THEATER STUDIES

**Director of undergraduate studies:** Shilarna Stokes (shilarna.stokes@yale.edu), Rm. 102, 220 York St., 432-1310; theaterstudies.yale.edu; theaterstudies.yale.edu/dance-studies-yale

As a branch of the humanities and as a complex cultural practice, theater claims a rich history and literature and an equally rich repertoire of embodied knowledge and theory. Theater Studies emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between practice and scholarly study. The major combines practical training with theory and history, while stressing creative critical thinking. Students are encouraged to engage intellectual and physical approaches to explore diverse cultural forms, historical traditions, and contemporary life. As the study of theater is interdisciplinary in scope and global in perspective, students are expected to take courses in cognate disciplines such as history, philosophy, anthropology, political science, film, art, literature, and foreign languages. Faculty members are affiliated with a range of departments; their diverse expertise lends breadth and depth to course offerings and enables students to devise a course of study reflective of their developing interests.

Special features of the program are the production seminars, guided independent study projects, and senior project. Each production seminar concentrates on study, through practice, of one aspect of work in the theater; examples are approaches to acting, directing, writing, dance, design, or digital media in performance. Each seminar involves numerous projects that grow out of the term’s work. For example, the project may be the production of a play or several plays, adaptation or translation of existing works, or creation of original plays, performance pieces, or set design. Independent study projects give the student freedom to pursue individual and group-generated projects under the guidance of a Theater Studies faculty member. All production seminars require permission of the instructor (by application or audition). Independent study project courses are open only to majors.

**PREREQUISITES**
The prerequisites for the major are THST 110 and THST 111.

**REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR**
The major consists of ten term courses beyond the introductory prerequisites (THST 110, 111), one of which must be THST 210, Introduction to Performance Concepts. Students are encouraged to enroll in a balanced combination of courses involving studio work and courses with literature, history, and theory content. Of the ten required term courses, four must focus on dramatic literature or theater history. At least one of the four courses should include dramatic literature originating in a language other than English. Students are urged to read plays in the original languages whenever possible. Students should choose additional courses to develop the perspectives achieved in the production and literature courses.

**Credit/D/Fail** Courses taken Credit/D/Fail may not be counted toward the requirements of the major in Theater Studies.

**SENIOR REQUIREMENTS**
Majors satisfy the senior project requirement in one of two ways. They may, with the approval of the director of undergraduate studies (DUS), take one of the dramatic literature or theater history courses, or a production seminar, as a senior seminar; in such cases, the expectations for the term paper are substantially higher for students using the course to fulfill their senior requirement. Or, a student may undertake a one-term senior project (THST 491). Senior projects may take the form of directing, designing, writing a play or musical, performing a role, choreographing a dance piece, or writing a critical essay. Performance-oriented projects are in addition to a senior essay, which is an integral requirement of THST 491. For students interested in mounting a production as part of their senior project, collaboration with fellow seniors is strongly encouraged, and collaborative projects will be given preference in the selection process. While collaboration is an important criterion considered by the faculty, it in itself does not guarantee that a project will be selected for inclusion in the curricular season. Proposals for senior project productions will normally be approved only for students who have previously served as producers of other students’ senior projects.

Students wishing to undertake a senior project must submit a proposal before the deadline announced by the DUS. This deadline typically falls before spring break of the junior year; students in the junior year will be provided with information and guidance towards the preparation of this rigorous proposal in the months leading up to the deadline. Each proposal is submitted to a faculty committee for approval.

**ADVISING**
**Courses in the School of Drama** Majors in Theater Studies are encouraged to consider taking selected courses in design, dramaturgy, and theater management, with permission of the instructor, the DUS, and the registrar of the School of Drama. Undergraduates may not, however, enroll in acting or directing courses offered by the School of Drama. Students enrolling in School of Drama courses should note that a maximum of four term courses from the professional schools may be offered toward the bachelor’s degree. Students also should note that the academic calendars of the School of Drama and of Yale College differ. The School of Drama calendar should be consulted for scheduling.

**REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR**
**Prerequisites** THST 110, 111
Number of courses  10 term courses beyond prereqs (incl senior req)
Specific course required  THST 210
Distribution of courses  4 courses in dramatic lit or theater hist, 1 with reading in lit other than English
Senior requirement  Senior seminar or senior project (THST 491)

FACULTY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM OF THEATER STUDIES

Professors  Daphne Brooks (African American Studies, American Studies, Theater Studies), James Bundy (School of Drama, Theater Studies), David Chambers (Adjunct), *Toni Dorfman (Adjunct) (Theater Studies), *Daniel Harrison (Music), Joan MacIntosh (Practice) (Theater Studies, School of Drama), *Lawrence Manley (English), *Deb Margolin (Practice) (Theater Studies), Donald Margulies (Adjunct) (English, Theater Studies), *Charles Musser (Film & Media Studies, American Studies, Theater Studies), Tavia Nyong’o (Theater Studies, American Studies), *Marc Robinson (School of Drama, Theater Studies, English), Gregory Wallace (Practice) (School of Drama, Theater Studies)

Associate Professor  Emily Coates (Adjunct) (Theater Studies, School of Drama)

Assistant Professor  Elise Morrison (Theater Studies)


*Member of the Executive Committee for the program.

* THST 093b, Creativity, Collaboration, and the Art of Making Theater  Hal Brooks
Within theater, there is always an initial spark of creation, whether it initiates from the playwright, a group of improvisers, or a combination of playwright and a troupe of actors. This course focuses on how to investigate, analyze, replicate and catalyze that impulse. It sources many art forms as a window into how we create, and attempts to address how artists begin to move from idea to execution. What is creativity? Is it innate? Is it a skill that can be developed? How? What happens when two or more people are involved in that pursuit of creation? Which techniques are common across disciplines? And how might a theater artist learn about creative pursuits from artists in other disciplines including music, design, and fiction as well as theater? Students from all backgrounds and interests will delve into techniques, identifying and integrating habits that foster creativity, creating their own works over the semester, both in small and larger groups, in solo and group projects. Enrollment limited to first year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.

* THST 097b, Anatomy in Motion  Bronwen MacArthur
The connection between advances in human anatomy and kinesiology—the science of human movement—and dance practices from the early 1900s to the present. Study of seminal texts and practical exercises that drove the research of Frederick M. Alexander, Mabel Elsworth Todd, Barbara Clark, and Lulu Swiegard and the application of their ideas in contemporary movement practices today. Topics include the synthesis of dance and science; the reeducation of alignment, posture and balance; the use of imagery; and the unification of mind and body. No prior dance experience required. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.

* THST 098a, Composing and Performing the One Person Play  Hal Brooks
First-year actors, playwrights, directors, and even students who have never considered taking a theater class, create their own work through a combination of reading, analysis, writing, and on-your-feet exercises. Students read texts and view performances that are generated by one actor in an attempt to discover the methodology that works best for their own creations. The course culminates with a midterm and final presentation created and performed by the student. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.

THST 110a and THST 111b, Survey of Theater and Drama  Shilarna Stokes
An introduction to theater history, plays, aesthetic theories, and performance techniques. From antiquity to the Restoration period in the fall and continuing through to the present in the spring.  HU

* THST 200b, Introduction to Theatrical Violence  Michael Rossmy
Engagement in a theoretical and practical exploration of depicting violence in theater. Actors learn to execute the illusions of violence on stage both safely and effectively, and the skills of collaboration, partner awareness, concentration, and impulse response. Preference given to Theater Studies majors.

