

# THEATRE

## Departmental Guidelines & Mission

The goals of the theatre major are twofold: first, to provide students with a working knowledge of the fundamental principles of each of the several arts of the theatre, offering opportunities for practical application of those principles in stage production; and second, to develop analytical skill, facility in problem-solving, historical perspective, and appreciation of aesthetic form.

The programs in theatre aim to develop the skills of thoughtful inquiry, informed judgment, and imaginative response that are fundamental to the rewarding pursuit of any profession. In addition, these programs aim to provide a sound basis for graduate study in theatre.

## Faculty

Chair: Associate Professor Mark Evans Bryan

Associate Professors: Mark Evans Bryan, Cheryl Kennedy McFarren

Assistant Professors: James Dennen, Bradley Frenette, Aviva Neff, Eleni Papaleonardos; Affiliated Instructors Nate Glowacki, Laura Plikerd, Camille Lerner

Academic Program Coordinator: Kristi Mathews

Academic Administrative Assistant: Cristina Dorda Soriano

View faculty profiles and contact information (<https://denison.edu/academics/theatre/contacts/>)

## Theatre Major

The **major in Theatre** divides the work of our students into three areas – **Theatre-Making, History & Theory**, and the **Emphasis** – which together culminate in a **Senior Project experience**.

### Theatre-Making

(16 credit hours: *both 100 and 200, either 301 or 302, and also 4 credits of Laboratory experience in the production laboratories of the Department of Theatre*)

Code	Title
THTR 100	Introduction to Theatre-making
THTR 200	Intermediate Theatre-making
THTR 301	Advanced Theatre-Making: Performers, Directors, and Text
THTR 302	Advanced Theatre-Making: Devising and Collective Making

### History & Theory of the Theatre

(12 credit hours: *any two of the following 300-level History & Theory courses and one Theatre Seminar*)

Code	Title
THTR 371	History, Literature, and Theory of the Theatre: Premodern World
THTR 372	History, Literature, and Theory of the Theatre: Early Modern Europe
THTR 373	History, Literature, and Theory of the Theatre: Modern World

THTR 374	History, Literature, and Theory of the Theatre: Theatre of the Americas
and one	
THTR 470	Theatre Seminar

### Emphasis

(12 credit hours: *Three elective course in Theatre or a combination of Theatre and other fields of inquiry.*)

### Senior Project

(4 credit hours: *Successful completion of the "Senior Project" or THTR 451/452 Senior Research.*)

### The Emphasis and Senior Project in the Major

Every student who majors in Theatre, by the end of the sophomore year, will propose an **Emphasis** in this major. After consulting with their advisor, the student will propose to the faculty of the Department of Theatre three courses and a subfield or unifying idea (at this same time, the student will also propose four alternate courses). The courses will either provide experiences of increasing depth in a sub-disciplinary area of theatre or explore related questions and ideas in the context of theatre study or theatre-making. The self-designed emphasis will culminate in a one- or two-semester **Senior Project**, which might be creative or research-oriented or both. Both the Emphasis and the Senior Project are subject to approval by the faculty of the Department of Theatre.

In their emphasis, a student could elect to follow a traditional sub-disciplinary path (Acting or Playwriting, for instance), a more specific but still traditional path (Music Theatre or Costume Design, for instance), a theoretical or theme-oriented concentration ("Theatre and Social Change" or "Gender and Performance," for instance), or a generalist path (provided the student could offer a meaningful justification for that plan). This coursework will take advantage of the advanced courses offered in the Department of Theatre and also, potentially, the offerings of the rest of the college. As in the college's Individually Designed Major, it will be the responsibility of the student to complete prerequisite courses necessary and to have developed a group of alternate courses in the event that they are unable to register for a proposed course. Senior Projects may either operate as individual projects with direct mentorship from a faculty member or as major contributions to our Laboratories in the sub-disciplinary areas of theatre-making, advised by faculty and in collaboration with faculty, staff, and peers.

## Theatre Minor

The **minor in Theatre**, requires the **Theatre-making core** (THTR 100, 200, and either 301 or 302); one course from the **History & Theory** sequence; **one elective course**; and **two credit hours of Laboratory work**.

