

Master of Fine Arts
In
Theater
Handbook



Department of Theater
Revised: January 2021

Contents

Mission Statement.....	4
Degree Programs.....	5
Department of Theater Faculty and Staff.....	6
Facilities and Programs.....	9
Theaters and Season.....	9
Adjunct Programs	9
Production Calendars	9
Guidelines for Graduate Students	10
Financial Assistance.....	10
Graduate Assistants.....	11
Teaching Assistants	12
Graduate Representation.....	12
Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism.....	13
Emergency Procedures.....	13
Lighting Design - MFA Studies in Theater Design and Production.....	15
Guidelines, Procedures, and Expectations	15
Course Requirements	15
Curriculum Charts.....	17
Required Projects	19
Qualifier	19
Thesis	22
Scenic Design - MFA Studies in Theater Design and Production.....	25
Guidelines, Procedures, and Expectations	25
Course Requirements	26
Curriculum Charts.....	28
Required Projects	30
Qualifier	30
Thesis	34
Technical Direction - MFA Studies in Theater Design and Production.....	37
Guidelines, Procedures, and Expectations	37
Course Requirements	38
Curriculum Charts.....	40
Required Projects	41
Qualifier	41
Thesis	45
Costume Design - MFA Studies in Theater Design and Production	48

Guidelines, Procedures, and Expectations	48
Course Requirements	49
Curriculum Charts.....	51
Required Projects	53
Qualifier	53
Thesis	56
Directing - MFA Studies in Directing	60
Guidelines, Procedures, and Expectations	60
Course Requirements	61
Curriculum Charts.....	63
Qualifier, Heightened Language Project, and Thesis	64
Qualifier	64
Heightened Language Project.....	69
Thesis	69
Playwriting - MFA Studies in Playwriting	71
Guidelines, Procedures, and Expectations	71
Course Requirements	72
Curriculum Charts.....	73
Required Projects	74
Qualifier	74
Thesis	75
Appendices and Forms for MFA Students.....	78

DEPARTMENT OF THEATER
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CARBONDALE

Mission Statement

The Department of Theater is an academic unit within the College of Liberal Arts of Southern Illinois University Carbondale, engaged in teaching, research/creative activity, and service. The Department of Theater is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Theatre, 11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21, Reston, VA. 20190.

The Theater Department is committed to the continued refinement of its primary objectives which are, in order of priority:

1. Dedication to the development of excellence in the education and training of its students
2. Contribution to the field of theater through investigation of and experimentation in the art and its practice
3. Service as a cultural benefit to the University and the community at large.

The Department of Theater blends scholarship and practice into an academically based theater experience that provides students with broad-based exposure to the human experience and a sound foundation in the skills of theater craft. Graduates will be able to apply their knowledge of performance, production, theater history and literature, and contemporary practice in a wide variety of theater venues. Graduates will also be able to demonstrate intrapersonal and interpersonal skills in the form of leadership qualities, self-discipline, creative expression, critical thinking, and the ability to work effectively as part of a collaborative team.

Degree Programs

The Department of Theater offers Theater training in a setting combining scholarship and practice. The course of study in theory and criticism in all areas of Theater is complemented by a production schedule that reinforces both approaches to Theater, creating work that is as imaginative and highly polished as possible. Students are expected to display discipline and dedication, in return for which they will receive honest evaluations of both academic and practical work. The development and guidance of talent and discipline, both characteristic of the artist/scholar, are the goals of the Department of Theater.

B.A. in Theater

B.F.A. Musical Theater

MFA in Theater: specializations in Directing, Playwriting, Costume Design, Lighting Design, and Scenic Design and Technical Direction

PHD in Communication Studies: Theatre History; Theory and Criticism; Dramaturgy; Playwriting; Performance Studies; Communication Pedagogy; Gender, Sexuality, and Communication; Intercultural Communication; Interpersonal Communication; Rhetoric and Philosophy of Communication

Special Areas: Coordination of cognate areas within the university structure offers the possibility of study in such interdisciplinary areas as Dramatic Literature, Creative Writing, Black American Studies, Museum Studies, Music Theater, and others.

Department of Theater Faculty and Staff

Full-time Faculty

SUSAN PATRICK BENSON
MFA Rutgers University
Acting, Voice and Speech Specialist
Director of Undergraduate Studies

DARRYL K. CLARK
MFA, SUNY College at Brockport
BA, Columbia College Chicago
Musical Theater Dance

THOMAS FAGERHOLM
MFA Minnesota State University Mankato
Technical Direction

ANNE FLETCHER
MA Emerson College, Boston
PHD Tufts University
History, Theory & Criticism, Dramaturgy

JACOB JUNTUNEN
MA Northwestern University
MA Ohio University
PHD Northwestern University
Playwriting, History & Criticism
Director of Graduate Studies

GENNIE NEUMANN LAMBERT
MFA Rutgers University
Scenic Design

OLUSEGUN OJEWUYI
MA University of Ibadan, Nigeria
MFA Yale University
Acting and Directing
Interim Chair

JANE PIVOVARNIK
MFA Southern Illinois University
Costume Construction

MARK K. VARNS
MFA University of Missouri, Kansas City
Lighting Design

WENDI ZEA
MFA Kent State University
Costume Design

Cross-appointed Faculty

MARY BOGUMIL
Department of English
PHD University of South Florida Dramatic Literature

Emeritus Faculty

LORI MERRILL-FINK
MFA University of Arizona Acting and Directing

TIMOTHY J. FINK
MFA Southern Illinois University
Musical Theatre

CHRISTIAN H. MOE
PHD Cornell University
Playwriting, Theory and Criticism

RONALD A. NAVERSEN
MFA Carnegie-Mellon University
PHD Southern Illinois University
Scenic Design, Theory, and History

DAVID A. RUSH
MA University of Iowa PHD University of Illinois Playwriting

Adjunct Faculty

None

Staff

SCOTT ELLIOTT
Business Manager

DARLENE REIDLEBERGER
Office Manager

Facilities and Programs

Theaters and Season

The academic season includes 5-7 full productions, providing a balance of classical and modern repertory, musicals, and student-written plays. Productions are assigned to either venue, depending on their artistic appropriateness. In addition, a variety of student-driven projects including original script readings are produced each year. These productions serve as Thesis and Dissertation projects for our MFA and PHD students.

The Department of Theater maintains two theaters for public productions:

The McLeod Theater: A proscenium stage seating 520. The playbill typically encompasses a balance of contemporary, classic, and original works, and offers three plays and a musical during the academic year (the latter co-produced with the School of Music). McLeod Summer Playhouse, consists of a combination of musicals and plays and one high school musical, and operates as a professional summer stock company, offering stipends, and/or undergraduate credit.

The Christian H. Moe Laboratory Theater: A flexible stage space (black box) seating up to 110 persons, which can be utilized as a full arena, three-quarter thrust, etc. A variety of plays are produced in the Moe Lab including new play premieres, MFA Directing, Design, and Playwriting Thesis productions, and class-related projects.

Adjunct Programs

Performance and production opportunities are also available in the Department of Communication Studies's Marion Kleinau Theater, a performance space for the staging of Performance Studies productions.

Production Calendars

The Department maintains Academic & Production Calendars on GOOGLE. These calendars provide access to all Department of Theater committee meetings, design and production meetings, scholarship auditions, special workshops, productions, etc. To access these calendars: 1) Go to Google Calendar and create an account; 2) Go to www.theater.siuc.edu; 3) Select "Resources"; 4) Under "GOOGLE CALENDAR LINKS" select the calendar you would like to join while holding down the "Control (PC) or Command (mac)" as you click on the link.

To add this calendar to your list of calendars, click on the "+ Google Calendar" button in the bottom right-hand corner.

Guidelines for Graduate Students

Financial Assistance

Fellowships: Students are eligible for a variety of financial aid opportunities through the Graduate School including competitive fellowships, minority fellowships, and federal work-study assistantships. Please note that there are different deadlines for each financial award, and many require the GRE. These financial awards cannot be offered until the student has completed their application and been admitted by both the Department of Theater and the Graduate School. Applicants are presented by recommendation of the Department of Theater on the basis of grade point average, GRE scores, and letters of recommendation submitted by the applicant. Awards may include a waiver of tuition and/or stipend.

Financial Aid forms and information are available at the Graduate School website.

<https://gradschool.siu.edu/cost-aid/>

Assistantships: There are a limited number of departmental assistantships available to graduate students. Assistantships cover full tuition waivers for 3 years and offer a monthly stipend for 9 months each academic year. Tuition scholarship recipients must enroll for a minimum of 8 graduate credit hours for fall and spring semesters and 3 graduate credit hours in summer. Assistantship duties typically involve working in publicity, house management, supervising in the production studio areas, and teaching introductory theater classes. Students may discuss their assignment interests with their faculty advisor and then express these to the Director of Graduate Studies. Students are encouraged to express their preferences, but the Department of Theater retains the final authority for making assignments according to departmental needs. The departmental deadline for application is March 1st and students may expect notification, regarding their employment, prior to May 1 for the following academic year.

Assistantships are occasionally available in other departments and offices on campus. Students interested in outside assistantships should check with the Financial Aid Office.

<https://gradschool.siu.edu/cost-aid/ga/>

Graduate Tuition Waivers: A limited number of tuition waivers are awarded each semester to graduate students on the basis of scholarship and/or need. The award does not offer a stipend. Students may receive a tuition scholarship for a maximum of three years during their enrollment in the University.

To be eligible the student must be admitted to the Graduate School and to a department, and the student may not hold another University appointment that provides a tuition scholarship (i.e. graduate assistantship, fellowship). Tuition scholarship recipients must enroll for a minimum of 8 graduate credit hours for fall and spring semesters and 3 graduate credit hours in summer.

Students should submit application forms at least one full semester preceding the semester for which the tuition scholarship is requested. Deadline dates are as follows: April 15 for summer session, July 15 for fall semester, and November 15 for spring semester.

Application forms are available at <https://gradschool.siu.edu/cost-aid/scholarships/>

Other Financial Aid: The Financial Aid Office offers further information concerning the availability of scholarships, loans, and on-campus jobs. This office may be contacted directly by mail or by telephone:

Financial Aid Office Mail Code 4702
Southern Illinois University Carbondale, IL 62901
(618) 453-4334
<https://fao.siu.edu/>

Graduate Assistants

Assistantships are granted to students with the necessary skills to complete various jobs within the Department. Assistantships are a privilege extended by the department and not an entitlement to all graduate students.

All new graduate assistants must attend the teaching workshops offered by the Graduate School and the Department of Theater in the week prior to the beginning of fall semester. The exact dates and times of these sessions will be available from the Director of Graduate Studies in Theater each summer and by contacting the Center for Teaching Excellence at <https://cte.siu.edu/>

Keys: Graduate assistants are assigned office space and appropriate building keys by the Department. Check with the Department Office Manager for further information. These keys must be returned at the end of each academic year. Lost or stolen keys must be reported to the Theater Office immediately.

Evaluations: Performance Evaluations are conducted by the area supervisor at the end of each semester. Failure to satisfactorily perform assigned assistantship duties or unsatisfactory academic progress will result in the student receiving a warning before termination of the assistantship, or a change and/or a reduction in assignment. These evaluations are kept in the student's personnel file in the Theater Office.

Copy Machine: Each teaching assistant is assigned a key code for the Department photocopier by the office staff. Photocopying must be restricted to materials needed for teaching classes and is not to be used for personal course work or personal business.

Numbers of copies are monitored, and excessive use will result in loss of access to the copy machine.

Teaching Assistants

Graduate Teaching assistants are supervised by the specific Area Head (Performance, Playwriting, Production, History) in which the student is teaching.

Syllabus: Standard syllabi, textbooks, attendance policies, and information on classroom procedures must be obtained from the faculty supervisor for each area. Copies of all syllabi are to be kept on file in the Theater Office.

Final Grades: Final grades are posted on-line on Saluki-Net. Be absolutely certain the correct grade is filed for each student. Grade changes are difficult (and sometimes impossible) once final grades are filed.

SGID Evaluation: At mid-term the teaching assistant will arrange for an SGID Evaluation to be conducted with their class(es) and review the results with their Area Supervisor. (See description on website).

ICE: At the end of the semester teaching assistants should arrange for their students to complete an Instructor and Course Evaluation Form (See description on website). Each semester the Office of Instructional Evaluation makes these forms and instructions available through the Center for Teaching Excellence.

Studio Schedules: The Costume, Scenic, and Lighting Studios are open 9-6 on Monday and from 2-6 Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Evening and weekend work calls may be called when necessary.

Graduate Representation

Departmental Representation: Graduate Students are represented by one or more of their peers on all Department of Theater subcommittees including Graduate Recruitment & Curriculum Committee, and Recruitment & Retention. Elections are held each year during Graduate Orientation.

