Technical Direction, M.F.A.

Degree Offered

- Master of Fine Arts

Nature of the Program

The M.F.A. program is an intense three-year course of study for students seeking professional preparation in Technical Direction.

- Three years of graduate courses and production work totaling a minimum of sixty-one designated credit hours
- A production or research thesis
- Oral defense of the thesis project
- A successful evaluation at the end of each semester of study
- An overall grade point average of 3.0

Admissions

Prospective candidates for the degree of master of fine arts in theatre must have a B.A. or B.F.A. degree or equivalent from an accredited institution. Ordinarily, a minimum of thirty semester hours in theatre at the undergraduate level is expected to have been completed with a grade point average of no less than 2.75; although, students with an undergraduate grade point average of 2.25 to 2.75 may be admitted with probationary status.

Auditions

Applicants must audition/interview to gain admittance into the program. Applicants intending to specialize in acting must submit a complete resume of their acting experience, at least two letters of recommendation from acting coaches or directors, and must present an audition before at least one member of the acting faculty. Those intending to specialize in design must submit a complete portfolio of their work, a resume of their design experience, and at least two letters of recommendation from design instructors or directors. An interview with members of the design faculty is also required.

For further details regarding these requirements, please contact the School of Theatre & Dance, West Virginia University, P.O. Box 6111, Morgantown, WV 26506-6111, visit theatre.wvu.edu (http://theatre.wvu.edu/), or call (304) 293-2920.

Advanced Standing

Students may be eligible for eighteen hours of graduate transfer credit for advanced-standing if they meet the regular requirements of graduate admission. Students admitted with advanced standing are required to be in residence at WVU for a minimum of two semesters and a summer session. The request for advanced standing should be made to the school director at the time of application.

Admission Requirements 2023-2024

The Admission Requirements above will be the same for the 2023-2024 Academic Year.

Major Code: 2519

Degree Requirements

Minimum GPA of 3.0 required.

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THET 636 Advanced Stagecraft 3
THET 712 Entertainment Rigging 3
THET 725S Portfolio Development 1
THET 726 Graduate Automation 3

Practicum
Graduate Production Practicum (Repeated) 4
THET 600 Graduate Production Practicum 1

Electives 9
Total Hours 61

SUGGESTED PLAN OF STUDY

First Year
Fall Hours Spring Hours
THET 520S or 625S 2 THET 524 3
THET 631S 3 THET 600 1
THET 600 1 THET 629 3
THET 610 3 Elective 3
9 10

Second Year
Fall Hours Spring Hours
THET 622S 3 THET 535 3
THET 627S 3 THET 628S 3
THET 712 3 THET 636 3
THET 600 1 THET 600 1
10 10

Third Year
Fall Hours Spring Hours
THET 725S 1 THET 635S 3
THET 726 3 THET 697 3
THET 697 6 Elective 3
Elective 3
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Total credit hours: 61

Major Learning Outcomes

TECHNICAL DIRECTION

This degree program may be especially appropriate for students interested in pursuing opportunities as technical directors or theatrical project managers.

The graduate must demonstrate advanced professional competence in technical direction including, but not limited to:

1. The ability to supervise the safe construction of scenery and properties within the scope of allocated/budgeted materials, labor/time, and space.
2. The ability to understand various elements related to (a) theatrical design; (b) the set up and operation of lighting components and systems; (c) the use of sound reinforcement and playback systems; (d) methods of scenic art and construction; (e) rigging and motor systems; (f) fluid power systems (pneumatics and hydraulics) and motion control; and (g) mechanical, structural, and electrical engineering. The ability to work with these elements as appropriate to specific productions is essential.
3. The ability to read and direct personnel based on computer-aided technical drawings.
4. Personnel management, including the ability to safely supervise and, when appropriate, schedule the work of personnel within and across various theatrical shops.
5. The ability to work with theatre professionals in their processes of production.
6. The ability to articulate and apply federal, state, and local health and safety practices and regulations associated with production and performance including, but not limited to, appropriate Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Life Safety Code.

