

Disciplinary Communication in Theater Arts

Educational Objectives

The Theatre Arts Department holds as fundamental the integration of theory and practice. Our majors enter the world of theater and dance as scholars, performers, playwrights, directors, administrators, technicians and dramaturgs. Success in each of these areas depends upon solid written and oral communication skills. The inherently collaborative nature of theater and dance demands that all involved be able to clearly speak and write so as to clarify and reach communal goals. As well as these necessities our playwrights must forge their unique artistic vision through poetic use of language that meets the rigor of plot and structure.

Writing

Theatre Arts students learn to

1. Write critical and analytical essays on individual playwrights, theorists and theater/dance history.
2. Write critical analyses of live performance, concentrating on scripts, acting/movement, and design.
3. Produce original dramatic scripts.
4. Produce grant proposals, cover letters and resumes.

Speaking/Presentation

Students learn to

1. Orally present and articulate their ideas about their own work in acting, theory, playwriting and design courses
2. Communicate clearly with faculty, staff and peers within the collaborative process of artmaking. This oral discussion is ongoing throughout all Department productions and is vital to the theater/dance student scholar/practitioner.
3. Analyze and discuss the work of others in structured post-production meetings. These

discussions identify the strengths and weaknesses of each specific Department production (the artwork itself and the process).

II. How the educational goals are met in the Curriculum

All Majors are required to take TA 20: introductory Studies in Acting as well as TA 61: Issues and Methods

TA 20: Introductory Studies in Acting (GE Codes IH, A)

The course concentrates on expanding the students' range of expression and ability to respond to and analyze dramatic text. The course teaches all majors a basic foundation of analysis and oral presentation techniques. In addition, students write concise, in-depth analyses of the four plays examined in the course as well as maintain an on-going log of their rehearsal processes.

TA 61: Issues and Methods (GE Code IH, A)

This course introduces the student to the variety of methods used to analyze/contextualize both theater texts and performance history. Through lectures, readings and discussion the student encounters a range of theories, plays and methodologies. The course places particular emphasis on the study of historical variations of presentation, the actor/audience relationship, the playwright's and director's roles throughout theater history, as well as the role of visual design in performance.

Students read plays and theater history, applying critical analysis to both text and performance. Primary written work consists of two papers (5 pages minimum) that focus on research and analysis of theatrical historical movements. Students create and present original performances (individual and ensemble works). Each student must produce a

shorter (2-page) paper explaining that creative process. Participation in class and section discussions is an integral part of this class.

All majors are required to take 3 upper-division Theater Arts courses. Typical among them are 100A Asian Theater, 124 Movement for Performers and 157 Playwriting.

TA 100A Asian Theater (GE Code A,E)

Students are exposed to major theoretical treatises, core narratives or texts and genres. Each student must write a 7 page research paper on a topic decided upon by the student and teacher. All students also participate in and present a performance project and write a concise explanation of their process.

TA 124 Movement for Performers (GE Code A)

In addition to rigorous movement training the student is required to present a monologue. In addition, all students must write two 3 to 5 page papers analyzing both the class' and their own process and progress.

TA 157 Playwriting (GE Code W,A)

The process of writing and revising one's original work for the stage is the ongoing work of the class. A basic requirement of eleven structured exercises leads to both a volume of written work as well as oral analyses and critiques between students and teacher in and outside of class.

All Majors are required to take TA 160: Dramatic Theories and TA 185: Senior Seminar

TA 160 Dramatic Theories (GE Code A)

Required of all majors, the course centers on in-depth analysis of seminal intellectual movements in 19th and 20th century theater. Participation in class discussion is mandatory. All students are required to write a 10 to 12 page paper. The paper progresses from a proposal through an outline and/or rough draft, culminating in a final draft. Students meet with the instructor prior to the writing of the final draft.

Required 161 courses include TA 161M Sexuality, Gender, Drama and Performance (GE Code A). Students study in-depth a minimum of eleven plays in addition to the course's required textual reading. Each student gives a twenty-minute presentation in class. The presentation is accompanied by a 10 page paper on a topic assigned by the teacher.

TA 185 Senior Seminar

Required of all majors, the course focuses on the practice and theory of contemporary theater. The course prepares the student for their work after graduation. Students are required to attend performances and then write critical analyses of 2 - 3 pages. Students also write several drafts of an introductory cover letter and resume as well as fill out an application to a graduate program, complete with a letter of intent.

Further, students perform original or contemporary dramatic texts. The rehearsal process - being brief - demands that the student present questions, debates and insights clearly and succinctly.

Conclusion:

The Theatre Arts department creates scholar-artists whose work combines intellectual rigor, critical acuity and artistic daring. Our curriculum is based on the intertwining of theory and practice and provides our majors with multiple opportunities to strengthen their written and verbal communication skills. By deepening these skills, our students have the capacity to clarify and communicate their own artistic visions as well as to analyze and appreciate the work of artists and practitioners who went before them.