* THST 207b / ENGL 214b, Introduction to Dramaturgy  Lynda Paul
Introduction to the discipline of dramaturgy. Study of dramatic literature from the ancient world to the contemporary, developing the core skills of a dramaturg. Students analyze plays for structure and logic; work with a director on production of a classical text; work with a playwright on a new play; and work with an ensemble on a devised piece.  WR, HU

* THST 210a, Introduction to Performance Concepts  Staff
A studio introduction to the basic techniques of acting, including the actor’s vocabulary and performance tools. Improvisation, performance exercises, and scene work based on Stanislavsky, Vakhtangov, Michael Chekhov, Strasberg, Adler, Meisner, and Hagen. Admission by audition. Open to Theater Studies majors only. Required for Theater Studies majors in the year immediately following THST 110, 111.  RP

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* THST 211b, Intermediate Acting  
Joan MacIntosh  
Continued study of acting as an art, building on performance concepts introduced in THST 210. Various approaches to the actor’s task, requiring deeper understanding of conceptual issues and increasing freedom and individuality in building a character. Exercises, monologues, and scene work. Admission by audition. Prerequisite: THST 210.  
HU  
* THST 212b, Community Engaged Theater: US Companies, Productions, and Practices  
Shilarna Stokes  
This seminar introduces students to the contemporary art and practice of community engaged theater, which connect professional artists to people from various walks of life who have stories to tell and ideas to express, and who want to explore performance as a medium of communication. Alongside readings that introduce students to the historical, theoretical, ethical, and artistic contexts of community-engaged theater in the United States, students learn about several major companies currently producing work in this field: Theatre of the Oppressed-NYC, Cornerstone Theater Company, Roadside Theater, Sojourn Theatre, Albany Park Theatre Project, and Urban Bush Women. In addition to studying their productions and processes through readings and visual materials, students have regular opportunities to acquire "on-your-feet" practice with techniques used by these companies as well as opportunities to converse with artists in the field.  
HU  
* THST 214a / ENGL 434a, Writing Dance  
Brian Seibert  
The esteemed choreographer Merce Cunningham once compared writing about dance to trying to nail Jello-O to the wall. This seminar and workshop takes on the challenge. Taught by a dance critic for the New York Times, the course uses a close reading of exemplary dance writing to introduce approaches that students then try themselves, in response to filmed dance and live performances in New York City, in the widest possible variety of genres. No previous knowledge of dance is required.  
WR, HU  
* THST 220b / MUSI 229b, Musical Theater Performance II  
Staff  
The collaborative process and its effect on musical theater performance. Choreography, music direction, and origination of new works. Analysis of texts, scripts, and taped or filmed performances; applications in students' own performance. May be repeated for credit. For audition information e-mail dan.egan@yale.edu.  
RP  
* THST 230b, Advanced Acting and Scene Study  
Joan MacIntosh  
Combination of exercises and scene study to deepen the understanding and playing of action. Admission by audition. Open to junior and senior Theater Studies majors only. May be taken more than once. Prerequisite: THST 211.  
* THST 235b / ART 235b, Dance Theater  
Irene Hultman Monti  
A studio-based introduction to movement vocabularies, physical techniques, and choreographic repertoire from post-1950 modern and postmodern dance theater to the present. Through a historical survey of major aesthetic shifts in dance, the course focuses on building the essential skills of a dance artist: the heightened awareness of time and space, the ability to read and translate diverse choreographic ideas, and the ability to question in motion. Open to students of all levels and majors.  
HU  
* THST 236a / MUSI 185a, American Musical Theater History  
Daniel Egan  
Critical examination of relevance and context in the history of the American musical theater. Historical survey, including nonmusical trends, combined with text and musical analysis.  
WR, HU  
* THST 300a, The Director and the Text I  
Toni Dorfman  
Basic exercises in approaching dramatic or other literary texts from the director’s perspective. Particular attention to the many roles and functions of the director in production. Rehearsal and production of workshop scenes. Open to junior and senior Theater Studies majors, and to nonmajors with permission of the instructor. Prerequisite: THST 210.  
HU  
* THST 308b, Performing Design  
Nathan Roberts and Deborah Margolin  
Exploration of the theatrical design and production process in a devised theater setting. Study and application of collaborative strategies of experimental theater groups (Living Theater, Split Britches) for the generation of design and production elements. Consideration of the elements that shape theatrical experiences; generative exercises leading to weekly design-performance pieces in response to textural, imagistic, and aural prompts; and technologies and techniques for adaptive, flexible design. Development of a devised theatrical work that culminates in a public performance.  
* THST 314a, Creation of a Musical: Rumspringa  
Annette Jolles  
RP
* THST 315a / ENGL 211a, Acting Shakespeare  James Bundy
A practicum in acting verse drama, focusing on tools to mine the printed text for given circumstances, character, objective, and action; noting the opportunities and limitations that the printed play script presents; and promoting both the expressive freedom and responsibility of the actor as an interpretive and collaborative artist in rehearsal. The course will include work on sonnets, monologues, and scenes. Admission by audition. Preference to seniors and juniors; open to nonmajors.  HU RP

