

THEATRE ARTS

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073. (CINE073, ENGL073) LIT AND VISUAL ART.

SM 076. Theatre in Philadelphia. (M) Malague and Schlatter. Frequently offered as a Freshmen Seminar

This course will investigate the state of the contemporary, non-profit theatre culture of Philadelphia by examining the history, artistic mission, and current production work of selected city theatre companies. This course will also explore the creative process of theatre-making as undertaken by these theatres through the reading of plays being produced by them this fall, through an analysis of the collaborative contribution of the playwright, director, actors, and designers to the creation of a production, and, finally, through attendance at those productions mounted by the theatre companies under investigation. The members of the class will write individual essays responding to these productions, do research and give group presentations on other Philadelphia theatre companies, and participate daily in a spirited dialogue about the vitality, level of artistic accomplishment, and cultural/social value of contemporary theatre in Philadelphia

100. Introduction to Theatre Arts. (C) Arts & Letters Sector. All Classes. Malague.

An introduction to different approaches to understanding and analyzing performance, representational theatre, and non-representational theatre, using as test cases both dramatic scripts and live performance. Different aspects of theatre art and theatrical process (acting, design, audience, musical theatre) will be taught by guest lecturers drawn from the Theatre Arts faculty and local professionals.

101. (ENGL087) Theatre, History,Culture 1: Classical to Middle Class. Arts & Letters Sector. All Classes.

This course investigates the history of theatre practice in Europe and Asia from Fifth-Century Athens to roughly the end of the Eighteenth Century. In addition to analyzing major dramatic works, this course examines the evolution of production methods - scenography, acting, costuming, theatre architecture - across cultures and key socio-historical moments. Readings will be drawn from historical research, theoretical writings, plays and contemporary social documents. A particular focus will be on the integral role that the theatre plays as a cultural institution in the ongoing civic life of major cities. The course approaches theatre as broadly interdisciplinary and examines its intersection with religious practice, political developments, national identity, geography, the visual arts and the urban landscape.

102. (ENGL097) Theatre, History, Culture 2 : Romantics, Realists and Revolutionaries. Arts & Letters Sector. All Classes.

This course investigates the history of theatre practice from the end of the Eighteenth-Century to the present, with an emphasis on interplay of mainstream practices with the newly emerging aesthetics of acting, scenography, and theatrical theory, and the interplay of popular entertainment and audiences with the self-defined aesthetic elitism of the Avant Garde. Among the aesthetics and phenomena we will examine are romanticism and melodrama; bourgeois realism and revolutionary naturalism; emotional-realist acting; the reaction against realism; political theatre; physical theatre; theatre and media; non-dramatic theatre; and theatre that challenges long-standing categories of national identity, empire, gender, and sexuality.

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SM 114. (ENGL114) Playwriting Workshop. (B) Staff.

This course is designed as a hands-on workshop in the art and craft of dramatic writing. It involves the study of existing plays, the systematic exploration of such elements as storymaking, plot, structure, theme, character, dialogue, setting, etc.; and most importantly, the development of students' own plays through a series of written assignments and in-class exercises. Since a great deal of this work takes place in class -- through lectures, discussions, spontaneous writing exercises, and the reading of student work -- weekly attendance and active participation is crucial.

SM 120. Introduction to Acting. (C) Ferguson, Malague, Schlatter, and Staff. Required of all Theatre Arts Majors

Rooted in the system devised by Constantine Stanislavsky, but incorporating a wide variety of approaches, including improvisation, this course guides students step by step through the practical work an actor must do to live and behave truthfully on-stage. Beginning with relaxation and physical exercise, interactive games, and ensemble building, students then learn and put into practice basic acting techniques, including sensory work, the principles of action, objectives, given circumstances, etc. The semester culminates in the performance of a scene or scenes, most often from a play from the Realist tradition. This course strongly stresses a commitment to actor work and responsibility to one's fellow actors. Practical work is supplemented by readings from Stanislavsky and a variety of other acting theorists that may include Uta Hagen, Robert Cohen, Stella Adler, among others. Students are required to submit short essays over the course of the semester in response to the readings and in preparation for their final scene project.

SM 121. Introduction to Directing. (C) Ferguson, Malague, Mazer, Schlatter. Required of all Theatre Arts Majors

This class will introduce the basic principals of stage directing, beginning with the fundamentals of three-dimensional storytelling in script and character analysis. The aim of this course is to provide students with a basic knowledge of directing through an introduction to the functional tools of the craft. Classes provide lectures and practical work in dealing with topics such as the function of the director, analyzing a script, visual composition, blocking, stage business, and working with actors. This course is a prerequisite for Advanced Directing.