University Representation: During Orientation, students may also be nominated to the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) <https://gpsc.rso.siu.edu/> the College of Liberal Arts Council (CoLA) <https://cola.siu.edu/infofor/faculty-staff/Offices-Committees-Councils/cola-council.html> and the Fine Arts Activity Fee Committee (FAAF). The names of students nominated will be placed in a general election of all graduate students to these councils.

GA United: Graduate Assistants are also represented by GA United www.gaunited.org 800-431-3730 which has negotiated the SIUC Graduate Assistant United Agreement with the SIUC Board of Trustees. This document is available at: <https://gaunited.org/contract/>

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

Graduate assistants should familiarize themselves with Undergraduate policies, including grievance procedures. The procedures are contained in the Undergraduate catalog available in the main office or online at <https://catalog.siu.edu/>

Integrity in research is the foundation upon which new knowledge builds. Misconduct threatens the research enterprise by violating that integrity and contradicts the fundamental purpose of research--to advance truth--while damaging the credibility of research in the eyes of the public. Instances of misconduct can have far-reaching effects. For these reasons, the University and the Department of Theater view misconduct in research activities with the utmost seriousness and expect all students to adhere to the highest ethical standards in their work. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code for definitions and policies on academic misconduct. <https://srr.siu.edu/student-conduct-code/>

Emergency Procedures

Graduate Students should be familiar with emergency procedures for Theater outlined in the Emergencies Procedures Handbook on the Department of Theater website <https://cola.siu.edu/theater/undergraduate/resources/>

Graduate Students should also be familiar with Emergency procedures outlined on the Emergency Communications website <https://emergency.siu.edu/>

SIUC uses a Wireless Emergency Notification System (WENS). In this system, an SIUC Alert is sent to cell phones as a text-message and/or as an e-mail to your e-mail address. The message may alert you to an emergency situation, ask you to take action, or both. Some weather warnings including will also be sent as an SIUC Alert.

You may register for WENS on the Emergency Communications Website SIUC also maintains an SIUC Alerts Emergency Information Phone Line at 1-866-264-6420 or 618-453-5375 and a website <https://emergency.siu.edu/about-alerts.php>

An Emergency Response Guide is available as a PDF file at <https://emergency.siu.edu/check/>

In the event of an emergency, a loudspeaker system may be used to convey SIUC Alerts and/or other information. Loudspeakers exist in a number of buildings including: Recreation Center, Student Center, Brush Towers, Student Health Center, SIU Arena

Weather Emergencies: Emergency sirens are tested at 10:00 AM on the 1st Tuesday of each month. The signals are: Long Blast = Tornado; High/Low = Any other emergency.

Emergency Information is also broadcast by City of Carbondale - AM 1620 WSIU - FM 91.9

Lighting Design - MFA Studies in Theater Design and Production

Guidelines, Procedures, and Expectations

First Year Overview

The first year of the MFA program is a time to assess strengths and weaknesses. Course work and production assignments offer lighting design students fundamental information and experience to reinforce knowledge, fill gaps in understanding, and opportunities to strengthen practical skills. Course work covers essential research and writing skills, history, script analysis, design and concept development, and graphic presentation methods. Through course work, students will also learn institutional procedures essential for completing department production assignments.

In the first year, lighting design students are expected to complete a Qualifier and a first-year review (this may also be completed the second year). and production students will normally complete at least one major project each semester for Lighting Designers this could be either as Assistant Designer or Designer.

Second Year Overview

The second year offers advanced-level courses in the student's area and continued development of graphic skills. Students often begin course work in their secondary areas and course work that enhances their specialization.

The MFA student is usually assigned a qualifying project if one was not completed in the first year. Design and Production students will normally complete at least one major project each semester.

Second-year students often propose or are assigned their Thesis production in the spring of the second year. The Thesis project is to be completed in the third year.

Third Year Overview

The Thesis project is normally scheduled during the second year or the first semester of the third year. The Thesis proposal should be developed early, and research and analysis should begin as soon as the Thesis project is assigned. To ensure that the student is properly prepared to complete the Thesis, written research and an analysis chapter should be completed before the production process begins.

The third year offers the student the opportunity to complete their THEA 599 Thesis hours and requirements. Students continue to improve their graphic skills, develop their portfolios, and explore employment opportunities. It is also an opportunity to develop practical skills in their secondary production interest. Students may work in other studio venues and request production assignments outside their first area of interest. Students are required to complete at least one major production assignment during the third year.

Course Requirements

MFA Core Requirements 12 hrs.

THEA 500	Introduction to Research Methods	1 hr. (to be taken 3 times)
THEA 501	Avant-Garde & Performance	3 hrs.
THEA 599	Thesis	6 hrs.

Lighting Area Requirements 29-33 hrs. total

THEA 418	Lighting Design	3 hrs.
THEA 510	Production Design Seminar	1 hr. (to be taken 6 times)
THEA 516	Advanced Theater Design & Production	2 hrs. (to be taken 4 to 6 times)
THEA 520A	Period Style for Theater I	3 hrs.
THEA 520B	Period Style for Theater II	3 hrs.
Design Classes Pick 2 of 3		
THEA 407	Scene Design	3 hrs.
THEA 414	Costume Design	3 hrs.
THEA 419	Technical Direction	3 hrs.
Electives 15-19 hrs. See Below		

Suggested Electives 15-19 total 9 hrs. total

THEA 400 Production (2 hrs. @)	2-4 hrs.
THEA 407 or 414 or 419 (The one not chosen from above)	3 hrs.
THEA 409 Scene Painting (2 hrs. @)	2-6 hrs.
THEA 413 Drafting (3 hrs. @)	12 hrs.
THEA 416A Structural Design (3 hrs.)	3 hrs.
THEA 416B Structural Design (3 hrs.)	3 hrs.

In addition to mastery in your design area, all design and production students must demonstrate competency in stagecraft skills including basic sewing, construction, painting, props methods and electrical skills. Students with these deficiencies will be advised to enroll in coursework to correct these deficits.

Curriculum Charts

1st Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 500 Research Methods	1	THEA 501 Avant-Garde	3
THEA 402 Drafting for the Theater	3	THEA 418 Lighting Design	3
Elective (Costume Design/ Technical Direction) THEA 516	3 2	Elective THEA 516	3 2
THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1	THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1
THEA 520A Period Styles for Theater I or Elective	3	THEA 520B Period Styles for Theater or Elective	3
Total	10	Total	12

2nd Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
Elective (Costume Design/ Technical Direction)	3	THEA 407 Scene Design	3
THEA 520A Period Styles for Theatre I or Elective	3	THEA 520B Period Styles for Theater I or Elective	3
Elective (413 Drafting Stage Management)	2-3 3	Elective	2-3
THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1	THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1
THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2	THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2
THEA 500 Research Methods (may be taken in the spring)	1		
Total	12- 13	Total	11- 12

3rd Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
Elective	2-3	Elective	2-3
Elective	2-3	Elective	2-3
THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1	THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1

THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2	THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2
THEA 500 Research Methods (may be taken in spring)	1		
THEA 599 Thesis (project)	3	THEA 599 Thesis (Written)	3
Total	11-13	Total	10-12

Required Projects

Qualifier

Purpose

The MFA student is usually assigned a qualifying project by the Production faculty based upon evaluation of the student's experience and portfolio.

The qualifying project for Lighting Designer is to serve as Lighting Designer for a production. In addition to the practical work, the student will present all appropriate analysis, research, and graphic materials connected with the project.

The qualifying project is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the skills necessary to successfully complete the position of lighting designer for a production. The necessary skills include, but are not limited to, script analysis, research, developing a design concept, leadership, interpersonal communication skills with all production areas as necessary, develop lighting cues and complete all graphic materials such as light plot and accompanying data sheets needed to successfully complete the project.

The proposal process for the Qualifier will be repeated for the Thesis project, with additional expectations as outlined below.

Schedule

As soon as the next year's season is chosen, the Lighting Design Faculty Advisor will consult with the lighting design graduate students, and assignments for the next year will be made. Those assigned qualifying and Thesis productions will begin work on their research for their proposals, with the goal that proposals shall be completed before the first design meeting. The time frames for these will be planned between the advisor and student (see Design Meeting Expectations in Production Handbook).

Requirements

Assignment

See "Schedule" above.

Proposal

The Qualifying Proposal and the Thesis Proposal require the same form of investigation using the same procedures and processes. Therefore, this section will apply to both the Qualifier and Thesis Proposals. The expectation is that the Thesis Proposal and subsequent Thesis Production will show greater proficiency and depth in the areas of research, analysis, writing, and advanced skills than those displayed in the Qualifier. The Thesis production is therefore held to a higher level of review and grading that is comparative with similar standards in professional Theater.

The steps outlined below form a broad pattern, to be adjusted as needed for the particular production, under the guidance of the advisor. The proposal should focus on sections I, II, and III, and where appropriate, may include research images, collages and other non-textual materials. The purpose of the proposal is to show you have done the background work required BEFORE entering into discussions with the director and the rest of the design team. The point is to demonstrate your creativity while still recognizing the collaborative nature of the project. A well-researched and prepared lighting designer is a much more effective collaborator, no matter what direction the production takes.

Sections IV and V will be completed through the design process and will be presented at the meeting after the show goes up.

I. Statement of Project (one to two pages):

The first sentence needs to indicate title, playwright, place/time of production (e.g. McLeod Theatre, Spring Semester 2020), your role, and a statement this is for your Qualifier/Thesis production. The remainder of the opening paragraph should be a brief “Thesis” statement as to what you believe the play is about, which you will then expand upon and “prove” in the next section.

Additional content should reflect on the following:

Why is this an appropriate production for you to execute?

What has prepared you for this project?

What are some areas for improvement?

What are the potential technical challenges in this production?

II. Play Analysis:

The list below is meant to serve as a guide to start your thinking and research. Answer questions and explore research based on the specific and unique given circumstances of the play. Not all plays will require answers to all questions, and other questions will likely need to be considered that are not listed here. Give specific examples/quotes from the text that are supported with outside research.

Themes (Author’s Intent):

A sentence or paragraph statement of theme(s) followed by a narrative defense of that statement. Consider the significance of the title (if any) and discuss why it is important to understanding the play and theme, especially for contemporary audiences.

Play Structure:

Describe the play’s structure, content, and history that will affect the design of this production. (This description should include dramatic form, genre, and style of production.

Given Circumstances

Where does the action of the play take place? This may include information regarding location, season, year, and time of day, as applicable.

What are the economic, social, political, moral, religious environments?

Historical/ Bibliographic Information

When was the play written?

Why did the author write this play?

If the play is based upon a historical event, give a brief account of the event.

What aspects of the cultural context and current events at the time of the plays writing explain the text?

E. Plot and Structure

What is the dramatic conflict or action of the play (do *not* give a plot synopsis)?

What devices does the playwright employ in terms of repeated images/colors/sounds/words, recurring themes, imagery, metaphors? (Remember to support with specific examples from the script.)

Scenic Breakdown (table form)

Act # & Scene #

Page #

Characters

Location

Notes

Style of Production

i.e. ISM as it might influence the technical demands of this production.

Historical Productions (if applicable)

What challenges might they add to this production?

Potential unique lighting requirements and/or Challenges if applicable

III. Statement of Goals:

Identify and define specific goals for this project.

How will this production challenge you and your abilities?

In what way will this project represent your 'qualifications' for MFA candidacy?

What are your goals as a designer? What aspects of the lighting design process do you want to challenge yourself with most?

Additional questions in this category to consider:

How will you further develop your:

Collaboration skills?

Communication skills?

Organizational skills?

Specific lighting design skills?

Timely delivery of all necessary paperwork (plot, data sheets, cues, etc.)

IV. Modes of Evaluation

How Will we measure the success of this project?

Define success for each of the identified goals in section III.

Sections V & VI are for the final Thesis document (see Thesis below).

Approval

Once the proposal is complete, the student is to provide a copy to their Thesis committee and asks to schedule a meeting with the committee. (The paper should be provided two weeks prior to the meeting.)

At the meeting, the student will be asked to briefly discuss their ideas on the play, then will answer questions from the committee.

The committee will then approve (or not) the proposal and sign the departmental 4-in-1 form accordingly.

Requirements for Executing Project

The student will follow the Collaboration Guidelines and fulfill all necessary steps on time. The student will follow all procedures of the lighting studio in completing the project and will meet weekly with the faculty lighting designer to ensure full completion of the project.

Committee Meeting and Approval Procedures

Procedure for the meeting

The student should arrange a meeting with their Thesis committee within ten days of the show closing. At the meeting, the student should prepare a brief presentation of their work; bringing in all pertinent documents, plots, paperwork, research images, lighting keys, sketches, and production photos to show what was accomplished. The student will use these documents to discuss how they met, or didn't meet, their goals for the production, and what their goals for the Thesis might be.