* THST 318b / MUSI 340b, Analyzing, Directing, and Performing Early Opera  Grant Herreid
Study of a seventeenth-century Venetian opera, with attention to structural analysis of text and music. Exploration of period performance practice, including rhetorical expression, musical style, gesture, dance, Italian elocution, and visual design. Production of the opera in conjunction with the Yale Baroque Opera Project. Open to all students, but designed especially for singers, instrumentalists, and directors. Admission by audition only. May be repeated for credit. For audition information e-mail grant.herreid@yale.edu.  HU RP

* THST 319a / AFAM 313a, Embodying Story  Renee Robinson
The intersection of storytelling and movement as seen through historical case studies, cross-disciplinary inquiry, and studio practice. Drawing on eclectic source materials from different artistic disciplines, ranging from the repertory of Alvin Ailey to journalism, architectural studies, cartoon animation, and creative processes, students develop the critical, creative, and technical skills through which to tell their own stories in movement. No prior dance experience necessary.  HU

* THST 320a / ENGL 453a, Playwriting  Donald Margulies
A seminar and workshop on reading for craft and writing for the stage. In addition to weekly prompts and exercises, readings include modern American and British plays by Pinter, Mamet, Churchill, Kushner, Nottage, Williams, Hansberry, Hwang, Vogel, and Wilder. Emphasis on play structure, character, and conflict.  RP

* THST 321a / ENGL 477a, Production Seminar: Playwriting  Deborah Margolin
A seminar and workshop in playwriting. Emphasis on developing an individual voice. Scenes read and critiqued in class. Admission by application, with priority to Theater Studies majors. A writing sample and statement of purpose should be submitted to the instructor before the first class meeting.

* THST 322b / ENGL 481b, Advanced Playwriting  Deborah Margolin
A seminar and workshop in advanced playwriting that furthers the development of an individual voice. Study of contemporary and classical plays to understand new and traditional forms. Students write two drafts of an original one-act play or adaptation for critique in workshop sessions. Familiarity with basic playwriting tools is assumed. Open to juniors and seniors, nonmajors as well as majors, on the basis of their work; priority to Theater Studies majors. Writing samples should be submitted to the instructor before the first class meeting. Prerequisite: THST 320 or 321, or a college seminar in playwriting, or equivalent experience.  RP

* THST 330b / HUMS 320 / LITR 324b, Representations of the Underworld  Toni Dorfman
What is the underworld? What questions have different ideas about the underworld posed about mortality, freedom, and goodness? Topics include dreams, hell, ghosts, the unconscious, and string theory. Sophomore standing required.  HU

* THST 333a / AFST 435a, West African Dance: Traditional to Contemporary  Lacina Coulibaly
A practical and theoretical study of the traditional dances of Africa, focusing on those of Burkina Faso and their contemporary manifestations. Emphasis on rhythm, kinesthetic form, and gestural expression. The fusion of modern European dance and traditional African dance. Admission by audition during the first class meeting.  HU RP

* THST 338b, Current Trends in Musical Theater  Daniel Egan
Exploration of musical theater created in the last ten years, with consideration of works conceived as commercial vs. those produced in non-commercial venues or developmental readings. Texts include librettos, scripts, recordings, videotapes, published essays, and analyses. These multiple approaches to understanding scores incorporate questions of how best to access multi-genre work. Attendance at selected performances in and around New York City. Music reading ability is assumed. Permission of instructor required.  HU RP