## Courses

### **THTR 100 - Introduction to Theatre-making (4 Credit Hours)**

An introduction to theatrical design and performance that engages the question "How and why is theatre made?" conducted in a combined discussion/workshop format. The course establishes a vocabulary for understanding basic theatrical conventions, roles, and practices, and provides opportunities for exploring the making of theatre through building student capacities in creativity, communication, and collaboration. Students will explore visual methods of interpreting a text (or idea) and will work collaboratively in weekly "Co-Labs" to solve problems and apply skills discussed in their other sessions. Because collaborative theatre-making relies upon effective oral communication skills, students will learn and practice the multiple types of oral communication throughout the course.

### **THTR 110 - Theatre Laboratory: Performance I (1 Credit Hour)**

A workshop and laboratory in which students perform in a role in a department theatre production which requires attendance, attention, and creative work under the direct instruction by the director and/or supervising faculty member.

### **THTR 111 - Theatre Laboratory: Performance II (2 Credit Hours)**

A workshop and laboratory in which students perform in a substantial role (in a department theatre production) which requires attendance, attention, and creative work at greater than 50% of the total hours of direct instruction by the director and/or supervising faculty member.

### **THTR 120 - Theatre Laboratory: Costume & Make-up Running Crew (1 Credit Hour)**

A workshop laboratory in which students serve on the costume and/or makeup running crew for a departmental theatre production.

### **THTR 126 - Costume Crafts II (2 Credit Hours)**

A hands-on course for students interested in learning construction techniques used in the creation of costumes for the stage. Each student will be developing more advanced sewing and costume construction skills. The course will cover draping and millinery and accessories construction.

### **THTR 130 - Theatre Laboratory: Scenery & Lights Running Crew (1 Credit Hour)**

A workshop laboratory in which students serve on the scenery and/or lights running crew for a departmental theatre production.

### **THTR 135 - Theatre Laboratory: Scenic Construction (1 Credit Hour)**

A workshop laboratory in which students learn the fundamentals of scenic stagecraft through practical application in the department's scene shop.

### **THTR 136 - Theatre Laboratory: Lighting and Electrics (1 Credit Hour)**

A workshop laboratory in which students learn the fundamentals of electrics stagecraft through practical application in the department's lighting and electrics shop and theatres.

### **THTR 182 - Theatre Laboratory: Assistant Stage Manager (1 Credit Hour)**

A production workshop in which the student an assistant stage manager for a departmental theatre production.

### **THTR 185 - Speaking as a Fine Art (1-4 Credit Hours)**

This is a special topics course.

### **THTR 190 - Theatre Laboratory: Special Topics (1-4 Credit Hours)**

A production workshop and directed study in which a student serves in some special capacity for a departmental theatre production.

### **THTR 195 - Special Topics in Theatre (1-4 Credit Hours)**

This course will explore a variety of special topics in the Theatre Arts.

### **THTR 199 - Introductory Topics in Theatre (1-4 Credit Hours)**

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

### **THTR 200 - Intermediate Theatre-making (4 Credit Hours)**

This course builds upon Introduction to Theatre-making (THTR100), which highlighted design collaboration and visual storytelling, by deepening students' understanding of textual analysis, vocabularies of staging bodies in space, the productive relationship between staging and Text (and other forms of organizing influence), and collaboration between performers and directors. Texts, as a point of origin for staging exercises, will vary, including extant dramatic literature (plays), narrative material for adaptation to the stage, poetry, folklore, and other elements (including students' own experiences), by which students will construct interpretive goals and make staging choices. Working together alternately as performers and directors, students will create/make unique Performance Texts, deriving some of their direction from the original Text and some through personal resonances and intentions which emerge as interpretation. Students will also develop new proficiencies with vocabularies of staging and they will practice collaboratively through in-class exercises and out-of-class group work on larger projects, which culminate in presentations, peer feedback, and constructive critique through discussion. Written work for the course includes text analyses, concept descriptions, and reflections on the collaborative process. Course work also includes quizzes on theoretical and practical reading assignments.

**Prerequisite(s):** THTR 100.

### **THTR 210 - Elements of Acting (4 Credit Hours)**

This course will introduce students to the process of acting, provide a solid foundation in a realistic acting technique and aid in developing the skills for creating a role. Students will learn the importance of warming up as an actor; utilize a series of exercises aimed at sharpening the imagination and emotional expression; and develop the actor skills of concentration and attention, relaxation and breathing, playing objectives, and overcoming obstacles. Students will also attend and analyze the Denison Department of Theatre mainstage productions.

### **THTR 220 - Elements of Costume and Makeup Design (4 Credit Hours)**

This course will study the elements and principles of visual design and the processes of the costume and makeup designer. There will be hands-on projects creating costume designs and makeup designs for theatrical characters. Skills of makeup application and drawing/painting will be developed throughout the semester. Other covered topics include textual analysis, style, and visual character development.

