

# Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies

**Director of undergraduate studies:** Hal Brooks (hal.brooks@yale.edu), Rm. 102C, 220 York St., 432-1310; [tdps.yale.edu](mailto:tdps.yale.edu)

The mission of the program in Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies (TDPS) is to cultivate adventurous artists and scholars with a serious commitment to craft and extensive understanding of the contexts in which cultural productions emerge. Introductory, term, and capstone courses reiterate the core learning objectives of the program: collaboration, craft, the integration of practice and theory, interdisciplinarity, and new work development.

Students are encouraged to gain experience in an array of disciplines including theater, dance, performance studies, musical theater, intermedia arts, and design. As research in theater, dance, and performance studies is interdisciplinary in scope and global in perspective, students are expected to take courses in cognate disciplines such as history, philosophy, anthropology, political science, film, art, and literature. The major provides a solid education in the humanities, as well as preparation for graduate studies or for careers in theater, dance, and the performing arts.

Faculty members are affiliated with a range of departments; their diverse expertise lends breadth and depth to course offerings and enables students to devise a course of study that reflects their developing interests. Faculty affiliated with the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale (DGSD) regularly teach Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies (TDPS) courses, and students have ample opportunities to interact with graduate students in the various departments of DGSD. Courses and events across the TDPS curriculum provide opportunities for students to attend performances by professional companies and artists and learn from discussions, workshops, and lectures offered by prominent guest artists and scholars.

Special features of the program are its production seminars, independent studies, research- and writing-based senior theses, and production-based senior projects. Production seminars, taken with the permission of the instructor, offer immersive, semester-long performance research and development, culminating in public presentations and productions. Independent studies, taken under the supervision of a faculty adviser, give students the freedom to pursue individual and group-generated projects and to investigate areas of scholarship not offered elsewhere in the curriculum. Independent study courses are typically open only to juniors and seniors in the major. Production-based senior projects as well as research- and writing-based senior theses are described in the Senior Requirements section.

In addition to the theater, dance, and performance studies curricula, three programs are integrated into the mission of the major.

The **Dance Studies curriculum** features studio and seminar courses that cover the practice, history, and theory of diverse dance forms and movement phenomena. Students are guided in physical techniques and movement research across a wide range of temporal, geographic, and cultural sites, linking dance to the other arts, the humanities, sciences, and social sciences, and they explore the fluid and

fraught relationship between movement and language. Contact: Emily Coates (emily.coates@yale.edu), Director of Dance.

The **Shen Curriculum for Musical Theater** examines American Musical Theater as a unique art form, one informed and influenced by changing cultural and socio-economic conditions as well as musical tastes and styles. Shen courses combine a grounding in skill-based study with history, analysis, and theory. The faculty consists of scholars and working professionals, including composers, directors, lyricists, librettists, directors, and performers. Additionally, the Shen Curriculum supports a co-curricular program that includes the Fridays at Five series of master classes and voice lessons in musical theater technique. Contact: Daniel Egan (dan.egan@yale.edu), Coordinator of the Shen Curriculum.

**Computing and the Arts** is an interdepartmental major designed for students who wish to work at and across intersections between computing and theater, dance and/or performance studies. Through a mix of practical and theoretical exploration, students consider how the live body on stage is reconfigured, reimaged, and reified through technological intervention. Contact: Elise Morrison (elise.morrison@yale.edu), affiliated faculty in Computing and the Arts.

The Theater, Dance, and Performing Studies department also supports three substantial co-curricular initiatives: the Performance Studies working group, the Yale Playwrights Festival, and the Yale Dance Lab.

#### PREREQUISITES

The prerequisites for the major are TDPS 1000 and TDPS 1001.

#### REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

See Links to the attributes indicating courses approved for Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies major requirements.

The major consists of ten term courses beyond the introductory prerequisites. Of the ten required term courses, students must take two courses in each of four domains: Artistic Practice, Interarts, Histories, and Performance Theory, one related elective and one senior requirement course. Most courses are listed in more than one domain, though they may count for only one domain requirement for a given student. Students may take term courses concurrently with prerequisite courses.

