

Theater

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wp.stolaf.edu/theater (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/theater>)

The St. Olaf Department of Theater takes for its subject matter all aspects of making theater. It produces a season of plays whose focus is the liberal arts curriculum rather than a typical theater company's season of plays. All courses focus on the making of dramatic art. Courses in history and theory, no less than those in acting, directing, and design, approach the problems and difficulties of making production their central issue.

The activities and skills necessary for learning about and making theater are well suited to learning about and contributing to lives of worth and service. The basic theater activity is making things: play scripts, sets, costumes, characters, and the complete works of which these are a part. The theater skills are leading, following, reading, writing, talking, drawing, building, acting, performing, and making arrangements. We place these skills in the service of our conception of theater as a way of knowing. Our courses, along with the rest of the college curriculum, develop an appreciation of the need for moral choice, an imagination that constructs and examines alternatives, and an understanding of creativity as a reality in the world and an agency of community and change. We think of the program as a kind of laboratory for a serious and productive life. This is what we mean when we call the study of theater at St. Olaf a liberal arts major.

In contemporary culture, theater and the entertainment industry overlap, with the result that public approbation and artistic success have become difficult to separate. Our program emphasizes process as well as public performance. Students learn to judge their own work according to principles derived from the art itself. And as part of the fine arts at St. Olaf, we also emphasize collaboration and the interdisciplinary nature of theater.

The St. Olaf College Theater Department is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theater.

Overview of the Major

The theater major requires nine courses plus four 0.25 credit practicums. The major includes an introductory course in theater texts and performances as well as coursework in acting, directing, design, production, and history of theater, plus one upper-level elective. Student majors enroll in a senior capstone course in the final semester. The requirements for the major are designed to provide a well-rounded course of study in the theater discipline. The co-curricular theater production program serves as a lab for our courses and offers extended learning and experience for St. Olaf students.

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Major (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/curriculum-committee/theater-major-ilos>)

Theater Teaching License

St. Olaf offers a K-12 teaching license in theater. Contact Elizabeth Leer, Education Department chair, for further information.

Special Programs

Students have the opportunity to study theater in London during Interim as part of a regular course taught by theater faculty. Students can set up internship experiences with theaters and other arts organizations in the Twin Cities and surrounding areas. Courses in the department regularly attend professional theater performances in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Guest artists from those theaters often visit the courses in the department to talk about and demonstrate their work and occasionally collaborate in the production work for our season of plays.

Recommendations for Graduate and Professional Study

Students planning on graduate study in theater should take the graduation major and additional courses for a total not to exceed 14.00 credits. Students should work closely with a faculty member in the area of their interest to plan their program. Students who are considering professional work in the theater or related arts should work together with faculty to develop appropriate resume or portfolio documents prior to graduation.

Requirements

This major requires a minimum of nine courses plus four practicum quarter credits. All majors must register with the department chair as soon as they declare the major.

Completion of an equivalent course at another institution should be approved by the department chair in advance to ensure credit toward the major requirement.

THEAT 130	Introduction to Acting	1.00
THEAT 140	Introduction to Design for Performance	1.00
THEAT 180	Text and Performance	1.00
THEAT 232	Stage Direction	1.00
THEAT 240	Scenery and Costume Design and Production	1.00
or THEAT 250	Lighting and Sound-Design and Production	
THEAT 270	History of Theater up to 1700	1.00
THEAT 271	History of Theater since 1700	1.00
THEAT 360	Senior Capstone	1.00
Select one of the following:		1.00
THEAT 338	Intermediate Stage Direction	
THEAT 352	Advanced Design for Performance	
THEAT 379	Topics in Interpretation and Theater	
THEAT 380	Top: Who Owns the Arts: Censorship, Sponsorship, and Artistic Freedom	
THEAT 394	Academic Internship	
THEAT 398	Independent Research	
Four practicum classes: ¹		1.0
THEAT 233	Theater Practicum: Acting, Directing, Dramaturgy (0.25)	

THEAT 253	Theater Practicum: Design, Technical Production (0.25)
Total Credits	10

¹ At least one must be THEAT 233 and at least two must be THEAT 253; the fourth practicum class is a choice of either THEAT 233 or THEAT 253.

Courses

THEAT 100: Oral Interpretation

This performance course is designed to develop a student's understanding, analysis, and presentation of poetry, drama, and prose. Offered 2016-2017 and alternate years.