* THST 340a, Ballet Now  Daniel Ulbricht
A practical investigation of seminal ballets in the repertory of New York City Ballet. Tracing a sweeping history of artistic innovation from the early twentieth century to the present, this course covers the technique and aesthetic details that constitute New York City Ballet’s style and follow the ways that these stylistic strengths are applied and transformed in the contemporary ballets of the 21st century. Repertoire excerpts move through foundational works by George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins to ballets created in the past fifteen years by some of the most prominent ballet choreographers working today. Prior dance training required. Admission is by audition.  HU RP

* THST 347b, Stanislavski and his Rebellious Protégés: Foundations of Modern Acting and Directing  David Chambers
We begin in Moscow with a deep study of the radical stage innovations of Konstantin Stanislavski, and explore America’s insufficient knowledge of his lifetime of research. Of equal value for theatre-makers today will our active examination of the artistic rebellions of Stanislavski’s most brilliant proteges of the revolutionary era: Vsevolod Meyerhold (biomechanics), Evgeny Vakhtangov (fantastic realism), and Mikhail Chekhov (psychological gesture). Through reading, video research, student presentations, and on-the-floor physical exercises, we engage in lively conversations with these foundational masters, always seeking inspiration and revelation for our own theatrical work in today’s world.
* THST 330a, Production Seminar: Gender, Justice, and the Body Politic Shilarna Stokes
An examination of gender, justice, and politics in contemporary and canonical plays, culminating in an ensemble-driven production of Shakespeare’s Measure for Measure. Admission by audition and/or interview during the first week of the term. HU

* THST 358b, Introduction to Lighting Design Alan Edwards
Exploration of the aesthetics and techniques of professional stage lighting. Priority to Theater Studies majors. RP

* THST 370b / PLSH 248b, Polish Theater and Its Traditions Krystyna Illakowicz
Exploration of the rebellious, defiant, and explosive nature of Polish theater, including ways in which theater has challenged, ridiculed, dissected, and disabled oppressive political power. Polish experimental and absurdist traditions that resulted from a merger of the artistic and the political; environmental and community traditions of the Reduta Theatre; Polish-American theater connections. Includes attendance at live theater events as well as meetings with Polish theater groups and actors. HU TR

* THST 380b / AMST 370b, The History of Dance Brian Seibert
An examination of major movements in the history of concert and social dance from the late nineteenth century to the present, including ballet, tap, jazz, modern, musical theater, and different cultural forms. Topics include tradition versus innovation, the influence of the African diaspora, and interculturalism. Exercises are used to illuminate analysis of the body in motion. WR, HU

* THST 390a / ENGL 222a, Modern European Drama Marc Robinson
Intensive study of the major playwrights of modern European drama—Ibsen, Chekhov, Strindberg, Shaw, Brecht, and Beckett—along with pertinent theater theory. WR, HU

* THST 395a / ART 389a, Postmodern Dance Emily Coates
A studio-based exploration of the epochal shift in choreographic aesthetics known as postmodern dance. The social and historical context in which postmodern dance emerged, including the reconstruction of key dances from the 1960s and 1970s; the evolution of postmodern dance aesthetics into the twenty-first century. HU

* THST 401a, Conceptual Sound Design for Theater Nathan Roberts
Theoretical and practical considerations for conceptual sound design, the creation of aural content and imagery in support of dramatic action. The use of sound to communicate meaning and intention effectively in a theatrical setting. Auditory culture and the phenomenology of hearing; the role of technology in sound design; development of critical listening skills and of a foundational vocabulary for the medium. Projects focus on the generation of content and ideas in support of a text. HU

* THST 424b, Libretto Writing for Musical Theater Marsha Norman
Practical instruction in book writing for musical theater combined with close reading of historical and contemporary examples of the genre. Weekly exercises focus on issues of craft, creativity, and collaboration. RP

* THST 440a, Conceptual Sound Design for Theater Nathan Roberts
Theoretical and practical considerations for conceptual sound design, the creation of aural content and imagery in support of dramatic action. The use of sound to communicate meaning and intention effectively in a theatrical setting. Auditory culture and the phenomenology of hearing; the role of technology in sound design; development of critical listening skills and of a foundational vocabulary for the medium. Projects focus on the generation of content and ideas in support of a text. HU