7. Facilities management, including a) the ability to oversee the daily operations and maintenance of various theatrical shops; and b) the ability to maintain a working schedule of work done in, and outside requests to use, various shops and theatrical facilities.

• The graduate must demonstrate basic competence in the following areas of design and technology including, but not limited to:
  1. Computer-aided technical drawing
  2. Sewing
  3. Technical research
  4. Welding

• The student must successfully serve as the technical director for at least two fully realized productions during the period of study, at least one of which must be fully mounted for the public.

COURSES

THET 510S. Programming for Lighting. 3 Hours.
PR: Consent. Intermediate to advanced programming methods and procedures for industry standard lighting consoles, including typical lighting console hierarchy and operation and its field application and implementation. Application and development of skills in general lighting electrics, lighting management and lighting networking set up and troubleshooting.

THET 520S. Principles of Stage Lighting. 2 Hours.
An exploration of lighting as a creative tool with emphasis on design development and equipment.

THET 523S. Costume Crafts Studio. 3 Hours.
This course will allow the graduate student to pursue research and intensive projects in the area of costume crafts through course work and lecture.

THET 524. Production Planning. 3 Hours.
Through the use of examples from the industry and an examination of current shows in the School’s production program, this course will offer a detailed study of the principles and successful strategies of production planning. An emphasis will be placed on time and labor management and budgeting for theatrical productions.

THET 535. Grad Theatre Health and Safety. 3 Hours.
An overview of safety-related issues in the theatre and entertainment technology industries. Through formal lectures and practical projects, students will be introduced to applicable safety policies and codes. Students will also complete American Red Cross CPR and First Aid certification.

THET 540S. Graduate Vocal Techniques. 2 Hours.
In-depth vocal work, with special care taken to address each actor's individual qualities, beginning with breath, alignment, and release of habitual tension. Open resonance and free articulation to support the actor's voice.

THET 541S. Graduate Voice Techniques. 2 Hours.
PR: THET 540 or THET 540S. Continue the work introduced in THET 540S with text exploration. Introduce the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and structure.

THET 542S. Graduate Stage Movement 1. 2 Hours.
Study of human movement in performance, including basic body awareness and anatomy, as well as Viewpoints and Suzuki training.

THET 543S. Graduate Stage Movement 2. 2 Hours.
PR: THET 542 or THET 542S. An intensive study of compositional techniques through the development of original performance materials using movement as a basis. Will include a study of the history of theatrical performance art works and artists.

THET 544S. Graduate Acting Studio 1. 3 Hours.
Foundation of the craft of acting including sensory elements ensemble building, environment, personalization, imagination, communication, conflict, and audition skills. Concentration is on modern and contemporary theatre.

THET 545S. . 3 Hours.
PR: THET 544 or THET 544S. Exploration of acting techniques applicable to the late 19th century, early 20th century European playwrights.

THET 546S. Graduate Scene Study 1. 1 Hour.
The presentation of scenes before a panel of acting, voice and movement faculty for critique. (May be repeated four times for credit.)

THET 547S. Graduate Scene Study 2. 1 Hour.
PR: THET 546 or THET 546S. The presentation of scenes chosen from Shakespeare and other plays of heightened text, before a panel of acting, voice, and movement faculty for critique.
THET 590. Teaching Practicum. 1-3 Hours.
PR: Consent. Supervised practice in college teaching of theatre. Note: This course is intended to insure that graduate assistants are adequately prepared and supervised when they are given college teaching responsibility. It also provides a mechanism for students not on assistantships to gain teaching experience. (Grading will be P/F.)

THET 591. Advanced Topics. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. Investigation of advanced topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses. Study may be independent or through specially scheduled lectures.

THET 592. Directed Study. 1-6 Hours.
Directed study, reading, and/or research.

THET 593. Special Topics. 1-6 Hours.
A study of contemporary topics selected from recent developments in the field.