THEAT 110: Introduction to Theater

A broad-based introduction to the art and craft of theater, this course focuses on the roles of actor, director, playwright, and designer, as well as aspects of theater history, performance, and literature. Students examine theater as a culturally diverse art form, with emphasis on the ways ethnicity, gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation inform theater in the United States. Students attend performances on campus and in the Twin Cities and integrate them with readings, lectures, and discussions. A ticket fee is required. Offered each semester.

THEAT 115: Acting for the Non Major

This studio course is designed as an overview of the acting process for the non-major and includes basic acting theories, rehearsal techniques, improvisation, history, and styles. Students explore and practice exercises, scene work, and audition material. The course requires trips to professional theaters in the Twin Cities. A ticket fee is required. This course does not fulfill the acting requirement for the major. Offered each semester.

THEAT 120: Public Speaking

Students learn and apply principles of speech composition and analyze speeches to understand effective methods. They demonstrate their knowledge in classroom speeches. Offered 2015-2016 and alternate years.

THEAT 130: Introduction to Acting

This studio course is centered on training the actor's instrument and developing basic acting skills including characterization, vocal production, physical and emotional connection, motivation and ensemble work. Students learn history of actor training from Stanislavski to present. Exercises, improvisation, monologue and scene work are all explored. This course requires trips to professional theaters in the Twin Cities. A ticket fee is required. Offered each semester. Counts toward film studies concentration.

THEAT 131: Acting for the Lyric Stage

This studio course focuses on the techniques of acting and singing for the musical theater. Students learn the basics of voice, movement, improvisation, and characterization in class exercises, prepared scenes, solos and duets. Course culminates in a public showcase of students' work. Offered spring semester 2015-2016. Inquire in the Theater Department office for future scheduling.

THEAT 133: Producing Theater: Introductory

This course studies theater performance through the full-scale mounting of a production during the month of January, followed by public performances at the beginning of spring semester. Students enroll in the class through either an acting audition or a production position interview held in late October or early November. No previous experience is necessary. Selected participants are notified prior to Interim registration. Details about the audition/interview are available by calling the Theater Department office, x3240 or online at the Theater Department website in "Student Resources > Auditions." Scripts are available by calling the Theater Department office, x3240. P/N only. Offered during Interim.

THEAT 140: Introduction to Design for Performance

The attributes of the things we see and hear in the performances that we attend contribute strongly to our experience as an audience. This course considers the elements and principles of design and their application to performance work. Students study the performance space, scenery elements, costuming, lighting and shadow, and the aural experience that the audience encounters during a performance. Problem-solving, collaboration, and design development are included in project work. Materials fee. Offered most semesters.

THEAT 180: Text and Performance

Play texts are the raw material for our classes in acting, directing, design, and historical studies. This introductory course for theater majors introduces students to canonical texts and performances that have helped to define our field. Primary emphasis is on the text as a blueprint for production focusing on analysis, variety of interpretation, the changing nature of theater space, and our growing awareness of the changing nature of performance. Students are expected to communicate clarity of understanding both orally and in writing. Non-majors are invited to take this course, though its primary focus is a comprehensive preparation for further theater studies. Offered each semester.

THEAT 200: Training the Speaking Voice

This course focuses on training the speaking voice, with an emphasis on clarity and flexibility of voice usage. Students learn how to use the phonetic alphabet to improve their speech. Contact the Theater Department office (x3240) for current scheduling. Counts toward linguistic studies concentration.

THEAT 230: Intermediate Acting

A studio course for the student with previous acting experience. Through scene and monologue work students explore text and character analysis as well as the requirements of major theatrical period styles. Students perform regularly throughout the semester. The course requires trips to professional theaters in the Twin Cities. A ticket fee is required. Offered annually in the spring semester.

Prerequisites: THEAT 110 or THEAT 180, and THEAT 130 or THEAT 131.

THEAT 232: Stage Direction

This studio course focuses on the fundamentals of stage direction. Students develop skills of play selection, audience analysis, text interpretation, working with actors, stage picturization and blocking, design considerations, and the process of casting and rehearsals. A primary focus is on developing a point of view about theater and directing by the study of other directors and theories of theater. Offered annually in the fall semester. Counts toward management studies concentration.

Prerequisites: THEAT 110 or THEAT 180, THEAT 115 or THEAT 130 or THEAT 131, and THEAT 140.