125. (ENGL056) The Play: Structure, Style, Meaning. (C) Malague.

How does one read a play? Theatre, as a discipline, focuses on the traditions of live performance. In those traditions, a play text must be read not only as a piece of literature, but as a kind of "blueprint" from which productions are built. This course will introduce students to a variety of approaches to reading plays and performance pieces. Drawing on a wide range of dramatic texts from different periods and places, we will examine how plays are made, considering issues such as structure, genre, style, character, and language, as well as the use of time, space, and theatrical effects. Although the course is devoted to the reading and analysis of plays, we will also view selected live and/or filmed versions of several of the scripts we study, assessing their translation from page to stage.

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SM 130. (CINE131) Introduction to Light, Set, and Costume Design. (C) Baratta and Johnson.
Required of all Theatre Arts Majors

Design for theatre (and all of the performing arts) is a dynamic, collaborative process that engages both intellect and emotion in staging the dramatic moment. The personal vision of the designer must navigate the often-uncharted waters of the production process, from the earliest, personal moments of design inspiration to the opening night performance. Design flows from creativity, is structured by research and theory, and is realized in living form by collaboration in the dynamic process of theatre-making. This class will integrate history, theory and practice of stage design in the interactive setting of the Collaborative Classroom in Van Pelt Library in this special interdisciplinary, active-learning course offering open to all Penn students. Group and individual projects, field visits, practical projects and guest speakers will be featured in this newly-revised course.

SM 131. Concepts of Lighting. (C) Whinnery.

In this course we will cover the basic concepts of the art and craft of Stage Lighting Design. As a craft we will examine mechanics and technology of lighting design including light sources, power distribution, optics, and control. As an art we will explore how lighting ties together all the visual elements of a production and helps create an appropriate atmosphere that heightens the audience's understanding and enjoyment of the play. Topics include: what light is, what it does, and how light influences our perception and understanding of what we see. Exercises will help the student learn how to see and to understand how light shapes and affects the appearance people and objects on stage and in everyday life. Projects work will emphasize design theory and practice (design methods, script analysis, and drafting skills). Lighting design has its roots in the theatre. The theatre continues to be a prime training ground for lighting designers, no matter what their field.

SM 132. Costume. (B) Staff.

Costume history and design provides a framework for organized study and practice in this particular facet of theatre production. It is a one-semester course, scheduled to meet once a week for a three hour session.

214. Advanced Playwriting. Bryan Delaney. Prerequisite(s): Thar 114 - Playwriting Workshop or Permit of the instructor.

This course is intended to reinforce and build upon the areas covered in Level 1 Playwriting (THAR-114) so that students can refine the skills they've acquired and take them to the next level. Topics covered will include techniques for approaching the first draft, in-depth characterization, dramatic structure, conflict, shaping the action, language/dialogue (incl. subtext, rhythm, imagery, exposition etc), how to analyse your own work as a playwright, dealing with feedback, the drafting process, techniques for rewriting, collaboration (with directors, actors etc) and the 'business of the art' - working with theatres, agents, dramaturgs etc. Students will undertake to write their own one-act plays over the course. The classes will be a mixture of lecture, discussion, study of dramatic texts, writing exercises and in-class analysis of students' work.

SM 133. Concepts of Stage Design. (A) Whinnery.

In this course we will cover the basic concepts of Scenic Design for the stage. Scene Design is about the look or physical appearance of the stage for a play. It reflects the way that the stage is composed artistically in regard to props, actors, shapes and color. We will explore Scene Design and the Theatre (story telling, place and local, time and period, society and culture) , Scene Design as a Visual Art (principals of design and composition, style, use of space, expression of concept) and examine how it ties together all the visual elements of a production to create an appropriate atmosphere that heightens the audience's understanding and enjoyment of the play. Topics will include: Script Analysis, Technical Production, Period Decor and Ornament; Drawing, Drafting, Model Making; and Scene Painting.

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SM 170. Voice for the Actor. (A) Doherty. Prerequisite(s): THAR 120 or equivalent.

This introductory course is designed to help the actor find new freedom and range of expression with their voice and to connect their voice to their impulse. Our focus on relaxation, sensitivity and awareness, using Fitzmaurice Voicework techniques inspired by yoga and meditation, help the student access and develop their own authentic sound. They will learn how to support their voice in a healthy way, with a view to longevity, spontaneity and flexibility of use. In this course, these kinds of vocal exercises will be applied to short, character monologues, in order to foster sensitivity to our voices and breath and to the habits and tensions we have formed around speaking in public. For an actor, reconnecting with their authentic voice is essential for an honest, connected and compelling performance. This training is also useful for anyone who wants to speak in public with confidence, sincerity and ease.

