School of Theatre and Dance

Degrees Offered

Bachelor of Arts Theatre

Bachelor of Fine Arts Theatre with an area of emphasis in:

- Acting
- Puppetry/Creative Dramatics
- Design and Technology

Minors:

- Theatre
- Technical Theatre
- Dance

Accreditation

All theatre degree programs at West Virginia University are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST).

Nature of Program

The School of Theatre & Dance offers a competitive training program for the student who seeks artistic growth and development. The School trains students in modern, state-of-the-art facilities with an emphasis on experiential learning in either a B.A. or B.F.A. degree program. We offer intensive training by professionals in the industry with small classes and one-on-one mentoring.

Mission Statement

We, the faculty and staff, educate students in the diverse traditions and practices of theatre and dance. We challenge each student to engage and confront—vigorously, honestly, and innovatively—the many processes of collaborative theatre and dance. We exemplify to our students the role of creative artists to develop, to explore, and to contribute meaningfully to the world they inhabit.

Performances

The School annually produces five to seven major productions in three major performance spaces: the Gladys G. Davis Theatre, Lyell B. Clay Concert Theatre, and the Vivien Davis Michael Laboratory Theatre, all in the Creative Arts Center. The School also occasionally produces in the historic Metropolitan Theatre in downtown Morgantown. These productions provide practical experience for all theatre students and serve the community audience with a balance of classic and contemporary drama, dance, opera, and musical theatre.

Bachelor of Arts Theatre

The Bachelor of Arts degree offers a broad-based program of study combining a liberal arts education with a general theatre curriculum.

Typically, the B.A. student in Theatre is one who chooses not to specialize in any one area of the art form but prefers instead to keep as many educational options open as possible. Future educational and career plans often include specialized study in a graduate program or a career in one of the many fields related to the performing arts.

The B.A. student may also pursue a second major and/or minor in other disciplines. Students often choose to double-major with fields such as music, English, political science, or journalism, for example.

Bachelor of Fine Arts Theatre

The four-year course of study, leading to the bachelor of fine arts (B.F.A.) degree, is designed for students who intend to pursue professional theatre careers or who may enter other fields where theatre skills are desirable.

The theatre major may choose from among three different areas of emphasis, each of which provides a well-rounded knowledge of the art as well as an opportunity to specialize. The various curricula combine formal classes in theory with practical application and experience in the School’s theatre, studio, and laboratory areas.
Emphasis in Acting

The B.F.A. Acting Program is competitive with the best university acting programs in the country, both in intensity and in class time devoted to acting training. Throughout the four years, students progress through a well-coordinated series of core theatre studies coursework covering dramatic theory, text analysis, theatre history, dramatic literature, directing, and special topics studies.

Freshman and sophomore students receive six hours of acting per week. Beginning in the sophomore year, students also receive an additional four hours per week of movement or voice/speech. These first two years are set against the backdrop of a rigorous and wide range of liberal arts coursework. In the junior and senior year B.F.A. acting students become members of the Acting Studio Program, where twenty hours a week are dedicated to performance training in movement, voice/speech, scene study, and acting.

The Junior year is grounded in contemporary American realism and early modern realistic and non-real European drama. The senior year is dedicated to work in Shakespeare and other period styles including Restoration comedy and comedy of manners, as well as acting for film and television, voice-overs, and musical theatre. Other topics covered in the Acting Studio Program include singing, Suzuki, movement composition, stage combat, audition technique, masks, improvisation, make-up, psychiatry for the actor, dialects, and fencing. The B.F.A. acting students are the core of the casting pool for five to six main stage productions as well as up to twenty workshop and second stage productions per year. A typical B.F.A. student will perform in as many as fifteen productions in their time at WVU.

Acting Studio Program

Training in the junior and senior year is known as the Acting Studio Program and continues intensive work in movement, voice/speech, and acting. The senior year is dedicated to work in Shakespeare and other period styles, as well as acting for film, television commercials, and voice-overs.

Continuation in the B.F.A. Acting program beyond the sophomore year is by audition only. All B.F.A. acting students must successfully pass an audition at the end of their sophomore year. For students that do not pass the audition, students may continue their theatre studies in the B.A. Theatre program.

Musical Theatre

Musicals comprise a large percentage of the theatrical productions in the United States every year. The School of Theatre & Dance recognizes that musical theatre study, performance, and production are integral parts of a student's education as well as their future careers, whether in performance, design, or technical theatre.

For the B.F.A. acting students, we offer classes in song analysis, auditioning, and scene study. Dance classes cover styles from tap to jazz, modern to ballet. Private vocal coaching for the singer is available from faculty in the School of Music.

The School of Theatre & Dance is committed to presenting musical theatre productions or showcases each season so our students in every discipline area can apply their class work to the stage. In recent years, the School of Theatre & Dance has produced musicals such as Guys & Dolls, Into The Woods, and Urinetown as well as opera productions in conjunction with the School of Music.

