

THEATRE, B.A.

Begin Campus: University Park

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

The BA in Theatre asks students to consider the theatrical past, to reflect on their reasons for doing theatre now, and to imagine what theatre can be in the future. Students take a broad range of courses in theatre theory and practice. They gain experience as dramaturgs and assistant directors for the School of Theatre Penn State Centre Stage. Many direct, design, and perform in B.A. projects and productions, and through Penn State's many student theatre and dance groups. We are particularly interested in drawing students to our program who are curious about theatre itself, and who wish to explore it through devising their own performances, writing plays, and directing and producing their own shows. The B.A. is also Penn State's home for dance studies, offering technique classes as well as a range of dance history and theory courses.

Students who pursue the B.A. in Theatre learn to research, analyze and synthesize information. Majors develop strong oral and written skills and many go on to postgraduate study not only in theatre but also in areas such as law, business and education.

What is Theatre?

Theatre is a collaborative art form; an art form where different disciplines converge to create a sensorial experience much greater than the sum of its parts. Theatre is history, culture, entertainment and social responsibility. Theatre engages and transforms. Theatre is storytelling, told with equal parts artistry, skill, and technology. A theatre artist is a resourceful problem solver, effective communicator, and a great collaborator. These life skills empower theatre professionals to pursue their individual paths and rise up to their potential, well beyond the theatre walls and into their everyday life.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You are a playwright, director, or dramaturg—or want to learn more about these practices.
- You enjoy devising, seeing, and writing about performance.
- You want to practice your theatre studies crafts in a department with a pre-professional season of plays and musicals.
- You plan to pursue an MFA in Dramaturgy or a PhD in Theatre or Performance Studies after graduation.
- You are transferring from another Commonwealth campus, and you would like to deepen your study of theatre.

Entrance to Major

Applicants wishing to be directly admitted into Penn State as a Theatre Studies major can apply through the College of Arts & Architecture admissions website, which details the admissions process. Continuing students, including those wishing to add the major, can apply by contacting the academic adviser for the School of Theatre to arrange for an informational interview. If the major seems feasible to the student, the adviser will refer them to the program director, who might request additional application materials (a play script, video, and/or an interview) to determine whether the student will thrive in the program.

The B.A. in Theatre degree program includes a Theatre Studies Option and three additional options, Theatre Performance, Dance Performance and Multicultural Performance. Entrance criteria to this major will include an interview with members of the Theatre faculty. Entrance to the three performance options will also include an audition or portfolio review.

Entrance Procedures

Students interested in pursuing Theatre (B.A.) should follow the appropriate first year, change of major, or transfer application instructions found under Theatre (BA, BFA, MFA) Admission Information at <https://arts.psu.edu/how-to-apply/#specific>.

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre, a minimum of 120 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	16-17.5
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	36.5-38

3 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 3 credits GHW courses.

3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if world language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
DANCE 270	Introduction to Bartenieff Fundamentals	3
THEA 1S	First-Year Seminar: Theatre Production Practices	1
THEA 132	Survey of Theatre Production Practice	3
THEA 201W	Script Analysis	3
THEA 289	Theatre Production Practicum	1
Additional Courses		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 3 credits of Acting from the following:		3
THEA 102	Fundamentals of Acting	
THEA 120	Acting I	
Select 3 credits of Theatre Foundations from the following:		3
DANCE 100	Dance Appreciation	
THEA 100	The Art of the Theatre	
THEA 101N	Performance and Society	
THEA 105	Introduction to Theatre	
THEA 106	Theatre Foundations	

Select 6 credits of Theatre and Performance Praxis from the following:

THEA 211	Dramaturgy
THEA 220	Acting II
THEA 434	Introduction to Directing
THEA 440	Principles of Playwriting

Select 9 credits of Theatre and Dance History from the following:

DANCE 410	Dance History
DANCE 411	
THEA 401	Theatre History I: Ancient to 1700
THEA 402	Theatre History II: From 1700 to Present
THEA 405W	Theatre History: American Theatre
THEA/WMNST 407W	Women and Theatre
THEA/AFAM 412	African American Theatre

Select 3 credits of Literature and Theory from the following:

AFAM/ENGL 235	From Folk Shouts and Songs to Hip Hop Poetry
CMLIT 12	Introduction to World Drama and Performance
CMLIT 112N	Introduction to Global Drama, Theatre, and Performance
CMLIT/ENGL 189	
CMLIT 422	African Drama
CMLIT 486	Tragedy
CMLIT 487	Comedy
CMLIT/ENGL 488	
ENGL 129	Shakespeare
ENGL 129H	Shakespeare
ENGL 438	American Drama
THEA 206	Critical Theory for Performance
THEA 499	Foreign Studies--Theatre Arts

Select 1.5-3 credits of Dance Theory and Technique from the following:

DANCE 170	Dance Conditioning
DANCE 221	Introduction to West African Dance and Culture
DANCE 225	Introduction to Hip Hop
DANCE 230	Ballet
DANCE 240	Jazz Dance I
DANCE 250	Tap Dance
DANCE 260	Introduction to Modern Dance
DANCE 370	Anatomy and Physiology for Performers
DANCE 370H	Anatomy for Performers
DANCE 370Z	

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements

6 of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- **United States Cultures:** 3 credits
- **International Cultures:** 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#83-80>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

World Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one world language in addition to English. This proficiency must be demonstrated by either examination or course work. See the Placement Policy for Penn State World Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, World Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; world language credits in this category must be in a second world language in addition to English or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language). Credits must be selected from the list of approved courses.

World Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the University Cultural Diversity (US/IL) requirement.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand theatre as a cultural art form in relationship to society, politics, pop culture, and other art forms.
- Comprehend and analyze the historical context of theatre, drama, and performance, including plays, major figures, costumes, scenic innovations, and theoretical approaches, and how these relate to contemporary society and culture.
- Demonstrate an ability to compare and contrast different cultures, points of view, and social systems through the analysis of historical and contemporary approaches to theatre and performance.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and-out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

University Park

Mary Sergeant (First Year Adviser)

Academic Adviser
116 Theatre Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-7586
mym7@psu.edu

Jeanmarie Higgins

Associate Professor of Theatre
116 Theatre Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-7586
jmh864@psu.edu

Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2024-25 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

Theatre, B.A. at University Park Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
THEA 1S*	1 THEA 132*	3
THEA 106*	3 THEA 201W*	3
THEA 120*	3 DANCE 270**	3
THEA 289*	1 World Language	4
ENGL 15 [†]	3 General Education Course (GQ) [‡]	3
World Language	4	
	15	16

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
THEA 211, 220, 434, or 440*	3 THEA 211, 220, 434, or 440*	3
World Language	4 DANCE 170, 221, 225, 230, 240, 250, 260, or 370*	1.5-3
Bachelor of Arts Knowledge Domain	3 Bachelor of Arts Knowledge Domain	3
General Education Course (GQ) [‡]	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
	16	13.5-15

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
CAS 100A, 100B, or 100C [‡]	3 (Optional Semester in London)	
THEA 401, 402, 405W, 407W, 412, DANCE 410, or 411 [*]	3 If at University Park campus:	
Bachelor of Arts Knowledge Domain	3 Literature & Theory ^{*1}	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 Elective	3
	Elective	3
	Elective	3
15		15

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
THEA 401, 402, 405W, 407W, 412, DANCE 410, or 411 [*]	3 THEA 401, 402, 405W, 407W, 412, DANCE 410, or 411 [*]	3
ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D [‡]	3 General Education Course	3
Bachelor of Arts World Cultures	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	1-2.5
15		13-14.5

Total Credits 118.5-121.5

- * Course requires a grade of C or better for the major
 ‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education
 # Course is an Entrance to Major requirement
 † Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

¹ Literature & Theory: Choose 3 credits from AFAM 235/ENGL 235, CMLIT 12, CMLIT 122N, CMLIT 189/ENGL 189, CMLIT 422, CMLIT 486, CMLIT 487, CMLIT 488/ENGL 488, ENGL 129, ENGL 129H, ENGL 438, THEA 206, THEA 499

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will

replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

Career Paths

Penn State's Theatre Studies major develops a foundation that serves as a strong base for careers ranging from educator to scholar to entrepreneur. With our required semester in London, you are prepared to be a global player in your chosen area of focus. The program provides a broad base that gives you the opportunity to bring together multiple interests. This degree prepares you with integral skills such as creative and theoretical thinking, collaboration, and synthesizing new information quickly.

Careers

In many ways theatre is the ultimate liberal arts major – and can help to prepare you for almost any career from medicine to law to writing for television. Additionally, many students choose to continue their education by pursuing a master of fine arts (M.F.A.) or doctorate (Ph.D.) in theatre.

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

Graduates with a Theatre Studies degree may opt to pursue a variety of postbaccalaureate or graduate studies programs in specialized topics or focus areas, such as dramaturgy, history, literature and criticism, and performance and cultural studies.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://arts.psu.edu/degrees/theatre-mfa/>)

Accreditation

The Bachelor of Arts in Theatre is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST).

Founded in 1965, the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) is an organization of schools, conservatories, colleges, and universities with approximately 188 accredited institutional members. It establishes national standards for undergraduate and graduate degrees and other credentials for theatre and theatre-related disciplines, and provides assistance to institutions and individuals engaged in artistic, scholarly, educational, and other theatre-related endeavors.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF THEATRE (<https://nast.arts-accredit.org/>)

Contact

University Park

SCHOOL OF THEATRE
116 Theatre Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-7586
theatre@psu.edu

<https://arts.psu.edu/academics/school-of-theatre/>