THEAT 233: Theater Practicum: Acting, Directing, Dramaturgy (0.25)

This theater practicum involves the student in the conceptual and practical processes of artistic creation and performance production in theater. Students study current theory and practice as well as historical approaches to performance problems. Lab sessions include creative projects and practical problem-solving in assistant directing, acting, or dramaturgy as part of the St. Olaf theater season. P/N only. First-year students are encouraged to enroll. May be repeated; four total registrations allowed. Registration is by audition or interview only. Offered each semester.

THEAT 234: Producing Theater: Advanced

Designed for the student with previous course work and production work in theater, this course studies theater performance through the full-scale mounting of a production during the month of January, followed by public performances at the beginning of spring semester. Students enroll in the course through either an acting audition or a production position interview held in late October or early November. Selected participants are notified prior to Interim registration. Details about the audition/interview are available by calling the Theater Department Office, x3240 or online at the Theater Department website in "Student Resources > Auditions." Scripts are available by calling the Theater Department office, x3240. P/N only. Offered during Interim.

Prerequisite: THEAT 133 or permission of instructor.

THEAT 240: Scenery and Costume Design and Production

This course balances the elements of production with the elements of design, focusing on materials, practices, and techniques used to create scenic and costume elements used in live production. The course includes hands-on experience in the scenic and costume studios, and projects in technical drawing, designing, analysis, and research. A course fee is required. Open to majors and non-majors. Offered annually in the spring semester. Prerequisite: THEAT 140 is recommended.

THEAT 250: Lighting and Sound-Design and Production

The design and production of lighting and sound in theater, dance, music, and general presentation work plays a significant role in the experience of these events. This course introduces the production problems of lighting and sound and includes design projects in both lighting and sound. Course fee required. Open to all majors and non-majors. Offered annually in the fall semester.

Prerequisite: THEAT 140 is recommended.

THEAT 252: Drawing and Painting for Theater

This studio course covers drawing and painting as it relates to theater design and production work. Students engage in exercises and project work in perceptual drawing, scene painting, and technical drawing. Course fee is required. Open to all majors and non-majors. Offered periodically.

THEAT 253: Theater Practicum: Design, Technical Production (0.25)

This theater practicum involves the student in the conceptual and practical processes of stage performance. Class sessions include practical problem-solving and hands-on experiences for productions which are part of the St. Olaf theater season. Experiences in scenery, props, costumes, lighting, sound, and stage management are available. Contact the Theater Department office (x3420) for specific details. P/N only. First-year students are encouraged to enroll. May be repeated; four total registrations allowed. The theater practicum 253A: *Design, Technical Production* is offered each semester; practicum 253B: *CADDPracticum* - covering computer-aided design and drawing (CADD) is offered most years in the spring semester.

THEAT 270: History of Theater up to 1700

Examines theatrical activities, from theater's origins to 1700, from three interrelated perspectives: 1) theater as social history; 2) theater as dramatic literature; and 3) theater as performance (the result of creative decisions made by playwrights, actors, directors, and designers). The schedule of when this course will be offered is located in "Student Resources > Theater Curriculum" at the Theater Department website. Counts toward ancient studies and medieval studies majors.

Prerequisite: THEAT 110 or THEAT 180 or permission of instructor.

THEAT 271: History of Theater since 1700

Examines theatrical activities in the period 1700 to the present, from three interrelated perspectives: 1) theater as social history; 2) theater as dramatic literature; and 3) theater as performance (the result of creative decisions made by playwrights, actors, directors, and designers). The schedule of when this course will be offered is located in "Student Resources > Theater Curriculum" at the Theater Department website.

Prerequisite: THEAT 110 or THEAT 180 or permission of instructor.

THEAT 275: Writing for Performance

This course introduces students to the art and craft of writing for stage and screen. As a workshop, the course encourages students to work out unique solutions to the aesthetic and practical challenges confronting dramatic writers of a one-act play or short screenplay in light of historical, theoretical, and critical materials. The course emphasizes the technical elements of dramatic writing, the vocabulary of the writer, and the nature of the writing experience, from germinal idea to marketing the completed script. Offered periodically. Counts toward film studies and media studies concentrations.

Prerequisite: THEAT 110 or THEAT 180 or permission of instructor.

THEAT 294: Academic Internships

Prerequisite: at least three previous courses in department.