Emphasis in Design and technology

The B.F.A. in Design & Technical Theatre introduces the student to all aspects of the theatre and is coupled with an extensive breadth of liberal arts requirements drawing from many other disciplines throughout the University. The program is designed for the student who intends to pursue further graduate study in theatre, a professional theatre career, or who may choose to enter a related profession where design and technology skills are highly desirable.

There are no areas of specialization in design or technical production at the B.F.A. level; rather, students are exposed to all facets of design and technology through selected coursework taken in all of the areas. Throughout the course of study, students must demonstrate a talent and ability in more than one area of the art form. Training also involves active participation in the production program and the opportunity to design fully produced mainstage productions. Emphasis on "hands-on" learning in the theatre and laboratories with state-of-the-art equipment is at the core of the Design & Technology Program.

In addition to completing the required coursework, students enrolled in design/technology emphasis program must participate in a portfolio review at the end of each semester of their sophomore and junior years. Furthermore, additional mid-term assessments may be required at the discretion of the Director or the Design & Technology Program Director. Students must successfully complete these assessments to be allowed to continue in the program.

Emphasis in Puppetry & Creative Dramatics

The B.F.A. course work includes intensive study in children's theatre; the practice of puppetry as a theatrical art form; and educational and creative dramatic activity as methods of learning and self-development for children. In addition to a broad-based curriculum in theatre studies, students work under the direction of a faculty member to operate a complete puppetry theatre with comprehensive study in a variety of construction, manipulation, historical study, and performance techniques. The School's Puppet Mobile tours the region while children's theatre productions provide hands-on experience and performance opportunities.
Puppetry graduates work for the following prestigious companies: Walt Disney, Grey Seal Puppet Company, Little Who Productions, Puppet Pizzazz, Houston Children’s Festival, Theatre West Virginia, The Pittsburgh Children’s Museum, Holden Puppets, Kids on the Block, and Nashville Sesame Street Live Touring.

**Entrance Requirements**

Auditions or interviews are not required for admission into the B.A. and B.F.A. programs. All students, however, must meet the University’s criteria for undergraduate admission.

Upon entrance, students must comply with the general regulations of the University concerning degrees, satisfy all entrance and divisional requirements, and complete one of the curricula of the School of Theatre & Dance with a 2.0 (C) grade point average.

For admission to the junior year of the School of Theatre & Dance, a student must have established an overall 2.0 (C) grade point average. Transfer students must establish transfer credit from other institutions during the first semester in which they are enrolled in the School of Theatre & Dance.

Students are responsible for correctly fulfilling all requirements. Each student should review the course requirements both before and after every registration period so that errors or omissions will be detected immediately.

**Career Opportunities**

Graduates of the School of Theatre & Dance are employed in professional theatre, radio, television, and film. Others have chosen careers in fashion design, commercial sales, makeup, lighting design and installation, law, and positions in the public arena. Undergraduates are frequently offered graduate student positions with leading university training programs offering M.F.A. study.

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**School of Theatre & Dance Scholarship Resources**

**Susan Tait Endsley Drama Endowed Scholarship**

Scholarships for students in theatre.

**Sam Boyd Jr. Scholarship**

Scholarships for students in theatre.

**Mabel DeVries Tanner Drama Scholarship**

Endowment income to be used for drama students enrolled at WVU. First preference will be given to students with financial need from the Morgantown area and secondly to residents of West Virginia.

**Charles D. Neel Scholarship**

Endowment income to be used for regularly enrolled undergraduate junior or senior students in the bachelor of fine arts program in the Division of Theatre and Dance.

**Richard S. Lawrence Memorial Book Scholarship**

Income shall be used to provide book scholarships to undergraduate students.

**Susan J. Robinson Performing Arts Scholarship**

Endowment income to be used for regularly enrolled undergraduate or graduate students majoring in theatre.

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**Faculty**

**Director**

- Joshua B. Williamson - M.F.A. (University of Wisconsin)
  Associate Professor, Lighting & Sound Design

**Professors**

- Jerry McGonigle - M.F.A. (American Conservatory Theatre)
  Acting & Directing
- Joann Spencer Siegrist - M.F.A. (University of Georgia)
  Puppetry, Creative Dramatics
**Associate Professors**
- Jessica Morgan Bishop - M.F.A. (The Ohio State University)
  Stage Movement
- Laura Hitt - M.A. (Trinity Repertory Conservatory/Rhode Island College (now part of Brown University’s MFA Theatre Consortium)
  Voice and Dialect
- Robert Klingelhofer
  Scene Design
- Jay Malarcher - Ph.D. (Louisiana State University)
  Theatre History, Literature, & Criticism
- Mary McClung - M.F.A. (West Virginia University)
  Costume Design & Technology
- Linda D. Milian - M.F.A. (Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University)
  Costuming
- William J. Winsor - M.F.A. (The Ohio State University)
  Scene Design