Results of meeting

The success of the project is evaluated by the student's Thesis committee, and the student is advised to areas that are successful and areas that will require additional training. The committee will either accept the project or determine that another qualifying project should be assigned. In some cases, the faculty may require additional production assignments before allowing the student to start a Thesis project.

Possible Outcomes

Approved The student's Qualifier project is approved, and they can move on to the Thesis project.

Conditional Approval The student's Qualifier project is approved, provided they fulfill conditions that will be written on the form, with a copy given to the student. Possible conditions may include additional writing, additional coursework, or another production.

Not Approved The student's Qualifier production is not approved. They must start the process over with a new production, and a new proposal, as assigned.

Non-Continuation The student is dismissed from the program.

Thesis

Purpose

The MFA student, through their thesis project, will demonstrate further development and mastery of all the skills and artistry associated with the lighting design of a production.

Schedule

As soon as the next year's season is chosen, the Lighting Design Advisor will consult with the technical direction graduate students, and assignments for the next year will be made. Those assigned qualifying and thesis productions will begin work on their research for their proposals, with the goal that proposals shall be completed before the first design meeting. The time frames for these will be planned between the advisor and student using the Collaboration Guidelines in Production Handbook).

Requirements

Assignment

See “Schedule” above.

Proposal

The Qualifying Proposal and the Thesis Proposal require the same form of investigation using the same procedures and processes. Therefore, this section will apply to both the Qualifier and Thesis Proposals. The expectation is that the Thesis Proposal and subsequent Thesis Production will show greater proficiency and depth in the areas of research, analysis, writing, and advanced skills than those displayed in the Qualifier. The Thesis production is therefore held to a higher level of review and grading that is comparative with similar standards in professional Theater.

See all questions and writing guidelines listed above for the qualifier proposal, to be used as well for the thesis proposal. Sections V & VI, below, are added for the final thesis document.

V. Realized Paperwork

Examples include:

- A) Lighting Research
 - 1) Lighting sources
 - 2) Inspiration images
 - 3) Period research as it relates to light
- B) Light plot/plots
- C) Data sheets (Instrument Schedule, Channel Hook-up, Color/Gobo count, etc)
- D) Lighting Key/Keys
- E) Scene Breakdown
- F) Lighting Concept Statement

VI. Qualifications/ Resume

Include your current Resume & Curriculum Vitae

Approval (Committee meeting and signing of “4-in1 form”)

Once the proposal is complete, the student is to provide a copy to their thesis committee and asks to schedule a meeting with the committee. (The paper should be provided two weeks prior to the meeting.)

At the meeting, the student will be asked to briefly discuss their ideas on the play, then will answer questions from the committee.

The committee will then approve (or not) the proposal and sign the departmental 4-in-1 form accordingly.

Requirements for Executing Project

The student will follow the Collaboration Guidelines and fulfill all required steps on time. The student will follow all procedures of the Lighting Studio in completing the project,

and will meet weekly with the faculty lighting designer to ensure full completion of the project.

Committee Meeting and Approval Procedures

Procedure for the meeting

The student should arrange a meeting with their thesis committee within ten days of the show closing. At the meeting, the student should prepare a brief presentation of their work; bringing in all pertinent documents, plots, paperwork, research images, lighting keys, sketches, and production photos to show what was accomplished. The student will use these documents to discuss how they met, or didn't meet, their goals for the production, and what their goals for the thesis might be.

Results of meeting

The success of the project is evaluated by the student's thesis committee, and the student is advised to areas that are successful and areas that will require additional training. The committee will either accept the project or determine that another thesis project should be assigned. In some cases, the faculty may require additional production assignments.

Possible outcomes:

Approved The student's Thesis project is approved, and they can move on to finish writing the thesis document.

Conditional Approval The student's Thesis project is approved, provided they fulfill conditions that will be written on the form, with a copy given to the student. Possible conditions may include additional writing, additional coursework, or another production.

Not Approved The student's Thesis production is not approved. They must start the process over with a new production, and a new proposal, as assigned.

Non-Continuation The student is dismissed from the program.

Finishing the Thesis Document

After the Thesis production is approved, the MFA student shall move forward with finishing the writing of the final thesis document, working with the faculty advisor. Keeping the Graduate School deadlines in mind, the student must arrange to send the document to their committee ahead of a final committee meeting to approve the final document. At that meeting, the student shall provide copies of the appropriate thesis approval forms (see Graduate School website and Department of Theater website) printed on the appropriate paper as noted, for the committee to sign. Two original sets should be signed, with one copy to be taken by the student to the Graduate School, and one copy to be kept in the student's departmental file.

Scenic Design - MFA Studies in Theater Design and Production

Guidelines, Procedures, and Expectations

First Year Overview

The first year of the MFA program is a time to assess strengths and weaknesses. Course work and production assignments offer scenic design students fundamental information and experience to reinforce knowledge, fill gaps in understanding, and opportunities to strengthen practical skills. Course work covers essential research and writing skills, history, script analysis, design and concept development, and graphic presentation methods. Through course work, students will also learn institutional procedures essential for completing department production assignments.

In the first semester, scenic design students will often be assigned as assistant scenic designer on a production, to better learn the procedures of the department. In the second semester, scenic design students are expected to complete a first-year review, and the writing of the Qualifier proposal. Design and production students will normally complete at least one major project each semester.

Second Year Overview

The second year offers advanced-level courses in the student's area and continued development of graphic skills. Students often begin course work in their secondary areas and course work that enhances their specialization.

The MFA student is usually assigned a qualifying project if one was not completed in the first year. Design and Production students will normally complete at least one major project each semester.

Second-year students often propose or are assigned their Thesis production in the spring of the second year. The Thesis project is to be completed in the third year.

Third Year Overview

The Thesis project is normally scheduled during the first semester of the third year. The Thesis proposal should be developed early, and research and analysis should begin as soon as the Thesis project is assigned. To ensure that the student is properly prepared to complete the Thesis, written research and an analysis chapter should be completed before the design process begins.

The third year offers the student the opportunity to complete their THEA 599 Thesis hours and requirements. Students continue to improve their graphic skills, develop their portfolios, and explore employment opportunities. It is also an opportunity to develop practical skills in their secondary production interest. Students may work in other studio venues and request production assignments outside their first area of interest. Students are required to complete at least one major production assignment during the third year.

Summers

Students are encouraged to work in their field during summers.

Course Requirements

MFA Core Requirements 12 hrs.

THEA 500	Introduction to Research Methods	1 hr. (to be taken 3 times)
THEA 501	Avant-Garde & Performance	3 hrs.
THEA 599	Thesis	6 hrs.

Scenic Design Area Requirements 34 hrs.

THEA 407	Scenic Design	3 hrs.
THEA 409	Scenic Painting Studio	2 hrs. (to be taken 1-3 times)
THEA 413	Drafting for the Theater	3 hrs. (to be taken 1-3 times)
THEA 510	Production Design Seminar	1 hr. (to be taken 6 times)
THEA 516	Advanced Theater Design & Production	2 hrs. (to be taken 4-6 times)
THEA 520A	Period Style for Theater I	3 hrs.
THEA 520B	Period Style for Theater II	3 hrs.
Design Classes Pick 2 of 3		
THEA 418	Lighting Design	3 hrs.
THEA 414	Costume Design	3 hrs.
THEA 419	Technical Direction	3 hrs.
Electives 14 hrs. See Below		

Suggested Electives (14 hrs. total)

- Properties Studio (Repeatable for advanced work)
- Scene Painting Studio (Repeatable for advanced work)
- Drafting for the Theater (Repeatable for advanced work)
- Structural Design for the Stage
- Dramaturgy
- Patterning & Draping
- Costume Crafts I/II

- Advanced Costume Construction
- Advanced Costume Design
- Metal Fabrication
- Special Topics

In addition to mastery in your design area, all design and production students must demonstrate competency in stagecraft skills including basic sewing, construction, painting, props methods and electrical skills. Students with these deficiencies will be advised to enroll in coursework to correct these deficits.

Curriculum Charts

1st Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 500 Research Methods	1	THEA 501 Avant-Garde	3
THEA 409 Scene Painting Studio	2	THEA 407 Scene Design	3
THEA 413 Drafting the Theater	3	Elective (THEA 406 Props Studio)	3
THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1	THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1
THEA 520A Period Styles for Theater I or Elective	3	THEA 520B Period Styles for Theater II or Elective	3
Total	10	Total	13

2nd Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 520A Period Styles for Theatre I or Elective	3	THEA 520B Period Styles for Theater I or Elective	3
THEA 409 Scene Painting Studio OR THEA 413 Drafting the Theater	2-3	THEA 418 Lighting Design	3
THEA 419 Technical Direction	3	Elective (THEA 406 Props Studio)	3
THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1	THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1
THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2	THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2
THEA 500 Research Methods (may be taken in the spring)	1		
Total	12-13	Total	12

3rd Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 414 Costume Design	3	THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1
Elective	3		

THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2	THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2
THEA 500 Research Methods (may be taken in spring)	1	Elective	3
THEA 599 Thesis (project)	3	THEA 599 Thesis (Written)	3
Total	12	Total	9

Note: Course offerings vary from year to year.

Required Projects

Qualifier

Purpose

The MFA student is usually assigned a qualifying project by the Production faculty based upon evaluation of the student's experience and portfolio.

The qualifying project for Scenic Designers is to Design a production. In addition to the practical work, the student will present all appropriate analysis, research, and graphic materials connected with the project.

The qualifying project is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the skills necessary to successfully complete the position of set designer for a production. The necessary skills include, but are not limited to, drafting, model building, drawing tradition or digital renderings; meeting deadlines, play analysis, supervision of production area, leadership, and interpersonal communication skills.

The proposal process for the Qualifier will be repeated for the Thesis project, with additional expectations as outlined below.

Schedule

As soon as the next year's season is chosen, the Scenic Design Faculty Advisor will consult with the scenic design graduate students, and assignments for the next year will be made. Those assigned qualifying and Thesis productions will begin work on their research for their proposals, with the goal that proposals shall be completed before the first design meeting. The time frames for these will be planned between the advisor and student (see Design Meeting Expectations in production handbook).

Requirements

The Qualifying Proposal and the Thesis Proposal require the same form of investigation using the same or similar procedures and processes. While this section will apply to both the Qualifier and Thesis Proposals, the expectation is that the Thesis Proposal and subsequent Thesis Production will show greater proficiency and depth in the areas of research, analysis, writing, and advanced skills than those displayed in the Qualifier. The Thesis Production is therefore held to a higher level of review and evaluation that is comparative with similar standards in professional Theater.

The steps outlined below form a broad pattern, to be adjusted as needed for the particular production, under the guidance of the advisor. The proposal should focus on sections I, II, and III, and where appropriate, will include research images, collages and other non-textual materials. The purpose of the proposal is to show you have done the background work required BEFORE entering into discussions with the director and the rest of the design team. The point is to demonstrate your creativity while still recognizing the collaborative nature of the project. A well-researched and prepared designer is a much more effective collaborator, no matter what direction the production takes.

Sections IV and V will be completed through the design process and will be presented at the meeting after the show goes up.

I. Statement of Project

One paragraph, with the first sentence including title, playwright, place/time of production (e.g. McLeod Theatre, Spring Semester 2012), and statement this is for your Qualifier/Thesis production. The remainder of the paragraph should be a brief “Thesis” statement as to what you believe the play is about, which you will then expand upon and “prove” in the next section.

II. Scene and Properties Breakdown

Create a chart listing each act and scene. Include all significant locations, set pieces, and note how the actors physically interact with the major set pieces, furniture, and entrances and exits. Also, include notations on essential hand props and set decoration.

Creating the Scene and Properties breakdown will develop awareness regarding the variety of settings, how the actors need to interact with the set, and what properties are necessary to make the production function.

III. Play Analysis

Theme/author’s intent: The student should write a sentence or paragraph statement of theme/s followed by a narrative defense of that statement. As you write this section, describe the play’s structure, content, and history as it will affect the design of this production. (This description should include dramatic form, genre, and particular style of production, i.e. ISM). What was the playwright trying to say with the piece; with what ideas did the playwright want the audience to walk away with? Many questions can be considered when discussing theme.

Other questions to consider when analyzing the play:

The list below is meant to serve not as a checklist, but as a guide to start your thinking and research. Answer questions and explore research based on the specific and unique given circumstances of your play. Not all plays will require answers to all questions, and other questions will likely need to be considered that aren’t listed here.

Essentially, explain the ideas behind the play, making sure your discussion is firmly rooted in the text. Be sure to give specific examples/quotes from the text, and support with outside research. (Research should include not only visual images, but also prior published analysis/criticism of the play. Looking at visual images from previous productions is not recommended, unless otherwise instructed by your faculty advisor.)