SM 171. Movement for the Actor. (B) Fishbeck. Primarily for majors. Non-majors need permission of the instructor

The study of the art of bodily expression throughout history in theory and practice, from Classical and Oriental, African and Latin forms of dance and movement theater to the contemporary dance and theater, including mime, modern dance, post modern dance, physical theater, film, and performance art.

SM 220. Advanced Acting. (M) Ferguson, Malague, Schlatter. Prerequisite(s): THAR 120 or by special permission of the instructor.

This course continues the work begun in the Introduction to Acting class. The specific focus of the course will be on helping students to connect more deeply and truthfully with each other on stage, freeing up the body of the actor to fulfill the physical demands of characterization, and analyzing the dramatic text to clarify objectives and focus action through unit breakdown. Attention will also be given to helping students work through specific problems and personal, creative obstacles. The basis of the course will be scene work taken from the twentieth-century repertoire (realist and non-realist plays), a classical monologue, and exercises taken from a variety of performance traditions. The course also includes readings from modern theorists and practitioners.

SM 221. Advanced Directing. (M) Schlatter. Prerequisite(s): THAR 121.

The primary goal of this course is to develop students' practical skills and methods as stage directors. The course continues the work of Introduction to Directing, focusing on effective text analysis, communicating with actors, and use of theatrical space and movement to tell the story of the play. The course is structured as a workshop, with students presenting and discussing each other's scene work in class. Students are responsible for three large projects, and each project is presented and discussed twice, first in its workshop and then in its final stage of development. The final project involves minimally staging a one-act play for an audience. Course work is supplemented by readings on the work of major modern directors, and by viewing and writing critiques of selected theatre performances.

SM 236. (ENGL236) Topics in Renaissance Drama: Acting Shakespeare. (M) Mazer. Prerequisite(s): THAR 120 or 121 or their equivalent. This course is not open to freshmen. Instructor permission is required.

Through specialized readings, writing assignments, and in-class acting exercises, the class will develop methods of interpreting Shakespeare's plays through theatrical practice. Topics include Shakespeare's use of soliloquy, two and three person scenes, the dramatic presentation of narrative source material, modes of defining and presenting the "worlds" of the plays, and the use of theatrical practice to establish authoritative text.

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SM 240. (ENGL226, ENGL276) Advanced Topics in Theatre History. (C) Mazer. This class is the next level up from Thar 140 - Topics in Theatre History.

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the basic materials and methods of theatre history and historiography, as applied to a particular topic, organized around a specific period, national group, or aesthetic issue. This course is concerned with methodological questions: how the history of theatre can be documented; how primary documents, secondary accounts, and historical and critical analyses can be synthesized; how the various components of the theatrical event--acting, scenography, playhouse architecture, audience composition, the financial and structural organization of the theatre industry, etc.--relate to one another; and how the theatre is socially and culturally constructed as an art form in relation to the politics and culture of a society in a particular time and place.

SM 241. (ENGL276) Actors and Acting: Page, Stage and Screen. (L)

We are all dazzled by the performances of certain actors, famous and not; nearly everyone has a favorite actor, or a favorite film or stage performance. This course will pursue the question: How do actors do what they do? We will explore acting theory and practice, examining major treatises on the acting process, the work of specific actors, and their relationship to iconic texts. Examples might include: Method acting traditions and the performances of actors such as Marlon Brando and Geraldine Page in the plays (and films) of Tennessee Williams; and Shakespearean acting as performed by legends like Laurence Olivier and John Gielgud. We will compare British and American acting traditions, and will consider the different acting styles associated with particular historical periods and theatrical genres. Readings will include actor interviews, reviews, biographies, and selected scripts; viewing will include representative moments of brilliant acting on film, as well as live performances on the London stage. We will also plan to converse with actors we see, through class visits or attendance at talk-backs.

SM 250. (ENGL276) Theatre Workshop. (M) Various Theatre Professionals. Cross-listings are contingent upon topics offered. For the current topics contact the Theatre Arts office.

This course will examine a specific aspect of theatrical practice, taught by a visiting professional theatre artist. The course, with different topics, may be repeated for credit. Recent topics have included performance art, Jacques LeCoq technique, Suzuki, and Viewpoints.

SM 270. (ENGL256) Acting American Drama: Players and Playwrights. (M) Malague.