THET 594. Seminar. 1-6 Hours.
Special seminars arranged for advanced graduate students.

THET 595. Independent Study. 1-9 Hours.
Faculty-supervised study of topics not available through regular course offerings.

THET 600. Graduate Production Practicum. 1 Hour.
PR: Consent. (May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credit hours.) Participation in assigned performance or production projects.

THET 610. Research Methods. 3 Hours.
Methods of production research for graduate students in acting and design, with particular emphasis on writing, library use, and manuscript preparation.

THET 613S. Stage Management. 3 Hours.
An exploration of stage managers' techniques, skills, and responsibilities through exercises, research into the profession, and experience stage managing an actual production.

THET 615S. Graduate Portfolio Development. 3 Hours.
Lab course on the techniques of portfolio development, focusing on both digital and traditional portfolio formats and related general techniques of graphic and image preparation.

THET 621S. Graduate Theatre Make-up. 2 Hours.
PR: Consent. Lecture/laboratory course exploring practical and physical applications of a stage character with makeup. In-depth study of facial anatomy and potential alterations through two- and three-dimensional appliances.

THET 622S. Graduate Scene Design. 3 Hours.
Graduate-level study of scenic design including conceptualization, mechanical perspective, drafting, model building, and color rendering. Emphasis placed on translating the script into a visual design.

THET 623S. Advanced Graduate Scene Design. 3 Hours.
PR: THET 622 or THET 622S. Continued study of conceptualization and techniques of presentation used in the creation of scenic environments. Emphasis on alternative forms including opera, ballet, display, and industrial venues. (May be repeated for a maximum of 9 credit hours.)

THET 624S. Graduate Costume Design 1. 3 Hours.
Intensive study of basic design elements as applied to costume design. Script analysis leading to conceptualization and communication through visual language. Experience in practical organization skills, paperwork, and budgeting. Studio/rendering work.

THET 625S. Graduate Lighting Design. 3 Hours.
PR: THET 427 or consent. Lecture/studio; intensive practical experience of lighting design for the theatre. Emphasis is placed on conceptualization, drafting, and rendering techniques related to the development and presentation of lighting design. (May be repeated for a maximum of 9 credit hours.)

THET 626S. Graduate Costume Design 2. 3 Hours.

THET 627S. Graduate Costume and Decoration 1. 3 Hours.
A historical survey of clothing, artistic style, and decoration from ancient Egypt to 1750. Emphasis on how stage designers employ period style in the design of costumes, scenery, and properties. (Field trip required.)

THET 628S. Graduate Costume and Decoration 2. 3 Hours.
A historical survey of clothing, artistic style, and decoration from 1750 to the present. Emphasis on how stage designers employ style in the design of costumes, scenery, and properties. (Field trip required.)

THET 629. Graduate Computer Assisted Design Seminar. 3 Hours.
PR: THET 631 and THET 622 or consent. Advanced study of the computer-assisted graphic design for the stage.

THET 630S. Graduate Rendering Techniques. 3 Hours.
This course allows the graduate student to explore and develop rendering techniques for scenic, costume and lighting designs. Students will work in watercolor, acrylic, marker, and other media.
THET 631S. Graduate Drafting for the Stage. 3 Hours.
Advanced techniques in drafting in accordance with current graphic standards for stage design and technology. Refinement of technique and graphic style through projects and exercises.

THET 633S. Graduate Stage Properties. 3 Hours.
An advanced studio course on the creation and organization of properties for the stage covering materials and construction techniques as well as research methods and keeping accurate paperwork.

THET 635S. Graduate Scene Painting. 3 Hours.
Course will provide scene painting skills needed in the execution of any kind of scene design and art skills that crossover into rendering and design. Scene painting skill enhances the artistic range and marketability of scene designers and technicians.

THET 636. Advanced Stagecraft. 3 Hours.
Study and research into advanced technical procedures including welding, materials, wood joinery, and practical construction problem solving. Emphasis on the practices and development of skills through projects.