- A. Consider the significance of the title (if any) and discuss why it is important to understanding the play and theme.
- B. Given Circumstances
 - a. Where/When does the action of the play take place? This may also include information regarding season, year, and time of day.

- b. What happened before the play starts?
- c. What are the economic, social, political, moral, religious environments?
- C. Historical Context
 - a. When was the play written?
 - b. Why did the author write this play?
 - c. What aspects of the cultural context and current events at the time of the play's writing explain the text?
 - d. List the highlights of the period in which the play takes place.
 - e. If the play is based upon a historical event, give a brief account of the event.
 - f. Do other works by the author illuminate their attitude and position in the play?
- D. Character Relationships
 - a. Provide a list of characters with a brief description of their most important qualities.
 - b. What are the polar attitudes of the principal characters towards each other at the opening and the closing of the play? Who changes and why?
 - c. Do characters' function as a group (such as a chorus, or a group of workers) and what is the purpose of this group?
- E. Plot and Structure
 - a. What is the dramatic conflict or action of the play (do not give a plot synopsis)?
 - b. What devices does the playwright employ in terms of repeated images/colors/sounds/words, recurring themes, imagery, metaphors? (Remember to support with specific examples from the script.)

III. Statement of Goals

In what way will this project represent your 'qualifications' for MFA candidacy? Identify and define specific goals for this project. Again, the following questions are meant to prompt your thinking; not all questions will relate to your production, and you will have other questions, not listed here, you need to consider.

Questions/possible goals to consider:

- A. What unique design or production elements (multiple scenes, timing of shifts, venue type (black box, proscenium, etc.) are required in the script and how do you plan to approach these challenges?
- B. From your past experiences and evaluations of your progress, what specific skills do you need to hone that this project will help you address?
- C. How will you focus on creating a more comprehensive, detailed, and engaging design that tells the story to the audience? What design techniques do you need to further develop?
- D. Other possible goals may include:
 - a. Clear communication and collaboration with director and fellow designers
 - b. Research goals
 - c. Timely communication materials Including thumbnail sketches and floorplans, renderings, white and color models, professional drafting package, including paint and prop elevations
 - d. Supervision of scenic artists and prop artisans

- e. Experimentation with new media/technology/materials (only if appropriate to script)
- f. Conduciveness of ground plan to blocking (the movement of performers)

(These ideas might be rudimentary at this stage, or be subject to change, i.e., if the designer has not had any specific input from a director, the designer should use the text of the script as the basis for the creative choices made. The objective in the statement of goals section is to have the student demonstrate their PROCESS of thinking, showing that they know how to do the job, no matter what specific form the job takes.)
Section IV and V are for the final Thesis document (see Thesis below).

Approval (Committee meeting and signing of “4-in-1 form”)

Once the proposal is complete, the student is to provide a copy to their Thesis committee and asks to schedule a meeting with the committee. (The paper should be provided two weeks prior to the meeting.)

At the meeting, the student will be asked to briefly discuss their ideas on the play, then will answer questions from the committee.

The committee will then approve (or not) the proposal and sign the departmental 4-in-1 form accordingly.

Requirements for Executing Project

The student will follow the Design Meeting Expectations and fulfill all required steps on time. The student will follow all procedures of the scene shop in completing the project and will meet regularly with the Set Design faculty and the Director to ensure full completion of the project.

Committee Meeting and Approval Procedures

Procedure for the meeting

The student should arrange a meeting with their Thesis committee within ten days of the show closing. At the meeting, the student should present a brief presentation of their work; bringing in all pertinent documents, and showing a sampling of inspiration and research images, all their renderings, and production photos to show what was accomplished. The student will use these documents to discuss how they met, or didn't meet, their goals for the production, and what their goals for the Thesis might be.

Results of meeting

The success of the project is evaluated by the student's Thesis committee, and the student is advised to areas that are successful and areas that will require additional training. The committee will either accept the project or determine that another qualifying project should be assigned. In some cases, the faculty may require additional production assignments before allowing the student to start a Thesis project.

Possible Outcomes:

Approved The student's Qualifier project is approved, and they can move on to the Thesis project.

Conditional Approval The student's Qualifier project is approved, provided they fulfill conditions that will be written on the form, with a copy given to the student.

Possible conditions may include additional writing, additional coursework, or another production.

Not Approved

The student's Qualifier production is not approved. They must start the process over with a new production, and a new proposal, as assigned.

Non-Continuation The student is dismissed from the program.

Thesis**Purpose**

The MFA student, through their Thesis project, will demonstrate further development and mastery of all the skills and artistry associated with the set design of a production.

Schedule

As soon as the next year's season is chosen, the Scenic Design Faculty Advisor will consult with the scenic design graduate students, and assignments for the next year will be made. Those assigned qualifying and Thesis productions will begin work on their research for their proposals, with the goal that proposals shall be completed before the first design meeting. The time frames will be planned between the advisor and student, (see Design Meeting Expectations in production handbook).

Requirements**Assignment**

See Schedule above.

Proposal

The Qualifying Proposal and the Thesis Proposal require the same form of investigation using the same procedures and processes. Therefore, this section will apply to both the Qualifier and Thesis Proposals. The Thesis Proposal and subsequent Thesis Production will show greater proficiency and depth in the areas of research, analysis, writing, and advanced skills than those displayed in the Qualifier. The Thesis production is therefore held to a higher level of review and grading that is comparative with similar standards in professional Theater.

See all questions and writing guidelines listed above for the Qualifier proposal, to be used as well for the Thesis proposal. Sections IV and V, below, are added for the final Thesis document.

IV. Methodology/Procedures

Identify the steps you will follow in this design process and provide pictures, charts and information on the following areas:

- A. Provide evidence of research, including bibliography (at least half of your sources should be published, scholarly sources)
- B. Initial design meetings will require graphic materials to communicate your ideas; create a collage or other method of sharing inspiration images.
- C. Create thumbnail sketches, ground plans, color swatches, rendering(s), model(s), elevations, and other items as noted on the Dept. of Theater Collaboration Guidelines and/or required by the needs of the production and expectation of the faculty. These will be developed within the design process. The final production materials will visually communicate the artistic concepts, architectural detail, and an accurate theater space. Students will produce professional quality work that provides clear spatial and conceptual understanding for directors, other designers, and technicians involved in the production.

V. Modes of evaluation

How will the success of this project be measured?

- A. Define success for each of your goals listed in section III.
- B. Define success for each of the steps to the design process identified in Section IV. The committee will use III and V to evaluate your work.

Support Material:

The student may wish to include support materials with their proposal (resume, selected portfolio materials, transcripts, etc.) to help the committee to assess the student's readiness for the project.

Approval (Committee meeting and signing of "4-in1 form")

Once the proposal is complete, the student is to provide a copy to their Thesis committee and asks to schedule a meeting with the committee. (The paper should be provided two weeks prior to the meeting.)

At the meeting, the student will be asked to briefly discuss their ideas on the play, then will answer questions from the committee.

The committee will then approve (or not) the proposal and sign the departmental 4-in-1 form accordingly.

Requirements for Executing Project

The student will follow the collaboration guidelines and fulfill all required steps on time. The student will follow all procedures of the scene shop in completing the project and will meet regularly with the Costume Scenic Design faculty and the technical director and paint and props collaborators to ensure full completion of the project.

Committee Meeting and Approval Procedures

Procedure for the meeting

The student should arrange a meeting with their Thesis committee within ten days of the show closing. At the meeting, the student should present a brief presentation of their work; bringing in all pertinent documents, and showing a sampling of inspiration and

research images, all their renderings, and production photos to show what was accomplished. The student will use these documents to discuss how they met, or didn't meet, their goals for the production, and what their goals for the Thesis might be.

Results of meeting

The success of the project is evaluated by the student's Thesis committee, and the student is advised to areas that are successful and areas that will require additional training. The committee will either accept the project or determine that another Thesis project should be assigned. In some cases, the faculty may require additional production assignments.

Possible outcomes:

Approved The student's Thesis project is approved, and they can move on to finish writing the Thesis document.

Conditional Approval The student's Thesis project is approved, provided they fulfill conditions that will be written on the form, with a copy given to the student.

Possible conditions may include additional writing, additional coursework, or another production.

Not Approved The student's Thesis production is not approved. They must start the process over with a new production, and a new proposal, as assigned.

Non-Continuation The student is dismissed from the program.

Finishing the Thesis Document

After the Thesis production is approved, the MFA student shall move forward with finishing the writing of the final Thesis document, working with the faculty advisor. Keeping the Graduate School deadlines in mind, the student must arrange to send the document to their committee ahead of a final committee meeting to approve the final document. At that meeting, the student shall provide copies of the appropriate Thesis approval forms (see Graduate School website and appendix of this document) printed on the appropriate paper as noted, for the committee to sign. Two original sets should be signed, with one copy to be taken by the student to the Graduate School, and one copy to be kept in the student's departmental file.

Technical Direction - MFA Studies in Theater Design and Production

Guidelines, Procedures, and Expectations

First Year Overview

The first year of the MFA program is a time to assess strengths and weaknesses. Course work and production assignments offer technical direction students fundamental information and experience to reinforce knowledge, fill gaps in understanding, and strengthen practical skills. Course work covers essential research and writing skills, history, script analysis, design and concept development, and graphic presentation methods. Through course work, students will also learn institutional procedures essential for completing department production assignments.

In the first semester, technical direction students will often be assigned as an assistant technical director on a production, to better learn the procedures of the department. In the second semester, technical direction students are expected to complete a first-year review, and the writing of the Qualifier proposal. Design and Production students will normally complete at least one major project each semester.

Second Year Overview

The second year offers advanced-level courses in the student's area and continued development of graphic skills. Students often begin course work in their secondary areas and course work that enhances their specialization.

The MFA student is usually assigned a qualifying project if one was not completed in the first year. Design and Production students will normally complete at least one major project each semester.

Second year students often propose or are assigned their Thesis production in the spring of the second year. The Thesis project is to be completed in the third year.

Third Year Overview

The Thesis project is normally scheduled during the third year. The Thesis proposal should be developed early, and research and analysis should begin as soon as the Thesis project is assigned. To ensure that the student is properly prepared to complete the Thesis, written research and an analysis chapter should be completed before the design process begins.

The third year offers the student the opportunity to complete their THEA 599 Thesis hours and requirements. Students continue to improve their graphic skills, develop their portfolios, and explore employment opportunities. It is also an opportunity to develop practical skills in their secondary production interest. Students may work in other studio venues and request production assignments outside their first area of interest. Students are required to complete at least one major production assignment during the third year.

Summers

Students are encouraged to work in their field during summers.

Course Requirements

MFA Core Requirements 12 hrs.

THEA 500	Introduction to Research Methods	1 hr. (to be taken 3 times)
THEA 501	Avant-Garde & Performance	3 hrs.
THEA 599	Thesis	6 hrs.

Technical Direction Area Requirements 48 hrs.

THEA 419	Technical Direction	3 hrs.
THEA 413	Drafting for the Theater	3 hrs.
THEA 416A	Structural Design for the Stage	3 hrs.
THEA 416B	Structural Design for the Stage	3 hrs.
THEA 510	Production Design Seminar	1 hr. (to be taken 6 times)
THEA 516	Advanced Theater Design & Production	2 hrs. (to be taken 4-6 times)
THEA 520A	Period Style for Theater I	3 hrs.
THEA 520B	Period Style for Theater II	3 hrs.
Design Classes Pick 2 of 3		
THEA 407	Scenic Design	3 hrs.
THEA 414	Costume Design	3 hrs.
THEA 418	Lighting Design	3 hrs.
Electives 6-10 hrs. See Below		

Suggested Electives (6-10 hrs. total)

- Metal Fabrication for Theater
- Drafting for the Theater (repeatable for advanced work)
- Properties Studio
- Scene Painting Studio (repeatable for advanced work)
- Topical Seminar (3-6 hrs.):
 - Theatrical Automation

- Sound Design
- Theater Production
- Costume Crafts I/II

In addition to mastery in your design area, all design and production students must demonstrate competency in theatrical stagecraft skills including basic sewing, construction, painting, props methods and electrical skills. Students with these deficiencies will be advised to enroll in coursework to correct these deficiencies.

Curriculum Charts

1st Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 500 Research Methods	1	THEA 501 Avant-Garde	3
THEA 413 Drafting for the Theatre	3	THEA 418 Lighting Design	3
THEA 419 Technical Direction	3	THEA 416 Structural Design for Theatre	3
THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1	THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1
THEA 516 Advanced Design	2	THEA 516 Advanced Design	2
Total	10	Total	12

2nd Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 400 Production	1	THEA 400 Production	1
Elective (Stage Management)	2	Elective or Thesis	3
THEA 409 Scene Painting Studio	2	THEA 407 Scene Design	3
THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1	THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1
THEA 516 Adv. Theatre Design	2	THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2
THEA 520A Period Styles for Theater I or Elective	3	THEA 520B Period Styles for Theater II or Elective	3
THEA 500 Research Methods (may be taken in spring)	1		
Total	12	Total	13

3rd Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 520A Period Styles for Theater or Elective	3	THEA 520B Period Styles for Theatre or Elective	3
Elective or Thesis	3	Elective or Thesis	3
THEA 400 Production	1	THEA 400 Production	1

THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1	THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1
THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2	THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2
THEA 500 Research Methods (may be taken in spring)	1		
Total	11	Total	12

Note: Course offerings vary from year to year.