**Artistic Practice Domain** (YC TDPS: Artistic Practice) This domain encompasses techniques and compositional strategies in theater, dance, musical theater, design, and intermedia performance. Practice-based courses emphasize the knowledge of doing, moving, creating, devising, composing, designing, and craft. Courses move through existing aesthetic practices and histories as a means of cultivating individual and collective expression and new creation. Skills: heightened attention to energy, time, and space; the artist's self-knowledge and body; fluency synthesizing movement and language in compositions; and innovative approaches to researching history and culture through performance.

**Interarts Domain** (YC TDPS: Interarts) This domain invites students to experience art-making between disciplines and within interdisciplinary forms. Courses in this area may draw connections and inspiration between established artistic disciplines, such as theater and dance, or reach beyond the program, putting the performing

arts in conversation with ideas and approaches in diverse fields including film, visual art, new media, psychology, and science. Ideally, students use the Interarts requirement to explore disciplinary practices outside of their main track and comfort zone, expanding the boundaries of methods, resources, and questioning that feed into their creative practice. Skills: collaboration; interdisciplinary research and creation; and the integration of methods and systems of knowledge drawn from diverse fields.

**Histories Domain** (YC TDPS: Histories) This domain includes courses in which the scope of study is defined by period, genre, and/or geographic region, in which students research past practices, texts, performances, and cultures. Courses in Histories may also ask students to employ performance-based research methods to analyze, discover, reconstruct, or intervene in diverse global, local, and personal historical narratives. Skills: engaging with material from disparate time periods, geographies, and cultural forms; methods of archival research and oral histories; and reenacting historical performance and adaptation in new forms.

**Performance Theory Domain** (YC TDPS: Performance Theory) Courses in this domain introduce students to foundational theories of performativity and theatricality as applied to a range of cultural contexts and global histories. Theory courses bring together intersecting literatures of feminist and queer theory, linguistic theory, critical race studies, dance studies, and anthropology that together form the theories and methods of Performance Studies and Dance Studies as fields of study and practice. These courses may also invite students to respond to and use theoretical concepts in the creation of live art. Skills: facility with performance studies analysis; application of theory to dramatic texts and embodied practices; and investigating dynamic relationship between archives and repertoires.

**Credit/D/Fail** No course taken Credit/D/Fail may be applied toward the requirements of the major.

**Courses graded P/F** No course taken Pass/Fail may be applied toward the requirements of the major.

**Outside credit** Courses taken at another institution or during an approved summer or term-time study abroad program may count toward the major requirements with DUS approval.

## SENIOR REQUIREMENTS

**Majors are held to the senior requirements that were in place when they declared their major.** However, with approval from the director of undergraduate studies (DUS), the following senior requirement options, updated for the academic year 2024–2025, may be fulfilled by students who declared the major in a prior term.

Majors satisfy the senior requirement in one of five main ways: a substantial senior essay written in an upper-level seminar, a production seminar, or a senior independent study (TDPS 4900, TDPS 4901, or TDPS 4902).

With the approval of the DUS, a student may take a one-term, upper-level seminar as a senior seminar. In such cases, the expectations for the final thesis will be substantially higher than for other students not taking the class as a senior seminar. Participation and

enrollment in a production seminar may similarly fulfill the senior requirement, and will similarly require a more extensive final paper than other students in the course.

Under the supervision of a faculty adviser, a student may undertake a one-term senior project in either the fall or spring semester by enrolling in TDPS 4901 which culminates in a production as part of the curricular production season. Depending upon an individual student's preparation, coursework, and research objectives, a senior enrolled in TDPS 4901 may direct, design, or devise a theatrical production, create a documentary film or digital media production, perform a role, choreograph a dance piece, or design an original work of performance art. Seniors engaging in production-based senior projects (TDPS 4901) must complete an essay (15–25 pages in length). For a production-based project to be considered for inclusion in the TDPS curricular season, a proposer must have previously served as a producer of a TDPS curricular production (or partner with someone who has) and must follow the proposal guidelines that are promulgated throughout their junior year.