THET 640S. Advanced Graduate Vocal Techniques. 2 Hours.
PR: (THET 541 or THET 541S) or consent. Intensive vocal exploration with Shakespearean text, character choices, and dialect work.

THET 641S. Advanced Graduate Vocal Techniques 2. 2 Hours.
PR: (THET 640 or THET 640S) or consent. Continuation of THET 640S with emphasis on period style texts, vocalization during emotionally intense scenes and fights. Includes technical analysis of text with attention to screaming, crying, and other moments of emotional intensity.

THET 642S. Advanced Graduate Stage Movement. 2 Hours.
PR: (THET 543 or THET 543S) or consent. Advanced study of movement techniques for character work, including rhythms of basic language/movement connections and period styles of movement.

THET 643S. Advanced Graduate Stage Movement 2. 2 Hours.
PR: (THET 642 or THET 642S) or consent. Continuation of THET 642S through work on directed projects; special topics in issues related to physicality in performance.

THET 644S. Advanced Graduate Acting Studio 1. 3 Hours.
PR: THET 545 or THET 545S. Continued exploration of the acting process focusing on heightened text and issues of period and style using the works of William Shakespeare.

THET 645S. Advanced Acting Studio. 3 Hours.
PR: THET 644 or THET 644S. Exploration of acting techniques specific to comedy, comedy of manners, physical comedy and sketch comedy.

THET 650S. Graduate Study in Musical Theatre. 2 Hours.
PR: THET 645 or THET 645S. Advanced musical theatre performance study with solos and scenes focusing on Stanislavski principles of objective and action along with interpretation choices within music composition.

THET 651S. Graduate Acting for the Camera. 2 Hours.
PR: THET 645 or THET 645S. Exploration of the principles of acting for the camera using multiple on-camera acting exercises. The course includes performance as well as audition skills.

THET 690. Teaching Practicum. 1-3 Hours.
PR: Consent. Supervised practice in college teaching of theatre. Note: This course is intended to insure that graduate assistants are adequately prepared and supervised when they are given college teaching responsibility. It also provides a mechanism for students not on assistantships to gain teaching experience. (Grading will be P/F.)

THET 691. Advanced Topics. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. Investigation of advanced topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses. Study may be independent or through specially scheduled lectures.

THET 692. Directed Study. 1-6 Hours.
Directed study, reading, and/or research.

THET 693. Special Topics. 1-6 Hours.
A study of contemporary topics selected from recent developments in the field.

THET 694. Seminar. 1-6 Hours.
Special seminars arranged for advanced graduate students.

THET 695. Independent Study. 1-9 Hours.
Faculty supervised study of topics not available through regular course offerings.

THET 696. Graduate Seminar. 1-3 Hours.
PR: Consent. Each graduate student will present at least one seminar to the assembled faculty and graduate student body of his or her program.

THET 697. Research. 1-9 Hours.
PR: Consent. Research activities leading to thesis, problem report, research paper or equivalent scholarly project, or a dissertation. (Grading may be S/U.)
THET 698. Thesis or Dissertation. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. This is an optional course for programs that wish to provide formal supervision during the writing of student reports (698), or dissertations (798). Grading is normal.

THET 699. Graduate Colloquium. 1-6 Hours.
THET 699. Graduate Colloquium. 1-6 hr. PR: Consent. For graduate students not seeking coursework credit but who wish to meet residency requirements, use the University's facilities, and participate in its academic and cultural programs. Note: Graduate students who are not actively involved in coursework or research are entitled, through enrollment in their department's 699/799 Graduate Colloquium to consult with graduate faculty, participate in both formal and informal academic activities sponsored by their program, and retain all of the rights and privileges of duly enrolled students. Grading is P/F: colloquium credit may not be counted against credit requirements for masters programs. Registration for one credit of 699/799 graduate colloquium satisfies the University requirement of registration in the semester in which graduation occurs.