Required Projects

Qualifier

Purpose

The MFA student is usually assigned a qualifying project by the Production faculty based upon evaluation of the student's experience and portfolio.

The qualifying project for Technical Directors is to serve as Technical Director for a production. In addition to the practical work, the student will present all appropriate analysis, research, and graphic materials connected with the project.

The qualifying project is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the skills necessary to successfully complete the position of technical director for a production. The necessary skills include, but are not limited to, preliminary and final bid (budget) analyses, drafting working and technical drawings; preliminary and complete build schedules, meeting deadlines, play analysis, supervision of production area, leadership, and interpersonal communication skills.

The proposal process for the Qualifier will be repeated for the Thesis project, with additional expectations as outlined below.

Schedule

As soon as the next year's season is chosen, the Technical Direction Faculty Advisor will consult with the technical direction graduate students, and assignments for the next year will be made. Those assigned qualifying and Thesis productions will begin work on their research for their proposals, with the goal that proposals shall be completed before the first design meeting. The time frames for these will be planned between the advisor and student (see Design Meeting Expectations in Production Handbook).

Requirements

Assignment

See "schedule" above.

Proposal

The Qualifying Proposal and the Thesis Proposal require the same form of investigation using the same procedures and processes. Therefore, this section will apply to both the Qualifier and Thesis Proposals. The expectation is that the Thesis Proposal and subsequent Thesis Production will show greater proficiency and depth in the areas of research, analysis, writing, and advanced skills than those displayed in the Qualifier. The Thesis production is therefore held to a higher level of review and grading that is comparative with similar standards in professional Theater.

The steps outlined below form a broad pattern, to be adjusted as needed for the particular production, under the guidance of the advisor. The proposal should focus on sections I, II, and III, and where appropriate, may include research images, collages and other non-textual materials. The purpose of the proposal is to show you have done the background work required BEFORE entering into discussions with the director and the rest of the design team. The point is to demonstrate your creativity while still recognizing the collaborative nature of the project. A well-researched and prepared technical director is a much more effective collaborator, no matter what direction the production takes. Sections V and VI will be completed through the design process and will be presented at the meeting after the show goes up.

I. Statement of Project (one to two pages)

The first sentence needs to indicate title, playwright, place/time of production (e.g. McLeod Theatre, Spring Semester 2020), your role, and a statement this is for your qualifier/thesis production. The remainder of the opening paragraph should be a brief “thesis” statement as to what you believe the play is about, which you will then expand upon and “prove” in the next section.

Additional content should reflect on the following:

- A) Why is this an appropriate production for you to execute?
 - 1) What has prepared you for this project?
 - 2) What are some areas for improvement?
 - 3) What are the potential technical challenges in this production?

II. Play Analysis

The list below is meant to serve as a guide to start your thinking and research. Answer questions and explore research based on the specific and unique given circumstances of the play. Not all plays will require answers to all questions, and other questions will likely need to be considered that are not listed here. Give specific examples/quotes from the text that are supported with outside research.

- A) Themes (Author’s Intent):
 - 1) A sentence or paragraph statement of theme(s) followed by a narrative defense of that statement. Consider the significance of the title (if any) and discuss why it is important to understanding the play and theme, especially for contemporary audiences.

B) Play Structure:

Describe the play's structure, content, and history that will affect the design of this production. (This description should include dramatic form, genre, and style of production, i.e. ISM).

- 1) Given Circumstances
 - a) Where does the action of the play take place? This may include information regarding location, season, year, and time of day, as applicable.
 - b) What are the economic, social, political, moral, religious environments?
- 2) Historical/ Bibliographic Information
 - a) When was the play written?
 - b) Why did the author write this play?
 - c) If the play is based upon a historical event, give a brief account of the event.
 - d) What aspects of the cultural context and current events at the time of the plays writing explain the text?
- 3) E. Plot and Structure
 - a) What is the dramatic conflict or action of the play (do not give a plot synopsis)?
 - b) What devices does the playwright employ in terms of repeated images/colors/sounds/words, recurring themes, imagery, metaphors? (Remember to support with specific examples from the script.)

C) Scenic Breakdown (table form)

- 1) Act # & Scene #
- 2) Page #
- 3) Characters
- 4) Location
- 5) Notes

D) Style of Production

- 1) i.e. ISM as it might influence the technical demands of this production.

E) Historical Productions (if applicable)

- 1) What challenges might they add to this production?

F) Potential Technical Requirements and/or Challenges

III. Statement of Goals

Identify and define specific goals for this project.

A) How will this production challenge you and your abilities?

- 1) In what way will this project represent your 'qualifications' for MFA candidacy?

B) What are your managerial goals?

Additional questions in this category to consider:

- 1) How will you further develop your:
 - a) Collaboration skills?
 - b) Communication skills?
 - c) Organizational skills?
 - d) Leadership and motivational skills or goals?
- 2) Timely delivery of all necessary paperwork (bids, schedules, drafting), deliverables, etc.
- 3) Quality Control?

C) What unique production elements do you envision for this production and how do you plan to approach these challenges?

IV. Modes of Evaluation

A) How Will we measure the success of this project?

B) Define success for each of the identified goals in section III.

Sections V & VI are for the final Thesis document (see Thesis below).

Approval (Committee meeting and signing of “4-in1 form”)

Once the proposal is complete, the student is to provide a copy to their Thesis committee and asks to schedule a meeting with the committee. (The paper should be provided two weeks prior to the meeting.)

At the meeting, the student will be asked to briefly discuss their ideas on the play, then will answer questions from the committee.

The committee will then approve (or not) the proposal and sign the departmental 4-in-1 form accordingly.

Requirements for Executing Project

The student will follow the Collaboration Guidelines and fulfill all necessary steps on time. The student will follow all procedures of the scenic studio in completing the project and will meet weekly with the faculty technical director to ensure full completion of the project.

Committee Meeting and Approval Procedures

Procedure for the meeting

The student should arrange a meeting with their Thesis committee within ten days of the show closing. At the meeting, the student should prepare a brief presentation of their work; bringing in all pertinent documents, schedules, bid forms, construction and technical drawings, and production photos to show what was accomplished. The student will use these documents to discuss how they met, or didn't meet, their goals for the production, and what their goals for the Thesis might be.

Results of meeting

The success of the project is evaluated by the student's Thesis committee, and the student is advised to areas that are successful and areas that will require additional training. The committee will either accept the project or determine that another qualifying project should be assigned. In some cases, the faculty may require additional production assignments before allowing the student to start a Thesis project.

Possible Outcomes

Approved The student's Qualifier project is approved, and they can move on to the Thesis project.

Conditional Approval The student's Qualifier project is approved, provided they fulfill conditions that will be written on the form, with a copy given to the student.

Possible conditions may include additional writing, additional coursework, or another production.

Not Approved The student's Qualifier production is not approved. They must start the process over with a new production, and a new proposal, as assigned.

Non-Continuation The student is dismissed from the program.

Thesis

Purpose

The MFA student, through their Thesis project, will demonstrate further development and mastery of all the skills and artistry associated with the costume design of a production.

Schedule

As soon as the next year's season is chosen, the Technical Direction Advisor will consult with the technical direction graduate students, and assignments for the next year will be made. Those assigned qualifying and Thesis productions will begin work on their research for their proposals, with the goal that proposals shall be completed before the first design meeting. The time frames for these will be planned between the advisor and student-Collaboration Guidelines in Production Handbook).

Requirements

Assignment

Proposal

The Qualifying Proposal and the Thesis Proposal require the same form of investigation using the same procedures and processes. Therefore, this section will apply to both the Qualifier and Thesis Proposals. The expectation is that the Thesis Proposal and subsequent Thesis Production will show greater proficiency and depth in the areas of research, analysis, writing, and advanced skills than those displayed in the Qualifier. The Thesis production is therefore held to a higher level of review and grading that is comparative with similar standards in professional Theater.

See all questions and writing guidelines listed above for the Qualifier proposal, to be used as well for the Thesis proposal. Sections V & VI, below, are added for the final Thesis document.

V. Realized Paperwork

Examples include:

- A) Construction Research
 - 1) Materials
 - 2) Building practices
 - 3) Structural Design
 - 4) Risk Assessments
- B) Bid Estimates (preliminary & final)
- C) Time Estimates (flow charts, work breakdown structures, etc)
- D) Build Schedules & Calendars
- E) Construction & Technical Drawings (publishable)
- F) To Do Lists
- G) Strike Paperwork

VI. Qualifications/ Resume

Include your current Resume & Curriculum Vitae.

Approval (Committee meeting and signing of “4-in1 form”)

Once the proposal is complete, the student is to provide a copy to their Thesis committee and asks to schedule a meeting with the committee. (The paper should be provided two weeks prior to the meeting.)

At the meeting, the student will be asked to briefly discuss their ideas on the play, then will answer questions from the committee.

The committee will then approve (or not) the proposal and sign the departmental 4-in-1 form accordingly.

Requirements for Executing Project

The student will follow the Collaboration Guidelines and fulfill all required steps on time. The student will follow all procedures of the Scenic Studio in completing the project and will meet weekly with the faculty technical director to ensure full completion of the project.

Committee Meeting and Approval Procedures

Procedure for the meeting

The student should arrange a meeting with their Thesis committee within ten days of the show closing. At the meeting, the student should prepare a brief presentation of their work; bringing in all pertinent documents, schedules, bid forms, construction and technical drawings, and production photos to show what was accomplished. The student

will use these documents to discuss how they met, or didn't meet, their goals for the production, and what their goals for the Thesis might be.

Results of meeting

The success of the project is evaluated by the student's Thesis committee, and the student is advised to areas that are successful and areas that will require additional training. The committee will either accept the project or determine that another Thesis project should be assigned. In some cases, the faculty may require additional production assignments.

Possible outcomes

Approved The student's Thesis project is approved, and they can move on to finish writing the Thesis document.

Conditional Approval The student's Thesis project is approved, provided they fulfill conditions that will be written on the form, with a copy given to the student.

Possible conditions may include additional writing, additional coursework, or another production.

Not Approved The student's Thesis production is not approved. They must start the process over with a new production, and a new proposal, as assigned.

Non-Continuation The student is dismissed from the program.

Finishing the Thesis Document

After the Thesis production is approved, the MFA student shall move forward with finishing the writing of the final Thesis document, working with the faculty advisor. Keeping the Graduate School deadlines in mind, the student must arrange to send the document to their committee ahead of a final committee meeting to approve the final document. At that meeting, the student shall provide copies of the appropriate Thesis approval forms (see Graduate School website and appendix of this document) printed on the appropriate paper as noted, for the committee to sign. Two original sets should be signed, with one copy to be taken by the student to the Graduate School, and one copy to be kept in the student's departmental file.

Costume Design - MFA Studies in Theater Design and Production

Guidelines, Procedures, and Expectations

First Year Overview

The first year of the MFA program is a time to assess strengths and weaknesses. Course work and production assignments offer costume design students fundamental information and experience to reinforce knowledge, fill gaps in understanding, and strengthen practical skills. Course work covers essential research and writing skills, history, script analysis, design and concept development, and graphic presentation methods. Through course work, students will also learn institutional procedures essential for completing department production assignments.

In the first semester, costume design students will often be assigned as assistant costume designer on a production, to better learn the procedures of the department. In the second semester, costume design students are expected to complete a first-year review, and the writing of the Qualifier proposal. Design and Production students will normally complete at least one major project each semester.

Second Year Overview

The second year offers advanced-level courses in the student's area and continued development of graphic skills. Students often begin course work in their secondary areas and course work that enhances their specialization.

The MFA student is usually assigned a qualifying project if one was not completed in the first year. Design and Production students will normally complete at least one major project each semester.

Second-year students often propose or are assigned their Thesis production in the spring of the second year. The Thesis project is to be completed in the third year.

Third Year Overview

The Thesis project is normally scheduled during the third year. The Thesis proposal should be developed early, and research and analysis should begin as soon as the Thesis project is assigned. To ensure that the student is properly prepared to complete the Thesis, written research and an analysis chapter should be completed before the design process begins.