Under the supervision of a faculty adviser, a student may undertake a one-term senior research project in either the fall or spring semester by enrolling in TDPS 4902 which culminates in a full-length essay (35–50 pages in length), a writing portfolio or other work of performance-based writing (plays, screenplays, etc.). In TDPS 4902 students' research falls into one of these three areas: 1) Literature, History, Theory, and Criticism 2) Writing Performance-based Art and Media, and 3) Performance Research, Analysis and Design. Seniors pursuing this thesis path are permitted to use their curricular thesis research to support their extracurricular work in a production that is organized and funded through the Creative and Performing Arts process or other approved entities. Similar to TDPS 4901, students enrolling in TDPS 4902 must follow the proposal guidelines that are promulgated throughout their junior year.

To ensure that their coursework aligns with their goals, students should begin discussing senior project ideas and plans with the DUS at the start of their junior year. Mandatory senior project orientation meetings for all juniors are held once in the fall and twice during the spring semester, with research and production proposals due the Friday before spring recess.

#### ADVISING

TDPS majors in their junior and senior years are required to meet with the DUS at the beginning of each of their final four terms. Students in their first and second years of study who may be interested in the TDPS major are encouraged to meet with the DUS once a semester to discuss goals, learn about opportunities, and ask questions.

#### COURSES REQUIRING INSTRUCTOR PERMISSION

With the exception of TDPS 1000 and TDPS 1001, many courses in Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies are limited enrollment courses that may require a short statement of interest, writing sample, or audition in order to obtain instructor permission to register. When there are more applicants for a course than can be admitted, priority is given to juniors and seniors who have declared a major in Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies or first- and second-year students who have completed one or both prerequisite courses (TDPS 1000 and TDPS 1001). Undergraduate students in all years of study and all majors are encouraged to apply to courses in Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies.

## COURSES IN THE DAVID GEFFEN SCHOOL OF DRAMA AT YALE

Majors in Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies are eligible to take DGSD courses in design, theory, dramaturgy, and theater management, with permission of the instructor, the DUS, the DGSD Registrar, using the Cross-School Course Registration Process for the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale. Undergraduates may not, however, enroll in acting or directing courses offered by the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale. Students enrolling in DGSD courses should note that a maximum of four term courses from the professional schools (of which DGSD is one) may be offered toward the bachelor's degree. Students also should note that the academic calendars of DGSD and of Yale College differ. The DGSD calendar should be consulted for scheduling. A student interested in taking a course at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale should begin by seeking the permission of the instructor and contacting their academic dean.

## SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

**Prerequisites** TDPS 1000, TDPS 1001

**Number of courses** 10 term courses beyond prereqs (incl senior req)

**Distribution of courses** 2 courses in each of four domains: Artistic Practice, Interarts, Histories, Performance Theory; plus 1 related elective.

**Senior requirement** Senior seminar with substantial final essay, production seminar, or senior independent study (TDPS 4900, 4901, or 4902)

## FACULTY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM OF THEATER AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES

**Professors** James Bundy (*School of Drama, Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies*), David Chambers (*Adjunct*) (*Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies*), \*Toni Dorfman (*Adjunct*) (*Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies*), Branden Jacobs-Jenkins (*Practice*) (*Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies*), Joan MacIntosh (*Practice*) (*Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies, School of Drama*), \*Lawrence Manley (*English*), \*Deb Margolin (*Practice*) (*Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies*), Donald Margulies (*Adjunct*) (*English, Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies*), \*Charles Musser (*Film & Media Studies, American Studies, Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies*), Tavia Nyong'o (*Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies, American Studies*), \*Marc Robinson (*School of Drama, Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies, English*), Alexandra Vazquez (*Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies*), Shane Vogel (*African American Studies, English, Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies*), Gregory Wallace (*Practice*) (*School of Drama, Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies*)

**Associate Professor** Emily Coates (*Adjunct*) (*Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies, School of Drama*)

**Assistant Professors** Elise Morrison (*Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies*), Amanda Reid (*Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies*)

**Lecturers** Hal Brooks, Lacina Coulibaly, Daniel Egan, Grant Herreid, Irène Hultman, Annette Jolles, Michael Korie, Bronwen MacArthur, Elijah Martinez, Lynda Paul, Emmanuele Phuon, Kelsey Rainwater, Nathan Roberts, Renee Robinson, Michael

Rossmey, Brian Seibert, Dexter Singleton, Sohina Sodhu, Shilarna Stokes, Daniel Ulbricht.

\*Member of the Executive Committee for the program.