* THST 487a, Performance behind Bars: Sacred Music, Sacred Texts, and Social Justice Ronald Jenkins
Through the study of theatrical works that have been adapted from sacred texts, the course introduces students to playwriting techniques helpful for writing their own scripts based on a socially conscious reading of sacred texts. Possible collaboration with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals in adapting Dante’s Divine Comedy for the stage. HU

* THST 430b / AFAM 451b / ANTH 445b / WGSS 442b, Black Women Moving and the Ethnography of Embodiment Aimee Cox
In this course we explore the theory and methods employed by Black women ethnographers, artists, and activists invested in transforming the traditional norms of the academic disciplines and creative contexts in which they operate. These boundary erasing, rule breaking women challenge us to think expansively and act courageously in our efforts to not only dream a new world but bring that world into fruition. The life and work of anthropologist/dancer/choreographer/activist Katherine Dunham (1909–2006) provides the framework through which we think through the strategies contemporary scholar-artists employ in their social justice practices, while the concept of movement is our theoretical and methodological foundation for engaging with the work of historical and contemporary Black women change agents. We ask how movement functions in the work of Dunham and these contemporary scholar-artists in terms of: the moving and/or dancing body; movement and migration across geographic territories and imagined space; and participation in
social movements. Inspired by the techniques these women have developed for re-imagining the possibilities for moving as an act of social change, we experiment with creating our own embodied artistic practices and research methods. Students should anticipate a holistic experience that requires an openness to physical activity and choreography (accessible to all) as one of our primary tools for both analyzing the multi-media course texts, as well as constructing our own boundary crossing projects.

* THST 452a, Acting: Constructing a Character  Gregory Wallace
This course is a studio based exploration of the internal and external preparation an actor must undergo in order to effectively render the moment-to-moment life of a given character. This course is meant to promote a rigorous investigation of how the actor uses the self as the foundation for transformation. The class consists of close readings, research presentations, rehearsals, and the occasional performance of characters drawn from a selection of classic American plays. Admission by audition during the first class session. Open to all majors.

* THST 453b / ENGL 462b, Writing Screenplay Adaptations  Donald Margulies
A workshop on the art of screenplay adaptation. Students read short stories, novels, and non-fiction; the screenplays based on that source material; and view and analyze the films themselves. Instruction focuses on the form, economy, and structure specific to screenwriting. Weekly writing exercises supplement the creation of a final project: a short screenplay based on source material of the student’s choosing. Previous experience in writing for film or stage would be advantageous but is not required. Restricted to juniors and seniors, or by permission of the instructor.

* THST 471a, Directed Independent Study  Staff
An independent study should generally conform to the standards and procedures of the senior project, THST 491, even when not undertaken by a senior. If the independent study is a performance or directing project, the adviser visits rehearsals and performances at the mutual convenience of adviser and student. The project must be accompanied by an essay of about fifteen pages, worth about half the final grade. Although the paper’s requirements vary with the project and its adviser, it must be more than a rehearsal log. The paper typically engages interpretative and performance issues as revealed in other productions of the work (if they exist). The writing should be concomitant with rehearsal, to enable each to inform the other, and a draft must be presented to, and commented on by, the adviser at least a week before—not after—the final performance. The final version of the paper, incorporating adjustments and reflections, should be turned in to the adviser no later than ten days after the performance closes, and no later than the first day of the final examination period. An essay project entails substantial reading, at least four meetings with the adviser, and a paper or papers totaling at least twenty pages. A playwriting project normally requires twenty new script pages every two weeks of the term and regular meetings with the adviser. A final draft of the entire script is the culmination of the term’s work. Application forms are available from the director of undergraduate studies. Juniors may use one term of these courses to prepare for their senior projects. Open to juniors and seniors. Prerequisites: THST 210 and one seminar.

* THST 491a or b, Senior Project in Theater Studies  Nathan Roberts and Daniel Egan
Students must submit proposals for senior projects to the Theater Studies office by the deadline announced by the director of undergraduate studies. Attendance at weekly section meetings is required for all students undertaking production projects. Application forms are available in the Theater Studies office, 220 York St.