The third year offers the student the opportunity to complete their THEA 599 Thesis hours and requirements. Students continue to improve their graphic skills, develop their portfolios and explore employment opportunities. It is also an opportunity to develop practical skills in their secondary production interest. Students may work in other studio venues and request production assignments outside their first area of interest. Students are required to complete at least one major production assignment during the third year.

Summers

Students are encouraged to work in their field during summers.

Course Requirements

MFA Theater Core 12 hrs.

THEA 500	Introduction to Research Methods	1 hr. (to be taken 3 times)
THEA 501	Avant-Garde & Performance	3 hrs.
THEA 599	Thesis	6 hrs.

Costume Design Requirements 48 hrs.

THEA 510	Production Design Seminar	1 hr. (to be taken 6 times)
THEA 516	Advanced Technical Design & Production	2 hrs. (may be taken 6 times)
THEA 412	Patterning and Draping for the Theater	2 hrs.
THEA 413	Drafting for the Theater	3 hrs.
THEA 414	Costume Design	3 hrs.
THEA 415A	Costume Crafts I	2 hrs. (may be taken 2 times)
THEA 415B	Costume Crafts II	2 hrs. (may be taken 2 times)
THEA 512	Advanced Costume Construction	2 hrs. (may be taken up to 4 times)
THEA 520A	Period Styles for Theater I	3 hrs.
THEA 520B	Period Styles for Theatre II	3 hrs.
Design Classes Pick 2 of 3		
THEA 407	Scene Design	3 hrs.
THEA 418	Lighting Design	3 hrs.
THEA 419	Technical Direction	3 hrs.
Electives 8 hrs. See Below		

Electives

Students must take 8 hours of elective credits. It is advised that these classes be in scenic painting, props, or makeup.

All Costume students must demonstrate competency in basic sewing and construction skills. Students with deficiencies will be advised to enroll in coursework to correct these deficiencies.

Curriculum Charts

First Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 500 Research Methods	1	THEA 501 Contemporary Developments	3
THEA 413 Drafting for the Theater	3	THEA 412 Patterning and Draping	2
THEA 414 Costume Design	3	THEA 407 Scene Design or THEA 418 Lighting Design	3
THEA 510 Production Design	1	THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1
THEA 520A Period Styles for Theater I or Elective	3	THEA 520 B Period Styles for Theater II or Elective	3
Total	11	Total	12

Second Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 415A Costume Crafts I	2	THEA 415B Costume Crafts II	3
THEA 520A Period Styles for Theater or Elective	3	THEA 520 B Period Styles for Theater II or Elective	3
THEA 512 Adv. Costume Design	2	THEA 512 Adv. Costume Design	2
THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1	THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1
THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2	THEA Adv. Theater Design	2
THEA 500 Research Methods (may be taken in spring)	1		
Total	11	Total	11

Third Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 415A Costume Crafts I	2	THEA 415B Costume Crafts II	2
THEA 512 Adv. Costume Construction	2	THEA 512 Adv. Costume Construction	2
THEA 510 Production Design	1	THEA 510 Production Design Seminar	1

THEA 516 Adv. Theatre Design	2	THEA 516 Adv. Theater Design	2
THEA 500 Research Methods (may be taken in spring)	1		
THEA 599 Thesis (Project)	3	THEA 599 Thesis	3
Total	11	Total	10

Required Projects

Qualifier

Purpose

The MFA student is usually assigned a qualifying project by the Production faculty based upon evaluation of the student's experience and portfolio.

The qualifying project for Costume Designers is to Design a production. In addition to the practical work, the student will present all appropriate analysis, research, and graphic materials connected with the project.

The qualifying project is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the skills necessary to successfully complete the position of designer for a production. The necessary skills include, but are not limited to, drawing renderings; meeting deadlines, play analysis, supervision of production area, leadership, and interpersonal communication skills.

The proposal process for the Qualifier will be repeated for the Thesis project, with additional expectations as outlined below.

Schedule

As soon as the next year's season is chosen, the Costume Design Faculty Advisor will consult with the costume design graduate students, and assignments for the next year will be made. Those assigned qualifying and Thesis productions will begin work on their research for their proposals, with the goal that proposals shall be completed before the first design meeting. The time frames for these will be planned between the advisor and student-(see Design Meeting Expectations in Production Handbook).

Requirements

Assignment

See "schedule" above.

Proposal

The Qualifying Proposal and the Thesis Proposal require the same form of investigation using the same procedures and processes. Therefore, this section will apply to both the Qualifier and Thesis Proposals. The expectation is that the Thesis Proposal and subsequent Thesis Production will show greater proficiency and depth in the areas of research, analysis, writing, and advanced skills than those displayed in the Qualifier. The Thesis production is therefore held to a higher level of review and grading that is comparative with similar standards in professional Theater.

The steps outlined below form a broad pattern, to be adjusted as needed for the particular production, under the guidance of the advisor. The proposal should focus on sections I, II, and III, and where appropriate, may include research images, collages and other non-textual materials. The purpose of the proposal is to show you have done the background

work required BEFORE entering into discussions with the director and the rest of the design team. The point is to demonstrate your creativity while still recognizing the collaborative nature of the project. A well-researched and prepared designer is a much more effective collaborator, no matter what direction the production takes. Sections IV and V will be completed through the design process and will be presented at the meeting after the show goes up.

I. Statement of Project

One paragraph, with the first sentence including title, playwright, place/time of production (e.g. McLeod Theatre, Spring Semester 2012), and statement this is for your Qualifier/Thesis production. The remainder of the paragraph should be a brief “Thesis” statement as to what you believe the play is about, which you will then expand upon and “prove” in the next section.

II. Play Analysis

Theme/Author’s Intent: A sentence or paragraph statement of theme(s) followed by a narrative defense of that statement. Describe the play’s structure, content, and history that will affect the design of this production. (This description should include dramatic form, genre, and particular style of production, i.e. ISM). What was the playwright trying to say with the piece; with what ideas did they want the audience to walk away? Many questions can be considered when discussing theme. The list below is meant to serve *not* as a checklist, but as a guide to start your thinking and research. Answer questions and explore research based on the specific and unique given circumstances of your play. Not all plays will require answers to all questions, and other questions will likely need to be considered that aren’t listed here. Essentially, your job in this section is to explain the ideas behind the play, making sure your discussion is firmly rooted in the text. Be sure to give specific examples/quotes from the text, and support with outside research. (Research should include not only visual images, but prior published analysis/criticism of the play. Stay away, however, from visual images of prior productions, unless otherwise instructed by your faculty advisor.)

Questions to consider when analyzing the play:

A. Consider the significance of the title (if any) and discuss why it is important to understanding the play and theme, especially for contemporary audiences.

B. Given Circumstances

1. Where does the action of the play take place? This may include information regarding location, season, year, and time of day, as applicable.

2. What are the economic, social, political, moral, religious environments?

C. Historical/ Bibliographic Information

1. When was the play written?

2. Why did the author write this play?

3. If the play is based upon a historical event, give a brief account of the event.

4. What aspects of the cultural context and current events at the time of the plays writing explain the text?

5. Do other works by the author illuminate their attitude and position in the play?

D. Character Relationships

1. Provide a list of each character with a brief description of their most important qualities.
2. What are the polar attitudes of the principal characters towards each other at the opening and the closing of the play? Who changes and why?
3. Do characters function as a group (such as a chorus, or a group of workers) and what is the purpose of this group?

E. Plot and Structure

1. What is the dramatic conflict or action of the play (do *not* give a plot synopsis)?
2. What devices does the playwright employ in terms of repeated images/colors/sounds/words, recurring themes, imagery, metaphors? (Remember to support with specific examples from the script.)

III. Statement of Goals

In what way will this project represent your ‘qualifications’ for MFA candidacy? Identify and define specific goals for this project. Again, the following questions are meant to prompt your thinking; not all questions will relate to your production, and you will have other questions, not listed here, you need to consider.

Questions/possible goals to consider:

- A. What unique design or production elements do you envision for this production and how do you plan to approach these challenges?
- B. How will you develop collaboration skills and timely delivery of all necessary paperwork, renderings, etc.?
- C. How will you focus on creating a more comprehensive, detailed, and engaging design that tells the story to the audience? What design techniques do you need to further develop?
- D. Other possible goals may include:
 1. Expand on an understanding of historical period research as it relates to the production.
 2. Focus on techniques for special costume effects: i.e., innovative fabric modifications, dye techniques, etc.
 3. Focus on techniques for improving rendering skills.
- E. From your past experiences and evaluations of your progress, what specific skills do you need to hone that this project will help you address?

(It is understood that some of these ideas might be very rudimentary at this stage, or be subject to change, i.e., if the designer has not had any specific input from a director, the designer should use the text of the script as the basis for the creative choices s/he makes. The objective in this section is to have the student demonstrate their **PROCESS** of thinking, showing that s/he knows how to do the job, no matter what specific form the job takes.)

Sections IV and V are for the final Thesis document (see Thesis below).

Approval

Once the proposal is complete, the student is to provide a copy to their Thesis committee and asks to schedule a meeting with the committee. (The paper should be provided two weeks prior to the meeting.)

At the meeting, the student will be asked to briefly discuss their ideas on the play, then will answer questions from the committee.

The committee will then approve (or not) the proposal and sign the departmental 4-in-1 form accordingly.

Requirements for Executing Project

The student will follow the Design Meeting Expectations and fulfill all required steps on time. The student will follow all procedures of the costume shop in completing the project and will meet regularly with the Costume Design faculty and the Costume Shop Manager to ensure full completion of the project.

Committee Meeting and Approval Procedures

Procedure for the meeting

The student should arrange a meeting with their Thesis committee within ten days of the show closing. At the meeting, the student should present a brief presentation of their work; bringing in all pertinent documents, and showing a sampling of inspiration and research images, all their renderings, and production photos to show what was accomplished. The student will use these documents to discuss how they met, or didn't meet their goals for the production, and what their goals for the Thesis might be.

Results of meeting

The success of the project is evaluated by the student's Thesis committee, and the student is advised to areas that are successful and areas that will require additional training. The committee will either accept the project or determine that another qualifying project should be assigned. In some cases, the faculty may require additional production assignments before allowing the student to start a Thesis project.

Possible Outcomes:

Approved The student's Qualifier project is approved, and they can move on to the Thesis project.

Conditional Approval The student's Qualifier project is approved, provided they fulfill conditions that will be written on the form, with a copy given to the student.

Possible conditions may include additional writing, additional coursework, or another production.

Not Approved The student's Qualifier production is not approved. They must start the process over with a new production, and a new proposal, as assigned.

Non-Continuation The student is dismissed from the program.

Thesis

Purpose

The MFA student, through their Thesis project, will demonstrate further development and mastery of all the skills and artistry associated with the costume design of a production.

Schedule

As soon as the next year's season is chosen, the Costume Design Faculty Advisor will consult with the costume design graduate students, and assignments for the next year will be made. Those assigned qualifying and Thesis productions will begin work on their research for their proposals, with the goal that proposals shall be completed before the first design meeting. The time frames for these will be planned between the advisor and student (see Design Meeting Expectations in Production Handbook).

Requirements

Assignment

See "schedule" above.

Proposal

The Qualifying Proposal and the Thesis Proposal require the same form of investigation using the same procedures and processes. Therefore, this section will apply to both the Qualifier and Thesis Proposals. The expectation is that the Thesis Proposal and subsequent Thesis Production will show greater proficiency and depth in the areas of research, analysis, writing, and advanced skills than those displayed in the Qualifier. The Thesis production is therefore held to a higher level of review and grading that is comparative with similar standards in professional Theater.

See all questions and writing guidelines listed above for the Qualifier proposal, to be used as well for the Thesis proposal. Sections IV and V, below, are added for the final Thesis document.

IV. Methodology/Procedures

Identify the steps you will follow in this design process and provide pictures, charts and information on the following areas (Items D – G to be added later in the design process):

- A. Provide evidence of research, including bibliography (at least half of your sources should be published, non-internet sources).
- B. Create a costume plot for each character.
- C. Create an action plot (x & o chart) for the play.
- D. Create a color plot and swatch sheets.
- E. Create spec sheets.
- F. Provide a budget estimate, with pull/buy/build/craft lists.
- G. Provide concept collage and renderings.

Modes of evaluation

How will the success of this project be measured?

- A. Define success for each of your goals listed in section III.
- B. Define success for each of the steps to the design process identified in Section IV. The committee will use III and V to evaluate your work. Support Material: The student may wish to include support materials with their proposal (resume, selected portfolio

materials, transcripts, etc.) to help the committee to assess the student's readiness for the project.

Approval (Committee meeting and signing of "4-in1 form")

Once the proposal is complete, the student is to provide a copy to their Thesis committee and asks to schedule a meeting with the committee. (The paper should be provided two weeks prior to the meeting.)

At the meeting, the student will be asked to briefly discuss their ideas on the play, then will answer questions from the committee.

