THEATER STUDIES

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FACULTY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM OF THEATER STUDIES


Associate Professors *Toni Dorfman (Adjunct) (Theater Studies), Gundula Kreuser (Music), Joan MacIntosh (Adjunct) (Theater Studies, School of Drama), *Deb Margolin (Adjunct) (Theater Studies), Robert Vorlicky (Adjunct) (Visiting)

Assistant Professors Sarah Demers (Physics), William Fleming (Theater Studies, East Asian Languages & Literatures), Christopher Semk (French)

Lecturers René Augesen, Jessica Berson, Emily Coates, Lacina Coulibaly, Daniel Egban, Grant Herreid, Annette Jolles, Paul Lazar, Elise Morrison, Claire Pamment, Nathan Roberts, Brian Seibert

Senior Lectors Krystyna Ilakowicz, Bárbara Safille

*Member of the Executive Committee for the program.

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.

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 and guided independent study projects. Each production seminar concentrates on study, through practice, of one aspect of work in the theater; examples are approaches to acting, directing, writing, dance, or design. Each seminar involves numerous projects that grow out of the term’s work. For example, the project may be 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.

The major The major consists of ten term courses beyond the introductory prerequisites (THST 110, 111), one of which must be THST 210. 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 be chosen from four different periods of dramatic literature or theater history or from four different cultures. A suggested scheme might be one course in each of four of the following categories: Shakespeare, African American theater, Greek drama, melodrama, British drama, modern American drama, contemporary American drama, German drama, or other courses in dramatic literature and 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 are encouraged to choose additional courses to develop the perspectives achieved in the production and literature courses. These courses may be selected (1) as a study of material that has influenced or provided sources for a playwright or theater; (2) as a study of the historical, political, or religious context of a particular playwright, theater, or literature; (3) as a study of forms of expression contemporary with a particular theater or author, for example, courses in music, art history, architecture, or film; or (4) as a study of theoretical aspects of the theater through courses in such areas as linguistics, aesthetics, psychology, or the history of criticism.

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

Senior requirement Majors satisfy the senior requirement in one of two ways. They may undertake a one-term senior project (THST 491) or, with the approval of the director of undergraduate studies, they may take one of the dramatic literature or theater history courses as a senior seminar. Senior projects may take the form of directing, designing, or writing a play, 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. Students wishing to undertake a senior project must submit a proposal before the deadline announced by the director of undergraduate studies. Each proposal is submitted to a faculty committee for approval.

Students interested in mounting a production as part of their senior project are encouraged to develop collaborative proposals among actors, writers, directors, designers, dancers, or dramaturgs. Students proposing a collaborative production project have priority for
rehearsal time and production slots in the Whitney Theater Space, 53 Wall Street. Proposals for senior project productions will normally be approved only for students who have previously served as producers of other students' senior projects.

**Courses in the School of Drama** Undergraduates may not enroll in acting or directing courses offered by the School of Drama. Majors in Theater Studies, however, are encouraged to consider taking selected courses in design, dramaturgy, and theater management, with permission of the instructor, the director of undergraduate studies, and the registrar of the School of Drama. For a description of these courses, see the director of undergraduate studies.

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.

Unless otherwise specified in individual course descriptions, courses in the School of Drama are not open to the Credit/D/Fail option.

**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, each from a different period or culture as specified (1 with reading in lit other than English)

**Senior requirement** Senior sem or senior project (THST 491)

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**Core Curriculum in Theater Studies**

**THST 110a and THST 111b, Survey of Theater and Drama** Staff

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 210a, Introduction to Performance Concepts** René Augesen

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

**Drama and Dance: History, Theory, Literature**

* **THST 099a / FILM 045a, Dance on Film** Emily Coates

An examination of dance on film from c. 1920 to the present, including early Hollywood pictures, the rise of Bollywood, avant-garde films of the postwar period, translations of stage choreography to screen, music videos, and dance film festivals. The impact of industry, circulation and audience, aesthetic lineages, and craft in the union of the two mediums. Students develop an original short film for a final class project. No prior dance or filmmaking experience necessary. Enrollment limited to freshmen. Preregistration required; see under Freshman Seminar Program. WR, HU