**Assistant Professors**
- Lee Blair - M.F.A. (University of Florida)
  Acting
- General Hambrick - M.F.A. (Texas Christian University)
  Dance
- Yoav Kaddar - Ph.D. (State University of New York)
  Dance, Dance Education
- Roger Smart - M.F.A. (University of California)
  Acting, Directing

**Assistant Professors - Teaching**
- Cathy O’Dell - M.F.A. (West Virginia University)
  Theatre, Introduction to Theatre, Acting

**Clinical Assistant Professor**
- Alan McEwen - M.F.A. (University of Oregon)
  Lighting & Sound Design
- Steven Neuenschwander - M.F.A. (Yale School of Drama)
  Technical Direction, Production Management

**Part-time Instructors**
- Stephanie Morris Lorenze - Ed.D. (West Virginia University)
  Dance, Dance Education
- Renee Nicholson - M.F.A. (West Virginia University)
  Dance, Dance Criticism

**Professors Emeriti**
- Charles Neel - Ph.D.
  Theatre
- M. Kathryne Weidebusch
  Dance
- John C. Whitty - Ph.D.
  Theatre History

**Associate Professors Emeriti**
- James D. Held - M.F.A. (University of Washington)
  Theatre History, World Drama
**Dance Minor**

**minor code - U042**

Courses required for the Minor in Dance include a variety of dance techniques and composition, as well as choreography, stage movement, dance history and philosophy, and theatre production. There are many performance opportunities for students on and off campus, including annual formal concerts, informal concerts (works in progress), participation in regional and national dance festivals, conferences, community, concerts, and touring.

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<tr>
<th>Dance Technique (Select two of the following):</th>
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<td>DANC 100 Fundamentals-Dance Techniques</td>
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<td>DANC 110 Fundamentals of Ballet</td>
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<td>DANC 130 Fundamentals of Jazz</td>
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<td>DANC 210 Intermediate Ballet</td>
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<td>DANC 220 Intermediate Modern</td>
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<td>THET 221 Theatre Make-Up</td>
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<tr>
<th>Choreography</th>
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<td>DANC 260 Fundamentals of Choreography</td>
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<td>DANC 310 Advanced Ballet</td>
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<td>DANC 320 Advanced Modern</td>
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<td>DANC 330 Advanced Jazz</td>
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<td>DANC 350 Modern/Ballet Partnering</td>
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<td>DANC 360 Advanced Choreography</td>
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<td>DANC 371 Creative Dance for Educators</td>
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<td>DANC 372 Dance Criticism</td>
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<td>DANC 400 Choreography Practicum</td>
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<td>DANC 410 Ballet Repertory</td>
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<td>DANC 420 Modern Repertory</td>
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**Total Hours** 19

A student must declare his or her intention to complete a minor in theatre and/or dance at the College of Creative Arts Records Office or at the Division of Theatre and Dance offices. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain information about the minor and to complete all of the required courses. Minors are welcome to audition for and participate in all division productions.

At the time of application for graduation, the student must indicate that he or she wishes to be certified as a minor. Successful completion of the minor will be submitted to the University Registrar’s Office by the student’s major degree program to be recorded on the student’s official transcript.

**Theatre Minor**

**Minor Code - U043**

By focusing on three broad areas—history and theory, performance, and production—the Minor in Theatre provides students with an overview of the profession and the opportunity to complete elective courses in areas where they have the greatest interest, such as acting, directing, stage design, voice, stage movement, playwriting, and puppetry. Performance opportunities may also be available for students pursuing the Theatre Minor.

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<tr>
<th>History and Theory</th>
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<tr>
<td>THET 101 Introduction to the Theatre</td>
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Select one of the following:

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<th>THET 301 History of Western Theatre</th>
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<td>THET 365 Traditions-Dramatic Literature</td>
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<td>THET 460</td>
<td>Contemporary Drama</td>
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<td>THET 102</td>
<td>Acting</td>
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<tr>
<td>THET 144</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Acting</td>
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**Performance (Select one of the following):**
- THET 102 Acting
- THET 144 Fundamentals of Acting

**Production (Select one of the following):**
- THET 103 Stagecraft
- THET 105 Costuming
- THET 220 Fundamentals of Lighting
- THET 314 Theatre Production and Design

**Electives (Select two of the following):**
- THET 143 Freshman Directing Workshop
- THET 225 Introduction to Stage Design 1
- THET 240 Fundamental Vocal Technique 1
- THET 242 Fundamentals of Movement
- THET 244 Intermediate Acting
- THET 302 Directing
- THET 400 Theatre Perform Rehersal Lab
- THET 404 Playwriting
- THET 461 Creative Dramatics
- THET 462 Puppetry

**Total Hours**

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