The committee will then approve (or not) the proposal and sign the departmental 4-in-1 form accordingly.

Requirements for Executing Project

The student will follow the Design Meeting Expectations and fulfill all required steps on time. The student will follow all procedures of the costume shop in completing the project and will meet regularly with the Costume Design faculty and the Costume Shop Manager to ensure full completion of the project.

Committee Meeting and Approval Procedures

Procedure for the meeting

The student should arrange a meeting with their Thesis committee within ten days of the show closing. At the meeting, the student should present a brief presentation of their work; bringing in all pertinent documents, and showing a sampling of inspiration and research images, all their renderings, and production photos to show what was accomplished. The student will use these documents to discuss how they met, or didn't meet, their goals for the production, and what their goals for the Thesis might be.

Results of meeting

The success of the project is evaluated by the student's Thesis committee, and the student is advised to areas that are successful and areas that will require additional training. The committee will either accept the project or determine that another Thesis project should be assigned. In some cases, the faculty may require additional production assignments.

Possible outcomes

Approved The student's Thesis project is approved, and they can move on to finish writing the Thesis document.

Conditional Approval The student's Thesis project is approved, provided they fulfill conditions that will be written on the form, with a copy given to the student.

Possible conditions may include additional writing, additional coursework, or another production.

Not Approved The student's Thesis production is not approved. They must start the process over with a new production, and a new proposal, as assigned.

Non-Continuation The student is dismissed from the program.

Finishing the Thesis Document

After the Thesis production is approved, the MFA student shall move forward with finishing the writing of the final Thesis document, working with the faculty advisor. Keeping the Graduate School deadlines in mind, the student must arrange to send the document to their committee ahead of a final committee meeting to approve the final document. At that meeting, the student shall provide copies of the appropriate Thesis approval forms (see Graduate School website and appendix of this document) printed on the appropriate paper as noted, for the committee to sign. Two original sets should be signed, with one copy to be taken by the student to the Graduate School, and one copy to be kept in the student's departmental file.

Directing - MFA Studies in Directing Guidelines, Procedures, and Expectations

First Year Overview

Directing students will, in their first year, begin course work, assistant direct at least one mainstage production, stage manage at least one mainstage production, complete or begin their Qualifier, and complete their first-year review. The stage management and Qualifier projects will fulfill requirements for courses. Other projects will be completed outside of coursework. The first year is focused on the basics of directing and collaboration.

Second Year Overview

Directing students will, in their second year, continue course work, complete Qualifier (if not completed in first year), complete their heightened language project, and propose their Thesis. The heightened language project and Qualifier projects will fulfill requirements for courses. The second year is focused on verse and stylized language in performance.

Third Year Overview

Directing students will, in their third year, direct their Thesis production as well as write and defend their Thesis. The third year is focused on the director's development in relationship to their desired career.

Course Requirements

MFA Core Requirements 12 hrs.

THEA 500	Introduction to Research Methods	1 hr. (to be taken 3 times)
THEA 501	Avant-Garde & Performance	3 hrs.
THEA 599	Thesis	6 hrs.

Directing Area Requirements 48 hrs.

THEA 401A	Stage Management	2 hrs.
THEA 401B	Stage Management Lab	1 hr.
THEA 402	Directing Studio	3 hrs.
THEA 417	Advanced Acting (or advised alternative)	3 hrs.
THEA 502	Advanced Directing Studio	3 hrs. (to be taken 3 times)
THEA 504A	Performing Justice/Theory	3 hrs.
THEA 504B	Performing and Producing Resistance	3 hrs.
THEA 511A	Playwriting I	3 hrs.
THEA 520A	Period Style for Theater I	3 hrs.
THEA 520B	Period Style for Theater II	3 hrs.
Design Classes Pick 2 of 3		
THEA 407	Scene Design	3 hrs.
THEA 414	Costume Design	3 hrs.
THEA 418	Lighting Design	3 hrs.
Electives 9 hrs. See Below		

Suggested Electives (9 hrs. total)

THEA 403A Advanced Movement for the Actor

THEA 403B Advanced Voice for the Actor

THEA 407 Scene Design

THEA 417 Advanced Acting

THEA 450 Topical Seminar
THEA 454 American Theater
THEA 460 Black Theater

Curriculum Charts

1st Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 500 Research Methods	1	THEA 501 Avant-Garde	3
THEA 402 Directing Studio	3	THEA 502 Advanced Directing Studio	3
THEA 504A Theories and Conventions or THEA 520A Period Styles	3	THEA 504B Theories and Conventions or THEA 520B Period Styles	3
THEA 401A and B Stage Management	3	THEA 407 Scene Design or THEA 418 Lighting Design	3
Total	10	Total	12

2nd Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 511A Playwriting I or THEA 417 Advanced Acting	3	THEA 500 Introduction to Research Methods (may be taken in fall)	1
THEA 502 Advanced Directing Studio	3	THEA 502 Advanced Directing Studio	3
THEA 504A Theories and Conventions or THEA 520A Period Styles	3	THEA 504B Theories and Conventions or THEA 520B Period Styles	3
THEA 414 Costume Design or Elective	3	THEA 407 Scene Design or THEA 418 Lighting Design or Elective	3
Total	12	Total	10

3rd Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 511A Playwriting I or THEA 417 Advanced Acting	3	Elective	3
THEA 599 Thesis (Production)	3	THEA 599 Thesis (Production)	3
THEA 500 Introduction to Research Methods (may be taken in spring)	1	Elective	3
Elective	3		

Total	10	Total	9
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Note: this plan contains one more elective than is required. Course offerings vary from year to year.

Qualifier, Heightened Language Project, and Thesis

Qualifier

Purpose

All MFA Theater students enrolled at SIUC must complete a Qualifier project that demonstrates skill in their area of study. The Qualifier showcases skills acquired prior to beginning the program and the capacity to integrate new concepts encountered in coursework. The Qualifier also allows students to begin integrating graduate-level research into theatrical practice in the first semesters of graduate work. It serves to prepare MFA students for later Thesis writing.

Schedule

See Appendices.

Requirements

Assignment

Directing students will pitch potential Qualifier shows to their advisor and committee.

The pitches for each should contain:

- A copy of the proposed play (a one-act play edited to 45 minutes of performance)
- A justification/ statement of purpose (detailing initial analysis of the script, projected ideas, and plan)
- directorial objectives

The committee will select from the pitched productions. Once a production is selected, the student may begin their proposal.

In select circumstances, a proposal may be considered by the faculty supervisor and Play Selection committee for the Qualifier project to direct an original Thesis or Dissertation play written by one of our departmental MFA or PHD playwriting students. Students interested in this option should speak with their adviser.

Proposal

All directing students will submit a Qualifier proposal to their committee prior to beginning rehearsals.

Proposals should include:

- A copy of the proposed play
- A justification/ statement of purpose, detailing initial analysis of the script, projected ideas, and plan.
- The following questions should be answered in the justification
- What are your artistic and personal connections to the play?
- What is your directorial interpretation/approach?
- What is the role of your audience and Theater in this project?

- What challenges will this production pose?
 - How will these challenges advance your development and skills as a director?
 - How do you plan to address the challenges?
- Recent Qualifiers have used the following outline for proposal:
- Introduction
 - Biography of playwright
 - Production History
 - Play Analysis
 - Given Circumstances
 - Genre
 - Themes
 - Character Analysis
 - Breakdown of Beats
 - Artistic Statement
 - Artistic and Personal Connections
 - Directorial Interpretation and Approach
 - Suggested Design
 - Statement on Casting
 - Role of Audience
 - Anticipated Production Challenges
 - Anticipated Learning Outcomes
 - Works Cited/ Consulted

Approval

The student's committee will approve the project prior to rehearsals.

The unique work of the director requires a well-articulated process for the approval of the proposal before rehearsals begin and leading into the production. The following guidelines should be adhered to by the student.

Phase I:

- I. Plays pitched by student. At least two selections to be reviewed by Supervisor
- II. Supervisor approves one selection from the submitted plays. Student will at this point send the approved selection to committee members.
- III. Supervisor works with student on preliminary proposal for approved selection. Student will work within the set goals and timeline set by Supervisor until approved.
- IV. Supervisor approves commencement of the writing of the full Proposal.

Phase II:

- I. Student will submit drafts either in chapters or as a whole to supervisor and committee.
- II. Committee will respond through shared communication. Student will respond to notes from committee with continuing supervision.
- III. Student in consultation with supervisor will convene committee for final evaluation to approve the proposal or not. This committee meeting could be held physically or electronically. Decision of committee will be conveyed to the student by the committee collectively or through the supervisor.

Phase III:

- I. If approved, student will commence rehearsals.
- II. Student will share daily rehearsal reports with committee
- III. Committee members may attend rehearsals at any point in the process. This may be done with or without prior notice to the student. Notes from such will be communicated directly to student and should be included in the daily rehearsal reports by the student.
- VI. Final performance(s) will be followed by the submission of the final Qualifier Essay to committee. This will include the proposal as earlier approved by the committee. It must also include a detailed postproduction essay; a self-evaluation by the student of the rehearsal process through to final performance(s).
- V. Student will seek and arrange a meeting time with the full committee, following the time stipulations as outlined in the Graduate Handbook. This meeting is the final step where the committee makes the decision to pass, fail, or make recommendations for further work.

Project Execution

Booking Rehearsal Spaces

Directors will be responsible for booking their own rehearsal spaces. Rehearsal spaces may be reserved via the office manager or production manager. In years in which the production manager has a graduate assistant, directors may reserve spaces through said graduate assistant. See the production handbook for rehearsal and rehearsal space protocols.

Securing Materials

Hand props are available for Graduate productions. Furniture props are limited to the rehearsal furniture located in both the Studio and Moe Theater spaces unless there is a specialty item in which case the Faculty Scenic Designer must be consulted. Students must make an appointment with the Graduate Assistant in Properties to borrow props. Times for borrowing props are regular Scene Studio hours. Do not wait until the last minute to borrow properties, as Graduate Assistants may be busy with their production duties. Do not alter or paint any props without permission from the Faculty Scenic Designer. The student is responsible for securing properties after each rehearsal unless there is an assigned stage manager or prop crew member. The borrower must return all props immediately after the final presentation and clean the stage and props cabinet. Lost/damaged props will be assigned a fair-market value and applied to the Student's Bursar bill.

The Production Book

The Production Book is a document of the production's research and experience from inception to post-production. This is a requirement for the completion of the production assignments, two One-Acts, the Verse/Heightened Language project, the Qualifier and Thesis productions, in the course of the program. As a more researched document, the Production Book will become part of the written Thesis requirement for the MFA degree in Directing.

All productions will be evaluated by the following guidelines: Strong analysis of play, literature, research and Theatrical conventions in particular reference to the play and director's production under review. Evidence of an imaginative and well-managed production. Markers will be found in the director's collaboration and management of the process with designers, playwrights (where playwright is in residence), actors and the others attached to the production. Of equal importance is the director's ability to use the available resources of the Theater- human and otherwise- for an engagement with the audience in ways that is most creative and deeply experiential as possible.

The director's overarching sense of design as projected through scenery, lighting, costumes, sound, and blocking will also be under review.

The production book should contain:

1. A clear and well-argued statement of the Production Vision.
2. A detailed, well-organized documentation of production research. This should include visual, audio, or other materials.
3. A carefully reasoned essay, detailing the director's concept or approach as influenced by the Play, the Playwright's vision, and the production research. This essay must also include thoughts on the major elements or points of interest that will guide the design, casting, and rehearsal process. It should have strong and supportive references in the dramatic literature, theatrical styles, theories and conventions. All other necessary exegeses of production such as the target audience, place, and timeliness of production should also be reflected.
4. A character by character analysis.
5. A plot breakdown reflecting the play's structure and the director's staging ideas (scene and beat breakdown)
6. A short statement on casting.
7. A rehearsal plan with projected goals.
8. A copy of the script.
9. A ground plan and final design sketches from design collaborators.
10. Notes on rehearsals.
11. A final post-production evaluation of total production experience, reviewing how vision was influence by process, how concept was enhanced or tempered by imagination and/or the practical realities of the rehearsal room. It should honestly speak for the director in accepting what worked and what did not with the view to building upon strength and working to correct weaknesses. The director's ability to recognize and discuss the work intelligently and objectively will give the reviewers/committee a good understanding of the levels of skills development and readiness.

Committee Meeting and Approval Procedures

The production book must be completed and delivered to the committee within five days of the project's completion. After receiving the production book, the directing student will meet with the committee.

Heightened Language Project

Purpose

the purpose of the Heightened Language Project is to provide an opportunity for the student director to

1. Research, analyze, and develop a production approach for a text in which language is used in a heightened or non-realistic manner.
2. Learn how language affects performance choices in terms of staging, movement, physical and vocal gesture and characterization.
3. Work with actors to create a unified performance of the approach and the text.