THET 710. Structural Design for the Stage. 3 Hours.
Structural Design for the Stage focuses on the safe design of scenic structures. Mathematical equations are defined to provide a foundation of how to approach structural challenges in theatre making sure scenic elements are safe and load bearing for production needs.

THET 712. Entertainment Rigging. 3 Hours.
Examines the tools, equipment, hardware, and safety practices in the entertainment industry. Rigging exploration ranges from traditional theatrical houses to concert settings.

THET 720. Seminar in Production Research. 3 Hours.
PR: THET 610 and THET 622 or THET 626 or THET 625. Seminar approach to individual design projects with oral and written presentations of research materials. Intensive critique within class by faculty and peers.

THET 721. Professional Aspects of Design. 3 Hours.
PR: THET 622 and THET 624 and THET 625. An in-depth work in the packaging and presentation of the design portfolio, resume writing, and job opportunities. Emphasis is placed on methods of making a successful transition from an academic environment into the performance industry.

THET 725S. Portfolio Development. 1 Hour.
Independent studio work supervised by faculty mentor to prepare the designer portfolio for professional presentations and interviews.

THET 726. Graduate Automation. 3 Hours.
PR: THET 629. Graduate Automation is the exploration of motorized equipment used in the arts and how it can be utilized for production purposes. Topics from electricity to mechanical design will be discussed.

THET 740S. Advanced Graduate Vocal Techniques 3. 2 Hours.
PR: THET 640 or THET 640S. The student will focus on more advanced dialect and vocal techniques to refine and ready the student's skills for the professional world. Microphone techniques will be introduced as well as development of voiceover techniques and copy.

THET 742S. Advanced Graduate Stage Movement 3. 2 Hours.
PR: THET 643 or THET 643S. The final course in the Graduate Acting movement sequence. An introduction to stage violence, specifically unarmed combat and basic rapier.

THET 750S. Graduate Showcase 1. 1 Hour.
PR: THET 645 or THET 645S. Preliminary preparation for Graduate Actor's Showcase. The showcase gives the graduating MFA actor the opportunity to demonstrate his/her skills for an audience of professional agents, casting directors, producers, and directors.

THET 751S. Showcase Development. 2 Hours.
PR: THET 624 or THET 624S. Using skills learned in monologue and scene work, students will develop a performance of selected works, develop a mailing list of professional agents, and perform two showcases.

THET 771. Contemporary Theatre Organizations. 3 Hours.
PR: THET 610. This course studies the philosophical and organizational structure of modern and contemporary theatres (1898-present). The class will function as a graduate seminar.

THET 790. Teaching Practicum. 1-3 Hours.
PR: Consent. Supervised practice in college teaching of theatre. Note: This course is intended to insure that graduate assistants are adequately prepared and supervised when they are given college teaching responsibility. It will also present a mechanism for students not on assistantships to gain teaching experience. (Grading will be P/F.).

THET 791. Advanced Topics. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. Investigation in advanced topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses. Study may be independent or through specially scheduled lectures.

THET 792. Directed Study. 1-6 Hours.
Directed study, reading, and/or research.

THET 793. Special Topics. 1-6 Hours.
A study of contemporary topics selected from recent developments in the field.

THET 795. Independent Study. 1-9 Hours.
Faculty supervised study of topics not available through regular course offerings.
THET 796. Graduate Seminar. 1-3 Hours.
PR: Consent. Each graduate student will present at least one seminar to the assembled faculty and graduate student body of his or her program.

THET 797. Research. 1-9 Hours.
PR: Consent. Research activities leading to thesis, problem report, research paper or equivalent scholarly project, or a dissertation. (Grading may be S/U).

THET 900. Professional Development. 1-6 Hours.
Professional development courses provide skill renewal or enhancement in a professional field or content area (e.g., education, community health, geology). The continuing education courses are graded on a pass/fail grading scale and do not apply as graduate credit toward a degree program.