### **THTR 230 - Elements of Scenic and Lighting Design (4 Credit Hours)**

This course is intended to introduce the student to the basic theories, practices, and functions of theatrical scenic and lighting design and the responsibilities of scenic and lighting designers. The course will examine the design process from initial concept through finished design.

### **THTR 240 - Elements of Playwriting (4 Credit Hours)**

An introductory course in the writing of drama. The course will involve the reading and discussion of assigned play texts as well as of peer-student writing. Students will complete weekly reading assignments, weekly written response assignments, and a series of creative exercises focused on technique, structure, and storytelling. Students will also have in-class workshop opportunities and the responsibility to engage in critical dialogues with their classmates. The final project is a short, original script.

**THTR 270 - Elements of Dramatic Art (4 Credit Hours)**

A study in the fundamental questions and theories of dramatic art in general and theatrical art in particular. Areas of investigation will include the function and purposes of dramatic art, its role in human societies, and its essential nature as an art form. Intriguing questions to be explored will include: What is drama? What is theatre? Why has it been a part of every human civilization? What does it do for us? What does it do to us? Has the fact that we are now inundated with dramatic art on a daily basis changed society?

**THTR 275 - Fashion: History, Culture and Identity (4 Credit Hours)**

An introduction of basic fashion theory and the visual communication of clothing through the study of Western dress with emphasis on how the "fabric" of each period (i.e., the trends in thought, art, culture, politics, and economics) made its impression on the fashion of the day.

**THTR 290 - Improvisation (1-4 Credit Hours)**

This is a special topics course.

**THTR 295 - Special Topics in Theatre (1-4 Credit Hours)**

This course will explore a variety of special topics in the Theatre Arts.

**THTR 299 - Intermediate Topics in Theatre (1-4 Credit Hours)**

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

**THTR 301 - Advanced Theatre-Making: Performers, Directors, and Text (4 Credit Hours)**

This course builds upon Theatre-making 100 and 200 by deepening students' understanding of the collaborative process that takes place between Performers and Directors in relation to Text and Interpretation. In THTR 301, text has the dual feature of working both as a point of origin from which thoughtfully and rigorously produced theatrical work can depart and serving as a measure, benchmark, or standard by which the effectiveness of their theatrical work can be evaluated. In this course – alternating between the role of director and actor/performer – students will encounter narrative centered realist and non-realist plays by which they will formulate full interpretations, make choices, and ask questions about the effectiveness of their staged work. As directors, they will investigate and creatively engage their text in order to inspire, invite, facilitate, and focus performances in keeping with their own original and singular interpretations. As actors, they will develop their own original interpretations of the collaborative parts and roles that they play, which work symbiotically in relation to their director(s)' guiding influence. Within the context of this creative collaborative triangle – between Text, Directors, and Performers – THTR 301 aims to expose students to multifaceted leadership challenges that each include extensive planning and analysis, rehearsals and staging, and engaging constructive critique of their work in the process of refinement of scene-length projects.

**Prerequisite(s):** THTR 100 and THTR 200.

**THTR 302 - Advanced Theatre-Making: Devising and Collective Making (4 Credit Hours)**

Is an advanced studio/workshop seminar in devising and collective making. Each iteration of this course requires its students to make theatre as a unique ensemble of theatre-makers, utilizing the skills of collaboration and communication developed in THTR 100 and 200 and the talents and artistry of advanced theatre students to develop as an ensemble an original performance. Students will create original theatre as an ensemble, both working as part of a collaborative group and exploring the leadership of ensemble-created theatre. This work involves research, composition, directorial techniques, performance, and peer review. Collaborating as an ensemble and using the elements and possibilities of the stage, students will create together in the space, writing performance. In this course students will work in ensembles to create devised pieces of theatre, integrating study of the techniques and methods of major theatre-making companies, culminating in a final original performance project. In addition to creative work, students will hone their skills in articulating their concept, process, and critique, developed in THTR 100 and 200.

**Prerequisite(s):** THTR 100 and THTR 200.

**THTR 310 - Workshop in Acting (4 Credit Hours)**

Intensive work on a specific acting problem. The subject will vary from year to year. Possible topics include: new approaches to developing roles, various styles and theories of acting, interdependency of design and movement, and working with new scripts. Repeatable with consent of instructor.