Requirements

- The project must utilize a text in which the language is in some way heightened through structure, verse, the addition of music, etc.
- A faculty member must agree to supervise and evaluate the production.
- This project is an assignment of THEA 502 Advanced Directing Studio Seminar, and evaluated and assigned a grade through that course. The instructor of record for the course during the semester the project takes place may or may not be the faculty supervisor for the project.
- Production must be limited to sixty minutes total running time.
- Productions must be presented for the public, but limited to no more than two performances. Number of performances will be determined by the supervisor and Faculty of the Department of Theater.
- The project will occur in the candidate's 3rd or 4th semester of the MFA program.

Thesis

Purpose

In addition to the general requirements for all directing projects, the Thesis production will be held to a high level of review and grading that compares strongly with similar standards in professional Theater. Candidates must complete the Thesis as their final graduating project. Thesis proposals must be submitted by the end of their third semester of study. Special consideration will be given for a late submission in the fourth semester of study. This is to accommodate the extended collaborative pre-production process. In select circumstances, a proposal may be considered by the faculty supervisor and Play Selection committee for the Thesis project to direct an original thesis or dissertation play written by one of our departmental MFA or PHD playwriting students.

Defense

No later than 5 school days after the final performance or project deadline, The Production Book must be distributed to the committee. The following week the committee will meet with the student for an oral defense, to determine the acceptability of the creative project. Following the successful completion of this oral evaluation, the student proceeds to the completion of the thesis under the supervision of her/his chair and committee.

Approval

If the thesis project is not approved, the student should consult with his committee to outline the steps necessary to correct the problems in order to develop a new thesis proposal and project.

In certain instances, the committee may pass the thesis project with conditions. These conditions may include, but are not limited to, additional course work or additional projects before graduation.

A student will have the opportunity to develop a maximum of two Thesis proposals and projects before the student will be denied further attempts to continue the program.

Playwriting - MFA Studies in Playwriting

Guidelines, Procedures, and Expectations

First Year Overview

Projects: Monthly Collaborative Short Play Evenings; MFA playwrights will likely produce one of the evenings. Fall Semester: Outline of full-length play. Write that full-length script over winter break. Spring Semester: develop that full length and present it as a staged reading at the Big Muddy New Play Festival. After Festival but before the end of Spring semester, turn in your Qualifier proposal. If approved, spend summer writing the script for the second-year full-length play (the Qualifier script).

Internship encouraged during summer (for credit, if desired)

Second Year Overview

Projects: Arrive on the first day of class with a draft of your second-year full-length play (the Qualifier script). Monthly Collaborative Short Play Evenings; MFA playwrights will likely produce one of the evenings. Fall and Spring Semester: develop the second-year full-length script and present it as a staged reading at the Big Muddy New Play Festival (as your Qualifier). After Festival but before the end of Spring semester, turn in your Thesis proposal.

Internship encouraged during summer (for credit, if desired)

Third Year Overview

Projects: Arrive on the first day of class with a draft of your third-year full-length play (the Thesis script). Monthly Collaborative Short Play Evenings: MFA playwrights will likely produce one of the evenings. Fall Semester: develop the third-year full-length script (your Thesis). Spring Semester: work with a director to produce your Thesis play for the Big Muddy New Play Festival (as your Thesis). This production will be bare bones, using pulled furniture, props, costumes, and a simple light plot. After Festival but before the Thesis submission deadline, meet with your committee to defend your play and the critical document that accompanies it.

Internship encouraged during summer (for credit, if desired)

Course Requirements

MFA Core Requirements 12 hrs.

THEA 500	Research Methods	3 hours
THEA 501	The Historical Avant Garde & Performance	3 hours
THEA 599	Thesis	6 hours

Area Requirements 45 hrs.

THEA 502	Advanced Directing Studio	3 hours
THEA 503	New Play Development	18 hours
THEA 504A	Performing Justice/Theory	3 hours
THEA 504B	Performing and Producing Resistance	3 hours
THEA 511A	Playwriting I	3 hours
THEA 511B	Playwriting II	3 Hours

Additionally, playwriting MFA Students must take 6 hours of approved 400- or 500-level Theatre History courses, and 6 hours of creative writing courses outside playwriting. THEA 502 Advanced Directing Studio must be taken unless playwrights already have directing experience, in which case they may take an extra elective.

Suggested Electives (9 hrs. total)

- THEA 455 Dramaturgy
- THEA 450 Special Topics
- THEA 460 Black Theatre

Curriculum Charts

1st Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 511A: Playwriting I	3	THEA 511B: Playwriting II	3
THEA 504A: Performing Justice/Theory OR 400- or 500-level Theatre History Course	3	THEA 504B: Performing and Producing Resistance OR 400- or 500-level Theatre History Course OR THEA 501: The Historical Avant Garde and Performance	3
THEA 503: New Play Development	3	THEA 503: New Play Development	3
THEA 402: Directing Studio	3	Research Methods	1
Total	12	Total	10

2nd Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 504A: Performing Justice/Theory OR 400- or 500-level Theatre History Course	3	THEA 504B: Performing and Producing Resistance OR 400- or 500-level Theatre History Course OR THEA 501: The Historical Avant Garde and Performance	3
THEA 503: New Play Development	3	THEA 503: New Play Development	3
Creative Writing outside playwriting	3	Creative Writing outside playwriting	3
Elective (optional)	3	Research Methods	1
Total	12	Total	10

3rd Year Suggested

Fall	Hrs.	Spring	Hrs.
THEA 503: New Play Development	3	THEA 503: New Play Development	3
THEA 599: Thesis	3	THEA 599: Thesis	3
Elective	3	Elective	3
		Research Methods	1
Total	9	Total	10

Note: Course offerings vary from year to year.

Required Projects

Qualifier

The purpose of the Qualifier proposal is to demonstrate the playwriting student has sufficiently grasped the fundamentals of the first year to write a full-length play over the summer. The purpose of the Qualifier play is to demonstrate that the playwright has a sufficient grasp of playwriting fundamentals to write the Thesis play.

The Qualifier play proposal should be written during the end of the first year and is due between the Big Muddy New Play Festival and the end of first year.

The Qualifier play is written over the summer between the first and second years, developed in Fall and Spring semesters of the second year, and presented during the Big Muddy New Play Festival of the second year.

Requirements:

Proposal

The Qualifier proposal is an assignment is a paper that includes the sections:

- Project Proposal (essentially an abstract)
- Artistic Statement (of the playwright, not just for this particular project)
- Genre/History Statement (about how the proposed play fits into the drama canon)
- Origin and Development (detailing how the idea for the play came about)
- Given Circumstances and Character Summary
- Outline, including the Major Dramatic Question, the Protagonist and their goal, the onstage manifestation of that goal, the protagonist's main obstacle, the protagonist's final action, and the thematic meaning of that final action
- Scene Breakdown
- Project Goals and Challenges
- Modes of Evaluation
- Works Consulted

Once written, the MFA Playwriting student will send it to their Chair. If the Chair finds the proposal satisfactory, the Chair will email it to the rest of the committee. If the committee find it satisfactory, the student will pass with no need for a meeting. If the Chair or any member of the Committee would like a meeting, there will be one to ask the playwright any clarifying questions.

Potential outcomes for the proposal or the Qualifier performance in the Festival are:

Approval

Conditional Approval Possible conditions include reworking the proposal's specifics; rewriting the Qualifier script; or working on specific professional weaknesses (such as meeting deadlines, etc.).

Not Approved If not approved, the Committee will have the option to either vote for non-continuation or beginning the project again, potentially putting the playwright a year longer in the program.

Non-Continuation Non-Continuation can be based on a failure to master the basic fundamentals taught in the first year or an ability to work at the professional level required in graduate school.

Festival

Once the committee determines the results of the Qualifier Proposal, without a meeting or with one, the committee will sign the “4-in1 form” in the graduate student’s file.

Over the summer between the MFA Playwright’s first and second years, they must write a draft of the script that is complete by the beginning of the second year. They will then spend the second year developing it under the close supervision of the Playwriting Chair. Its final presentation will be a staged reading in the Big Muddy Play Festival.

Once performed in the Festival, the MFA Playwriting student will set a time to meet with the Chair. The Chair will provide detailed feedback, but If the Chair found the Qualifier’s staged reading satisfactory, and the committee agrees, the student will pass with no need for a meeting. If the Chair or any member of the Committee would like a meeting, there will be one to ask the playwright any clarifying questions.

Potential outcomes for the Qualifier staged reading in the Festival are:

Approved

Conditional Approval Possible conditions include reworking the proposal’s specifics; rewriting the Qualifier script; or working on specific professional weaknesses (such as meeting deadlines, etc.).

Not Approved If not approved, the Committee will have the option to either vote for non-continuation or beginning the project again, potentially putting the playwright a year longer in the program.

Non-Continuation Non-Continuation can be based on a failure to master the basic fundamentals taught in the first year or an ability to work at the professional level required in graduate school.

Once the committee determines the results of the Qualifier Performance, without a meeting or with one, the committee will sign the “4-in1 form” in the graduate student’s file.

Thesis

The purpose of the Thesis proposal is to demonstrate the playwriting student has sufficiently grasped advanced playwriting techniques to envision a full-length play over the summer. The purpose of the Thesis play is to demonstrate that the playwright has a mastery of advanced playwriting techniques to write the Thesis play.

The Thesis play proposal should be written during the end of the second year and is due between the Big Muddy New Play Festival and the end of second year. It is possible, like a commissioning theatre, that the Department of Theater will put specific requirements on the script, potentially providing a maximum cast size, length, etc.

The Thesis play is written over the summer between the second and third years, developed in Fall semester of the third year, and produced during Spring semester of the third year. It is presented during the Big Muddy New Play Festival of the third year in a bare-bones production using pulled furniture, props, costumes, and a simple light plot.

Requirements:

Proposal

The Thesis proposal is an assignment is a paper that includes the sections:

- Project Proposal (essentially an abstract)
- Artistic Statement (of the playwright, not just for this particular project)
- Genre/History Statement (about how the proposed play fits into the drama canon)
- Origin and Development (detailing how the idea for the play came about)
- Given Circumstances and Character Summary
- Outline, including the Major Dramatic Question, the Protagonist and their goal, the onstage manifestation of that goal, the protagonist's main obstacle, the protagonist's final action, and the thematic meaning of that final action
- Scene Breakdown
- Project Goals and Challenges
- Modes of Evaluation
- Works Consulted

Once written, the MFA Playwriting student will send it to their Chair. If the Chair finds the proposal satisfactory, the Chair will email it to the rest of the committee. If the committee finds it satisfactory, the student will pass with no need for a meeting. If the Chair or any member of the Committee would like a meeting, there will be one to ask the playwright any clarifying questions.

Potential outcomes for the proposal or the Qualifier performance in the Festival are:
Approved

Conditional Approval Possible conditions include reworking the proposal's specifics; rewriting the Qualifier script; or working on specific professional weaknesses (such as meeting deadlines, etc.).

Not Approved If not approved, the Committee will have the option to either vote for non-continuation or beginning the project again, potentially putting the playwright a year longer in the program.

Non-Continuation Non-Continuation can be based on a failure to master the basic fundamentals taught in the first year or an ability to work at the professional level required in graduate school.

Festival

Once the committee determines the results of the Thesis Proposal, without a meeting or with one, the committee will sign the “4-in1 form” in the graduate student’s file.

Over the summer between the MFA Playwright’s second and third years, they must write a draft of the third-year full-length (Thesis) script that is complete by the beginning of the third year. They will then spend the Fall semester of year three developing the third-year full-length (Thesis) script under the close supervision of the Playwriting Chair. In spring, the playwright will work with a director, actors, and designers to produce the play. Its final presentation will be in the Big Muddy Play Festival.

Once performed in the Festival, the MFA Playwriting student will set a time to meet with their Committee; this is the Thesis Defense Meeting. The MFA Playwriting student will begin the meeting by discussing their time at SIU with the Thesis Play as the culmination. The Student will discuss the successes and failures of the Thesis play, how it fits into their previous work at SIU, and how they see themselves moving forward after SIU. The committee will then ask the student questions of a wide-ranging nature, not just about the Thesis, but about any aspect of the student’s time at SIU, theatre in general, and the student’s future plans.

Potential outcomes for the Thesis Defense meeting are:

Approved

Conditional Approval

Possible conditions include rewriting the Thesis script or accompanying critical document.

Not Approved

If not approved, the Committee will have the option to either vote for non-continuation or beginning the project again, potentially putting the playwright a year longer in the program.

Non-Continuation

Non-Continuation can be based on a failure to master the basic fundamentals taught in the first year or an ability to work at the professional level required in graduate school.

Appendices and Forms for MFA Students

In previous handbooks, forms appeared in the appendices. All forms have been move to the resources page on the Department of Theater website.