This course will investigate the interrelationship between American drama and American acting techniques. Connections to be considered include: The Group Theatre and Clifford Odets; The Actors Studio and Tennessee Williams; The Meisner Technique and David Mamet. We will also view the work of individual actors in filmed and live versions of the plays we study, examining the many ways in which actors collaborate with playwrights by creating roles and reinterpreting them. Readings will include the acting texts of American master teachers such as Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner, and Uta Hagen, as well as a number of American plays. This course will include acting exercises and scene work.

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SM 271. (CINE271, ENGL274) American Musical Theatre. (M) Fox.

The American musical is an unapologetically popular art form, but many of the works that come from this tradition have advanced and contributed to the canon of theatre as a whole. In this course we will focus on both music and texts to explore ways in which the musical builds on existing theatrical traditions, as well as alters and reshapes them. Finally, it is precisely because the musical is a popular theatrical form that we can discuss changing public tastes, and the financial pressures inherent in mounting a production. Beginning with early roots in operetta, we will survey the works of prominent writers in the American musical theatre, including Kern, Berlin, Gershwin, Porter, Rodgers, Hart, Hammerstein, Bernstein, Sondheim and others. Class lecture/discussions will be illustrated with recorded examples.

272. Twentieth Century American Theatre and Drama. (M) Schlatter.

This course examines the development of the modern American theatre from the turn of the century to the present day. Progressing decade by decade the course investigates the work of playwrights such as Eugene O'Neil, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee, David Mamet, August Wilson and Tony Kushner, theatre companies such as the Provincetown Players and the Group Theatre, directors, actors, and designers. Some focus will also be given to major theatrical movements such as the Federal Theatre Project, Off-Broadway, regional theatre, experimental theatre of the Sixties, and feminist theatre.

SM 273. (CINE225, ENGL292) Dark Comedy. (M) Ferguson.

From Plautus to Ionesco, dark comedies explore concepts and ideas seemingly at odds with comic traditions and structures they employ. This class uses the the study of theory, history, plays and theatrical technique to explore the significance and effect of tragicomedies. Students will acquire an understanding of the genre's unique characteristics through textual and practical work and through viewing pertinent films. In addition to reading and discussing plays and criticism, students will be required to perform a scene from a tragicomic play, experimenting with and creating tragicomic effect through performance. This course will be roughly organized into three sections: historic precedents (Plautus, Shakespeare, Moliere), 19th century transitional dramas (Chekhov, Isben) and 20th century tragicomedies, in which the bulk of the course readings will be done (Beckett, Ionesco, Pinter, Stoppard, Henley, etc.).

SM 277. 20th Century Acting Theory and Practice. (M) Malague.

This course examines the making of theatre from the actor's perspective, focusing on major twentieth century forms and the acting techniques constructed to produce them. Through an investigation of theories of such practitioners as Stanislavsky, Brecht, and Grotowski, the class will consider contrasting models for their actor's work, and such issues as the actor's relationship to the audience, director, playwright, and text. The course will include practical performance exercises and an exploration of representative play scripts.

SM 274. (ENGL256) Dramaturgy. (M) Mazer.

This course will examine the functions and methods of the dramaturg--the person in the theatrical process who advises the artistic collaborators on (among other things) new play development, the structure of the script, the playwright's biography and other writings, the play's first production and its subsequent production history, and the historical and regional details of the period depicted in the plays action. We will study the history of the dramaturg in the American theatre and discuss contemporary issues relating to the dramaturg's contribution to the theatrical production (including the legal debates about the dramaturg's contribution to the creation of RENT). And, in creative teams, the class will create dramaturgical portfolios for a season of imaginary (and, potentially, a few actual) theatrical productions.

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SM 275. (CINE225, COML267, ENGL276, ENGL356, URBS274) Advanced Topics in Theatre. (M)

Fox, Ferguson, Malague, Mazer, Schlatter. This course, which may with different topics, be repeated for credit, will examine a specific aspect of theatrical practice. Recent topics have included performance art, Jacques Lecoq technique, improvisation, and puppetry.

This course will combine an intensive practical and intellectual investigation of some area of the making of theatre: performance techniques, theatrical styles, a particular period of theatre history. For the current topics contact the Theatre Arts office or visit the website.

One section of 275 every other Spring will consist of a small number of Theatre Arts majors selected by the faculty to become members of "the Edinburgh Project." This ensemble will mount a production that will be performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August. Many of the readings and exercises in this course will be geared to prepare for production; rehearsals for the project will continue after the exam period at the end of the semester.