**Prerequisite(s):** THTR 100 or 210.

**THTR 320 - Workshop in Costume Design (4 Credit Hours)**

An advanced studio course concentrating on specific problems in costume design. There will be an emphasis on textual analysis, style, visual character development, and rendering techniques.

**Prerequisite(s):** THTR 100 or THTR 220.

**THTR 321 - Laboratory: Assistant Costume Designer (2 Credit Hours)**

A production workshop and directed study in which the student serves as Assistant Costume Designer for a departmental theatre production.

**THTR 330 - Workshop in Scenic Design (4 Credit Hours)**

An intermediate course exploring the planning and execution of theatrical scenic design. Students will be presented with a variety of scenic design challenges in a series of design projects.

**Prerequisite(s):** THTR 100 or THTR 230.

**THTR 331 - Theatre Laboratory: Assistant Scenic Designer (2 Credit Hours)**

A production workshop and directed study in which the student serves as Assistant Scenic Designer for a departmental theatre production.

**THTR 336 - Theatre Laboratory: Assistant Lighting Designer (2 Credit Hours)**

A production workshop and directed study in which the student serves as Assistant Lighting Designer for a departmental theatre production.

**THTR 340 - Workshop in Playwriting (4 Credit Hours)**

A workshop course in the writing of drama. The course will involve the reading and discussion of assigned play texts and peer-student writing. Each student will work on a major creative project throughout the semester. Evaluation of a student's work will be based on this project, participation in workshop performance and discussion, and a portfolio of drafts and revisions. The course will conclude with staged readings or performances of the major projects.

**Prerequisite(s):** THTR 240 or ENGL 237 or CINE 202 or consent.

**THTR 345 - Reynolds Playwriting Workshop (4 Credit Hours)**

An advanced playwriting workshop conducted by the Reynolds Playwright-in-Residence. The Jonathan R. Reynolds Playwright-in-Residence endowment provides for a visiting playwright of national or international renown to teach in the Department of Theatre for one semester, every other academic year. The course's content is dependent upon the visiting artist, but the course will typically involve explorations into technique and form and the writing of a major creative project. Past Reynolds Playwrights have included Arnold Wesker, Lee Blessing, Jeffrey Hatcher (DU '80) and Caridad Svich.

**Prerequisite(s):** THTR 240 or permission of instructor.

**THTR 361 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****THTR 362 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****THTR 363 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****THTR 364 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****THTR 371 - History, Literature, and Theory of the Theatre: Premodern Mediterranean World (4 Credit Hours)**

This course explores the relationship among theatrical storytelling traditions and the cultures and audiences that produced them from ancient Africa, Turkey, and Greece to medieval Europe and the Middle East. Major topics of investigation will include evidence of prehistoric theatre forms, ancient Egyptian and pre-Hellenistic theatre and drama in the Mediterranean world, classical and late Hellenistic drama and performance, republican and imperial Roman drama and theatre, the religious and secular theatre of medieval Christian Europe, and the early theatre forms of the Islamic world. Course readings combine primary sources, secondary analyses, and drama and theory texts.

**Prerequisite(s):** Sophomore-Junior-Senior status.

**THTR 372 - History, Literature, and Theory of the Theatre: Early Modern Europe (4 Credit Hours)**

This course explores the tremendous changes in dramatic and performance theory, entertainment culture, dramatic literature and performance, and theatrical production during the early modern period in Europe. Beginning with the Italian Renaissance, the course investigates the drama and theatre of the major theatre cultures of the early modern era—Italy, England, Spain, and France, with a special focus on the English drama—in the context of the rapidly changing culture of European nationalism, mercantilism, and colonialism. Course readings combine primary sources, secondary analyses, and drama and theory texts.

**Prerequisite(s):** Sophomore-Junior-Senior status.

**THTR 373 - History, Literature, and Theory of the Theatre: Modern Africa and Europe (4 Credit Hours)**

This course explores dramatic and performance theory, entertainment culture, and theatrical production during the modern era from the rise of romanticism in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century to the theatre forms that characterized the post-WWII period in the European and African world. Course readings combine primary sources, secondary analyses, and drama and theory texts.

