenance of tools used in the costume shop. Through these methods we will interpret costume renderings by prominent designers.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

E. Bergeron

Prereq. preference to fy and so; lab fee \$25; additional purchase of construction supplies and materials is the responsibility of the student.; 4 credits

122f Design I

An introduction to the art and work of the set and costume designer in the performing arts. Students will learn how a designer approaches a script, how their work impacts a production, and what means are used in the execution of this process. They will learn how to develop their own visual imaginations and how to create visual concepts through discussions, renderings, and models. No previous experience in theatre, performance, or the visual arts is required.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

V. James, S. Conly

lab; \$30. lab fee. Additional purchase of design supplies and materials is the responsibility of the student.; 4 credits

126f Lighting Design I

An introduction to the art and practice of lighting design (with some sound design) for the theatre. This course will cover the basics about light, lighting equipment and how to develop a design. Students will learn how to draft a light plot, focus lights, and build light cues.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

L. Dubin

lab; purchase of design supplies, materials, and theatre tickets is the responsibility of the student; 4 credits

150f What Is Performance?

(First-year seminar; writing-intensive course; Same as Critical Social Thought 100f-03)

What's the difference between acting and being, and how does the idea of "performance" structure this difference? How do we "perform" our own identities, and how do we interpret the performances of others? This seminar offers a basic introduction to performance studies, an exciting new discipline through which everyday life, ritual behaviors, and artistic practices are studied. Perspectives from the arts, humanities, and social sciences will be explored using both textual and performative approaches. This is a speaking-, reading-, and writing-intensive class that includes innovative individual and group exercises.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

E. Rundle

Prereq. fy or permission of instructor; 4 credits

180s Introduction to Technical Theatre

This course will examine the materials and techniques used in building and operating theatrical scenery. It will include prop building, rigging, and welding for the theatre. Students will learn the skills to work in the scene shop interpreting scenic designs for department productions.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

R. Mauran

lab; purchase of design supplies, materials, and theatre tickets is the responsibility of the student; 4 credits

215s Topics in Performance: Scene Study

Topics courses offer a specific approach to performing. They may include mask characterization, physical theatre techniques, acting Shakespeare, and vocal training, among others.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

The department

Prereq. Theatre Arts 105 and permission of instructor; 4 credits

220fs Topics in Design

Various topics in theatrical design, or in related design fields, including theory, practice, and history. Subjects may include opera performance and design, costume crafts, domestic interiors, and materials and techniques.

The course combines historical study with studio work.

Fall 2011

220f(1) Makeup and Hair Design

Using basic painting and three-dimensional techniques, students will learn the fundamentals of stage makeup design and application. Included in the course are units on corrective makeup, aging techniques, realistic and fantasy character makeup, facial prosthetics, hair, and facial hair. Note: Students will be responsible for some of the cost of course materials and for the purchase of a student makeup kit.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

S. Conly

Prereq. one theatre arts course and permission of instructor; preference to theatre arts majors; 4 credits

220f(2) Sound for Theatre and Film

This course examines the theory, practice, and history of theatrical sound design. The course will make use of classroom projects and the current Rooke Theatre productions to develop the students' sound designs. While sound and music for theatre will be the focus, students of film, TV, and music composition are encouraged to apply.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

B. Connelly

Prereq. one theatre course or permission of instructor; 4 credits

Spring 2012

220s(1) Design Studio

This is a course for students who have taken Design I and would like to explore this discipline further. At the 200 level, students may focus on either set or costume design, visualizing a play from initial ideas to a complete presentation as a portfolio project. They will also assist in the development and execution of designs for the department's productions. May be taken at the 300 level dependent upon course work. A student accepted at 300 level will be fully responsible for the set or costume design for a department production.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

V. James

Prereq. Theatre Arts 122. Preference for taking

one or more of the following and work on production crews: painting, drawing, sculpture, architecture, costume and/or set construction, lighting design.; lab fee of \$20.; 4 credits

234s Topics in Theatre Studies: Queer Theory, Performance, and Public Practice

(Speaking-intensive course; Same as Gender Studies 223s(01)) How are gender and sexuality constructed, rehearsed, and contested through performance? How can queer cultural production serve as a method of activist intervention in dominant culture? In this course, students are introduced to the central theories and debates in queer studies, with attention to the intersections among gender, sexuality, race, and class. Students also see, write about, and discuss performances that critically engage queer discourses. Additionally, this course asks students to put theory into practice: students stage scenes from selected plays, create original performances inspired by course readings, and experiment with other performative interventions in public culture.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

J. Pryor

4 credits

251f Histories of Performance I

(Same as Critical Social Thought 252f(01)) A survey of world performance history, including: the evolution of human language and consciousness; the rise of oral, ritual, and shamanic performance; religious and civic festivals; and imperial theatre practices that position the stage at the dangerous intersection of religious worship, public taste, royal patronage, and government censure. Understanding performance as both artistic practice and social institution, this course emphasizes the role performance has played in changing audiences and as a cultural and political force in various societies. We explore not only how performances were created—in terms of design, dramaturgy, architecture, and acting—but also for whom, and why.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets

Humanities I-A requirement

E. Rundle

4 credits

252s Histories of Performance II

A historical survey of dramatic texts and world performance traditions from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, with attention given to: the influence of print culture on early modern theatrical movements; the rise of nationalism and the creation of dramatic genres; and the effects of industry and technology on experimental modernist forms. Understanding performance as both artistic practice and social institution, this course emphasizes the role performance has played in changing audiences and as a cultural and political force. As such, we explore not only how performances are created—in terms of design, dramaturgy, architecture, and acting—but for whom, and why.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-A requirement

E. Rundle

Prereq. Theatre Arts 251; 4 credits

281fs Shakespeare

(Speaking-intensive course; Same as English 211) A study of some of Shakespeare's plays, emphasizing both the poetic and the dramatic aspects of his art, with attention to the historical context and varieties of critical interpretations, including those of the twentieth century. Nine or ten plays.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

E. Hill, F. Brownlow

Prereq. soph, jr, sr or permission of instructor; 4 credits

282fs Theatre Practicum

Fall 2011

282f(2)

Rehearsal and performance TBA, directed by Roger Babb, November 10-13 and November 18-20.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

R. Babb

Prereq. by audition or interview only; 2-4 credits

Spring 2012

282s(1)

Rehearsal and performance TBA

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

B. O'Harra

Prereq. by audition or interview only; 2-4 credits

282s(2) Uncommon Women and Others

Rehearsal and performance of *Uncommon Women and Others* by Wendy Wasserstein, April 2012.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

B. O'Harra

Prereq. by audition or interview only; 2-4 credits

283s Playwriting

(Writing-intensive course) This course offers practice in the fundamentals of dramatic structure and technique. Weekly reading assignments will examine the unique nature of writing for the theatre, nuts and bolts of format, tools of the craft, and the playwright's process from formulating a dramatic idea to rewriting. Weekly writing assignments will include scenework, adaptation, and journaling. The course will culminate in the writing of a one-act play. Each class meeting will incorporate reading student work aloud with feedback from the instructor and the class. Students will listen, critique, and develop the vocabulary to discuss plays, structure, story, and content.

Does not meet a distribution requirement

The department

Prereq. an English writing course, one course in theatre arts, or permission of instructor; lab fee \$10, may be re-taken at 300 level with permission of instructor; 4 credits

295fs Independent Study

Does not meet a distribution requirement

The department

Prereq. permission of instructor and the department; 1-4 credits

***332s Modern Drama**

(Same as English 332) A history of drama in Europe, America, and Africa from the late nineteenth century to the present. Readings include plays by Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Shaw, O'Casey, Pirandello, O'Neill, Brecht, Williams, Miller, Beckett, Pinter, Hansberry, Soyinka, Aidoo, Shepard, Fugard, Norman, Wilson, and Parks.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

J. Lemly

Prereq. jr, sr, 8 credits in English or in theatre arts, or permission of instructor; satisfies theatre arts department seminar.; 4 credits

350fs Seminar

Fall 2011

350f(1) Performance Criticism Workshop

This seminar immerses students in the Five College theatre scene, with opportunities for travel to regional professional theatres. By approaching live performance from a critical perspective, students rethink how they see, understand, and respond as audience members. How does the practice of theatre-going relate to public discourse? What is the social function of theatre today? Weekly readings include contemporary theatre criticism and selected plays. Each student writes a number of short reviews over the semester. In-class workshops provide opportunities for discussion and revision. Students learn the arts of editing and offering feedback to others.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

E. Rundle

Prereq. sr or jr with Theatre Arts 251 and 252; soph with permission of instructor; This course may be taken more than once. Purchase of theatre tickets is the responsibility of the student.; 4 credits

Spring 2012

350s(1) Wasserstein and Her World

(Same as Gender Studies 333s(01)) This course coincides with MHC's yearlong celebration of renowned American playwright Wendy Wasserstein '71. Readings include Wasserstein's complete works, Julie Salamon's new biography *Wendy and the Lost Boys*, and critical essays that place Wasserstein in the context of feminist theatre practice. Students will have the opportunity to conduct archival research using the Wasserstein Papers, and will participate in numerous campus events, including the Weissman Center's playwriting symposium and guest lectures by visiting scholars and artists. As dramaturgs for the department's production of *Uncommon Women*, the class will create a substantial program honoring Wasserstein and her legacy.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

E. Rundle

Prereq. permission of instructor, with preference to Theatre Arts and Gender Studies majors; 4 credits

350s(2) 150 Years in American Theatre

(Same as English 345) This course will move from April 1865, when Lincoln was assassinated in a Washington theater while laughing at a hugely successful British comedy, to the present day, when revivals of the classic American playtexts grace major theaters in London. We shall follow the emergence of a distinctively national drama, responding to British precedents early, and more recently incorporating more diverse, even international, perspectives. Playwrights studied include Susan Glaspell, Langston Hughes, Eugene O'Neill, Edward Albee, Miguel Piñero, August Wilson, David Mamet, Suzan-Lori Parks, David Henry Hwang, Lynn Nottage, and Will Eno.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

H. Holder

Prereq. 8 credits in the department or in related subjects or permission of instructor; 4 credits

*382s Theatre Practicum

Rehearsal and performance of mainstage production, and research papers. Weekly evening rehearsals—minimum of 4 nights per week at 3-4 hrs per rehearsal. Intensive weekend technical rehearsals followed by performances.

Meets Humanities I-A requirement

R. Babb

Prereq. By audition or interview only.; 4 credits

395fs Independent Study

Does not meet a distribution requirement

The department

Prereq. permission of instructor and the department; 1-8 credits