SM 276. Theatre Criticism. (M) Mazer.

This course is both a practical writing course, and an examination of the role of the various kinds of theatre criticism and their relation to contemporary theatrical art and the theatre industry. Students (and faculty) will write (and rewrite) one theatre review a week, based on a theatre event everyone will see. Additional readings will be drawn from theatre critics and reviewers through history (Hazlitt, Shaw, Beerbohm, Agate, Clurman, Brustein, Rich, Wardle, Nightingale, Billington, and others).

SM 278. Variety Arts. (M) Fox.

This course examines a series of "variety arts" movements -- theatre in which striking visual and auditory elements are even more important than the traditional story and script. Topics generally include: Grand Guignol, the French "theatre of fear and terror," where shocking images are used to stimulate and frighten the audience; tableaux vivant, in which actors create stage pictures based on famous paintings and other visual icons; concert song and ballad, where performers interpret character and story through vocal means; American musical theatre, in which music and dance become the highest form of expression; German cabarets, where artists use a combination of song and text to create politically and culturally controversial theatre; contemporary performance art, a genre that mixes comedy, the visual arts, dance, music and text.; and more. The course also explores how these visual and auditory elements might be used by actors, directors, and designers to enhance and enrich our more traditional, text-based theatre.

SM 279. (ENGL356, GSW279) Women in Theatre and Performance. (M) Malague. This is a topics class which include: Dangerous Women and Provocative Performance.

Theatre began as a form that excluded women entirely. The plays of ancient Greece and Elizabethan England were written and performed only by men, beginning a long tradition of theatre that represented women only from male perspectives. Has that tradition been so dominant for so long that women's voices on stage are still a novelty? This course focuses on a wide range of plays and performances by and about women; the work we read (and view) will evidence artistic attempts to represent women's lives, experiences and perspectives on the stage. Among the issues encountered and examined in these works are the roles of love, sexuality, friendship, career, community, marriage, motherhood, family, and feminism in women's lives - as well as the economic and political position(s) of women in society. The course will also offer contextual background on feminist theatre history, theory, and literature, as well as the diverse (and divergent) creative efforts of female artists to use live performance as a means of creating social and political change.

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SM 320. Scene Study. (A) Malague. Prerequisite(s): THAR 220.

Scene Study is an advanced acting class that combines intensive script analysis with performance of scenes; material to be explored will be chosen specifically for the members enrolled in class. Open to students who have successfully completed Introduction to Acting, this course continues with greater emphasis on the actor's work with the text. We will study several plays together as a group, conducting Stanislavskian table work. We will then workshop and perform scenes from these plays in subsequent class sessions. In consultation with the instructor, students will identify individual goals, building on discoveries made in other Theatre Arts courses and/or prior stage work, exploring roles and plays that present actors with new challenges and expand their range. Depending on the number of students enrolled in the class, we are likely to perform at least three scenes and a monologue. Plays will be read alongside key theoretical texts, and class work will be complemented by attendance at selected live productions on campus and in Philadelphia.

SM 485. (COML385, EALC255, FOLK485) Japanese Theatre. (C) Kano.

Japan has an enormously rich and varied theatrical tradition. In this course, we will examine Japanese theatre in historical and comparative contexts.

350. (ENGL256) Rehearsal and Performance. (C) Ferguson, Fox, Malague, Mazer and Schlatter.

Theatre Rehearsal and Performance provides students with deep intellectual and artistic immersion in the theatrical process through intensive research, rehearsal, and performance of a full-length stage piece. Students may enroll in this course as actors (by audition only) or as assistant directors, stage managers, dramaturgs, or designers (by permission of the instructor). Each semester, the play will be featured in the Theatre Arts Program production season; the class meeting times will vary, but will typically consist of 16-20 hours per week in the evening hours.

SM 375. (ENGL270, ENGL371, WSTD371) Feminist Theatre. (M) Malague.

385. PRESENTING THE ARTS GRAD.

Graduate Level - This class meets in conjunction with Thar 285. This graduate level class will also include additional assignments above the 285 requirements as discussed with the instructor for that semester. A study of the creation and presentation of art (e.g., theater, film, sculpture), the cultural context of creativity and the management of individual and institutional performance and exhibition. A combination of lectures by instructors and practitioners, case studies and consulting projects with local institutions will illustrate the relationship between creativity and presentation. Students will be required to write papers, proposals, and complete a term project.

SM 579. (ENGL456, GSWS579) Provocative Performance. Malague.

999. Graduate Level Independent Study. (S) Staff.