**Prerequisite(s):** Sophomore-Junior-Senior status.

**THTR 374 - History, Literature, and Theory of the Theatre: Theatre of the Americas (4 Credit Hours)**

THTR 374 explores the history of performance, entertainment culture, and theatrical production from pre-Columbian cultures to the popular theatre/performance traditions of the contemporary Americas. Course readings combine primary sources, secondary analyses, and drama texts in English and in translation. Though a significant portion of this course is devoted to the complicated social and artistic forces that produced the current theatre and entertainment cultures in British North America and the United States, THTR 374 also explores theatre traditions in Spanish-speaking North America, Spanish- and French-speaking Caribbean cultures, and Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking South America. THTR 374 explores the history of performance, entertainment culture, and theatrical production from pre-Columbian cultures to the popular theatre/performance traditions of the contemporary Americas. Course readings combine primary sources, secondary analyses, and drama texts in English and in translation. Though a significant portion of this course is devoted to the complicated social and artistic forces that produced the current theatre and entertainment cultures in British North America and the United States, THTR 374 also explores theatre traditions in Spanish-speaking North America, Spanish- and French-speaking Caribbean cultures, and Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking South America. Course readings combine primary sources, secondary analyses, and drama and theory texts.

**Prerequisite(s):** Sophomore-Junior-Senior status.

**THTR 380 - Workshop in Directing (4 Credit Hours)**

This course builds on the fundamentals of composition and staging covered in "Directing: Realism." Elements of composition are reviewed, rethought, and applied to Arena and Thrust stage configurations. Simultaneous movement, symmetrical picturization, and other unrealistic techniques are considered in terms of staging. Collaborative processes with designers will be explored as well as further methods of working with actors. Special attention is given to abstract story telling, musical theatre and opera, dreamscapes, and contemporary drama and comedy.

**THTR 381 - Theatre Laboratory: Assistant Director (2 Credit Hours)**

A production workshop and directed study in which the student serves as Assistant Director for a departmental theatre production.

**THTR 382 - Theatre Laboratory: Stage Manager I (2-4 Credit Hours)**

A production workshop and directed study in which the student serves as the Stage Manager for a departmental theatre production.

**THTR 389 - Workshop in Lighting Design (1-4 Credit Hours)**

This is a special topics course.

**THTR 390 - Historical Costuming and Rendering (1-4 Credit Hours)**

This is a special topics course.

**THTR 391 - Workshop in Solo Performance (4 Credit Hours)**

Workshop in Solo Performance combines the study of solo performance with the exploration of the practice of writing and performing solo performance. Course work includes the discussion and analysis of solo performance texts; the viewing and analysis of recorded solo performances (both documentary records and performances created for the camera); and practical artistic work in dramatic writing and performance. The workshop culminates in both a research project and a creative performance project. Required readings include a variety of forms of solo performance, from early rhapsodic and oral poetry traditions of the Mediterranean world to the modern performances of solo artists.

**Prerequisite(s):** THTR 100 or THTR 210 or THTR 240, or permission of instructor.

**THTR 395 - Special Topics in Theatre (1-4 Credit Hours)**

This course will explore a variety of special topics in the Theatre Arts.

**THTR 399 - Advanced Topics in Theatre (1-4 Credit Hours)**

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

**THTR 410 - Senior Project: Acting (4 Credit Hours)**

The student serves as an Actor for a departmental theatre production.

Prerequisite: Consent of the Faculty.

**THTR 435 - Senior Project: Lighting Design (4 Credit Hours)**

The student serves as Lighting Designer for a departmental theatre production. Prerequisite: Consent of the faculty.

**THTR 440 - Senior Project: Playwriting (4 Credit Hours)**

The student will be the author/creator of a theatrical text presented in the mainstage three laboratory season or in an alternate venue/series under the direct supervision of faculty mentors. Prerequisite: Consent of the faculty.

**THTR 451 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)**

Senior standing and consent from the instructor.

**THTR 452 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)**

Senior standing and consent from the instructor.

**THTR 470 - Theatre Seminar (4 Credit Hours)**

Intensive study of a major playwright, genre, form, or context of dramatic literature; of historical, cultural, aesthetic significance of theatre production during a specific period or particular movement in the history of the theatre; or, of specific movements or artists in design, acting, directing, or other fields of theatre production and performance. The seminar topics will vary. Repeatable.

**Prerequisite(s):** Junior/Senior standing or consent of instructor.

**THTR 480 - Senior Project: Directing (4 Credit Hours)**

The student serves as Director for a departmental theatre production.

Prerequisite: Consent of the faculty.

**THTR 490 - Senior Project: Special Topics (4 Credit Hours)**

The student serves in some capacity on a departmental theatre production.

**Prerequisite(s):** Consent of the faculty.

**THTR 495 - Special Topics in Theatre (1-4 Credit Hours)**

This course will explore a variety of special topics in the Theatre Arts.