* **THST 115b / HUMS 455b / PHYS 115b, The Physics of Dance** Sarah Demers Konezny and Emily Coates

Critical investigation of introductory concepts in physics through the lens of dance. Topics in physics include the normal force, friction, Newton's laws, projectile motion, potential and kinetic energy, and conservation of energy. Topics in dance include aspects of dance history, contemporary artists who engage with science, and the development of movement studies. Class meetings include movement exercises. Prerequisite: basic trigonometry and algebra. Prior dance experience is not required. QR, HU, SC

* **THST 221b / RLST 340b / SAST 270b, Islamic Performance Traditions in Contemporary South Asia** Staff

Introduction to performance practices that have emerged through encounters between Islam and South Asian cultures. The diverse meanings, pleasures, and experiences such practices have offered practitioners and publics over time and space. Case studies of Islamic performance traditions examined alongside instances of creative reinventions in contemporary South Asia and its diasporas. HU

* **THST 228b / ENGL 244b / FILM 397b, Writing about the Performing Arts** Margaret Spillane

Introduction to journalistic reporting on performances as current events, with attention to writing in newspapers, magazines, and the blogosphere. The idea of the audience explored in relation to both a live act or screening and a piece of writing about such an event. Students attend screenings and live professional performances of plays, music concerts, and dance events. HU

* **THST 235a / ART 235a, Dance Theater** Emily Coates

A practical and theoretical survey of dance theater history. Introduction to movement vocabularies, physical techniques, and repertoire from post-1950 modern and postmodern dance theater. Open to students of all levels and majors. HU

* **THST 236a / MUSI 246a, 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 RP
A seminar and workshop in writing about the human body in motion, with a focus on the art of dance. Close reading of exemplary dance writing from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The challenges and possibilities of writing artfully about nonverbal expression. Students use a variety of approaches to write about dance and other performance genres. No previous knowledge of dance required. WR, HU

* THST 265a / FREN 265a, French Classical Tragedy  
Christopher Semk

Comprehensive survey of seventeenth-century French tragedy, with an emphasis on performance. Stylistic features and major themes of tragedy; the material conditions of early modern performance; the art of declamation; recent productions, including those that seek to reproduce early modern practices and those that modernize the plays. Works by Bernard, Corneille, Racine, and Rotrou. I5, HU

* THST 291a / ENGL 288a, Eloquence: Classical Rhetoric for Modern Media  
Joseph Roach

Classical rhetoric, from Demosthenes to the digital age: the theory and practice of persuasive public speaking and speech writing. Open to junior and senior Theater Studies majors, and to nonmajors with permission of the instructor. HU

* THST 303a / ENGL 336a / LITR 323a, The Opera Libretto  
J. D. McClatchy

A selective survey of the genre from its seventeenth-century Italian origins to the present day. The libretto's history, from opera seria to opéra comique to melodrama, featuring libretti by Hofmannsthal, W. S. Gilbert, and Auden. Emphasis on literary adaptations, from Da Ponte and Beaumarchais to Britten and Thomas Mann. Source material includes works by Shakespeare, Schiller, Hugo, Melville, and Tennessee Williams. Readings in English; musical background not required. WR, HU

* THST 333b / MUSI 337b, Stephen Sondheim and the American Musical Theater Tradition  
Daniel Egan

The musical theater of Stephen Sondheim, both as a popular phenomenon of the contemporary Broadway stage and in relation to models and forms employed in the past. HU RP

* THST 335b / AMST 370a, The History of Dance  
Jessica Berson

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 388a, Revenge Tragedy and Moral Ambiguity  
Toni Dorfman

A study of plays and films variously construed as revenge tragedy that raise aesthetic and ethical issues, including genre, retribution, "just wars," public vs. private justice, and the possibility of resolution. How questions of crime, punishment, and justice have been posed in drama, from classical Greece through the twentieth century. HU

* THST 413a / WGSS 413a, Feminist Theater and Performance  
Elise Morrison

Introduction to a range of works by feminist scholars, activists, playwrights, and performers who have used theatrical performance as a means by which to critique and reimagine cultural representations of gender and sexuality. Mapping out of significant theories, debates, and performance strategies that emerged out of the feminist movement(s) of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Students research, perform, and critically engage with historical and contemporary examples of feminist performance work. HU