THEAT 298: Independent Study

Prerequisite: at least three previous courses in department.

THEAT 338: Intermediate Stage Direction

A studio course focusing on the artistic decision-making process of stage direction, script analysis, directorial concepts, production designs and hands-on directing experience building on the skills developed in THEAT 232: *Stage Direction*. Students direct a one-act play as the final project for the course. Offered annually in the spring semester. Counts toward management studies concentration.

Prerequisite: THEAT 232 and THEAT 240 or THEAT 250. THEAT 270 or THEAT 271 recommended.

THEAT 352: Advanced Design for Performance

This course studies and analyzes the concepts, principles, and techniques of doing visual designs for stage performances and extends the techniques and experiences of design for each student. Students engage in design project work that is theoretical or part of a production in the St. Olaf Theater season. Students study creating the Design and Production Portfolio, do project work in perceptual drawing and scene painting, and explore digital media applications and techniques for design and production in the performing arts. Offered periodically. Inquire in the Theater Department office for scheduling information.

Prerequisite: THEAT 140 or THEAT 240 or THEAT 250. Equivalent experiences or study may qualify; see instructor for permission.

THEAT 360: Senior Capstone

This is a seminar course open exclusively to theater majors, to be taken during the spring semester of the senior year. Students engage in analysis of performance work as well as dissemination of creative work through written and spoken presentation methods. Each student applies research, analysis, writing, and presentation methods in the exploration of a particular theater topic or case study of his or her choosing. Offered annually in the spring semester.

Prerequisites: THEAT 130, THEAT 140, THEAT 180, THEAT 232, THEAT 240 or THEAT 250, THEAT 270 or THEAT 271 or permission of instructor.

THEAT 379: Topics in Interpretation and Theater

An in-depth investigation of a selected topic through readings, bibliography, reports and projects. May be repeated if topic is different. Offered annually.

Prerequisite: THEAT 110 or THEAT 180. Some topics courses may require additional prerequisites. Please inquire in the Theater Department office before registering.

THEAT 380: Top: Who Owns the Arts: Censorship, Sponsorship, and Artistic Freedom

An investigation into the relationship between theater and society through study of various issues in theater arts including censorship, funding, arts advocacy and arts education. Issues of contemporary ethical concern will be discussed and analyzed through a variety of historical and contemporary normative perspectives. Inquire in the Theater Department office (x3240) about schedule of offering for future academic years. Counts toward management studies concentration.

Prerequisite: THEAT 110 or THEAT 180; BTS-T.

THEAT 394: Academic Internship

Prerequisite: at least five previous courses in department.

THEAT 396: Directed Undergraduate Research

This course provides a comprehensive research opportunity, including an introduction to relevant background material, technical instruction, identification of a meaningful project, and data collection. The topic is determined by the faculty member in charge of the course and may relate to his/her research interests. Offered based on department decision. May be offered as a 1.00 credit course or .50 credit course.

Prerequisite: determined by individual instructor.

THEAT 398: Independent Research

Prerequisite: at least five previous courses in the department.

Related Course

ID 258: Theater in London (abroad)

A full immersion in the art of theater, students will attend approximately 22 performances at London and Stratford theaters. The course will include the reading of play texts, dramatic criticism, group discussions and backstage tours. England, a theatrical center of the English-speaking world, enables students to experience a wide variety of theatrical performances ranging from traditional to modern. Excursions to Stratford-upon-Avon, Stonehenge, Canterbury and Oxford offer additional cultural perspectives. Offered annually during Interim. Counts toward English major.

Faculty

Chair, 2015-2016 (fall)

Brian Bjorklund (on leave Interim and spring)
Professor of Theater
design and technical theater; scene painting

Chair, 2015-2016 (Interim and spring)

Karen Wilson
Professor of Theater
theater; ethics and theater; directing; voice/phonetics

Vice-Chair, 2015-2016 (Interim and spring)

Dona Freeman
Artist in Residence in Theater
stage acting; acting Shakespeare; stage direction; period styles of acting

Todd F. Edwards

Assistant Professor of Theater
design and technical production; stage combat; media and video design

Gary C. Gisselman

Artist in Residence in Theater
directing; musical theater

William Sonnega

Associate Professor of Theater
theater; media studies

Jeanne I. Willcoxon

Assistant Professor of Theater
feminist and postdramatic theater; early modern performance; directing and acting