* THST 444b, Theories of Embodiment  
Jessica Berson

Examination of theories about the body and its motion. The inscription of identity on and through the body; ways in which the body resists and rewrites identity through movement. The body as a physical, social, and phenomenological entity; institutional, normative, aesthetic, and virtual bodies. Practical workshops and exercises include movement experiences. Open to junior and senior Theater Studies majors, and to nonmajors with permission of the instructor. Students must preregister during the reading period of the preceding term. HU

Playwriting, Production, and Performance

* THST 21b, 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 RP
* THST 224a / MUSI 228a, Musical Theater Performance I  Andrew Gerle
The structure and meaning of traditional and contemporary musical theater repertoire. Focus on ways to "read" a work, decipher compositional cues for character and action, facilitate internalization of material, and elicit lucid interpretations. For singers, pianists, and directors. Prerequisites: MUSI 211 and 219, or with permission of instructor. Admission by audition only. May be repeated for credit. For audition information e-mail dan.egan@yale.edu.  HU RP

* THST 226b / MUSI 229b, Musical Theater Performance II  Annette Jolles
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.  RP

* THST 231a, Chekhov in Performance  René Augesen
A studio-based exploration of the world of Anton Chekhov, focusing on character analysis and development. Admission by audition only. Preference to Theater Studies majors.  HU

* THST 230a, 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 RP

* THST 313a, 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 322b, 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 and directors. Prerequisites: MUSI 211 and 219. Admission by audition only. May be repeated for credit. For audition information e-mail grant.herreid@yale.edu.  HU RP

* THST 320b / ENGL 453b, Playwriting  Donald Margulies
A seminar and workshop in writing for the stage. Readings include modern American and British plays by Pinter, Mamet, Churchill, Kushner, Williams, and Wilder. Emphasis on play structure, character, and conflict. In addition to weekly exercises, students write a one-act play.  RP

* THST 322b, 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 335a / 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 343b, Public Speaking  Elise Morrison
Development of skills in public speaking and in critical analysis of public discourse. Key aspects of rhetoric and cultural communication; techniques for formulating and organizing persuasive arguments, engaging with an audience, and using the voice and body effectively.  RP

* THST 376a, Digital Media in Performance  Elise Morrison
Practical and theoretical innovations in contemporary theater and performance brought about by new technologies and forms of information exchange in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Exploration of how the live body on stage is reconfigured and reimagined through technological intervention. Priority to majors in Theater Studies, in Art, and in Computing and the Arts. Students must preregister during the reading period of the preceding term.  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.

* THST 410a, Choreographing Theater  Paul Lazar
The synthesis of choreographic and directorial practices in theater making explored through the creation of an original work of performance. Ways in which heightened attention to movement draws out unique aspects of texts. Content of the performance is derived in collaboration with the students and inspired by sources ranging from literature to film to daily conversation. Preference to Theater Studies majors. HU  RP

* THST 413b, Structures of Comic Performance  Deborah Margolin
Relations between the theory and practice of comic performance. A historical dramaturgical investigation of what makes something funny; practical, performative experiments in comedy. Prerequisites: THST 210 and 211. WR, HU

* THST 414a, Lyric Writing for Musical Theater  Michael Korie
The craft of lyric writing in musical theater, opera, and crossover works. Both historical models and new composition used as objects of study. Analysis of song form and placement, and of lyric for character, tone, and diction. Creation of lyrics in context. Limited enrollment. Interested students should write to dan.egan@yale.edu for application requirements. May not be repeated for credit. HU  RP

* THST 437a / ENGL 479a / ER&M 437a, Playwriting Workshop behind Bars: 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 442b, Scene Study  Joseph Roach
Ensemble studio explorations of classic scenes from the repertoire of modern and contemporary drama. Admission by audition only. Preference to Theater Studies majors. HU

Special Projects

* THST 471a and THST 472b, Directed Independent Study  Elise Morrison
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  Staff
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.