THEATRE M.F.A.

Degree: Master of Fine Arts
https://www.towson.edu/cofac/departments/theatre/gradtheatre/

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Towson University's M.F.A. in Theatre Arts cultivates the self-generative artist through an interdisciplinary, process-oriented and collaborative experience. Every student will engage with a diverse range of practical approaches and theoretical perspectives in order to help develop an individual aesthetic that is expressed through the creation of new work. The program is designed as an experimental, self-directed process that will challenge, expand and develop each participant's artistic vision. It is for artists who cannot be content working in a single discipline or in the traditional conservatory model. The program is dedicated to educating and invigorating world citizens of theatre who engage deeply in our local and global communities, and wish to combine the life of an artist with the skills and sensibilities of entrepreneurs and educators.

Every two years, a small group is selected to work collaboratively and individually on the creation of new theatrical work. The Towson M.F.A. in Theatre program offers a laboratory atmosphere in which students are encouraged to explore new ideas and approaches. Past student explorations have included Bunraku puppetry; translation of contemporary European drama; object theatre; integration of video with live performance; experiments in autobiographical performance; and community art projects; among others. While the program emphasizes practice, it also expects students to be thoroughly engaged in theoretical pursuits as well. Students conduct serious scholarship and develop a firm grounding in the history of experimental performance.

The 24-month program cultivates both an individual's vision and aesthetic and an ensemble approach to creation. Over their residency in the program, students work closely with one another on projects initiated by themselves and members of the faculty. The final project is the most challenging aspect of the student’s involvement with the program. It is a confident demonstration of the student’s personal aesthetic and vision that reflects her explorations and discoveries during her residency in the program. The emphasis is on process—not product. Members of the full-time faculty at Towson University teach the majority of classes. However, this curriculum is augmented by seminars and workshops with distinguished visiting artists. Guest artists may facilitate a master class, lecture or demonstration as part of a required class, or work in a residency with the students of the program. Recent guests include Lee Breuer, Holly Hughes, Dan Hurlin, Kari Margolis, Sandglass Theatre, Rinde Eckert and Richard Armstrong.

The program is dedicated to exploring theatre through international contexts. Through a long-standing collaboration with the Center for International Theatre Development, students have toured performances and participated in workshops in countries that include Poland, Egypt, Slovakia and Bulgaria. Artists from countries such as Japan, Russia and South Africa have also had residencies in the program.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must hold a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university** with a GPA of 3.00 or higher based on the applicant’s last 60 units of undergraduate and post-baccalaureate study. A minimum GPA of 2.75 is required for conditional admission. All matriculated students are accepted conditionally for one year. At the end of the first year of study, students are evaluated for continuance based on their readiness to undertake their final project, as demonstrated by their academic standing, portfolio review and final project proposal.

Candidates are screened by both the M.F.A. program and by University Admissions.

This program admits for fall of even years only.

Please complete the online application (https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/admissions/apply), including the following:

- A graduate application with required fee
- Official transcripts from every college or university attended
- A personal artistic statement outlining the candidate’s goals as a theatre artist and the specific relevance of the M.F.A. program at Towson to the candidate’s objectives
- A current professional résumé
- Slides, photographs, video, reviews, papers, scripts or other supporting materials in multiple artistic disciplines
- Three letters of recommendation from individuals who can speak to the applicant’s talent, scholarship, collaborative skills and ability to thrive in a self-directed program
- A list of at least three other references, with telephone numbers, whom the department may contact for additional evaluations

An interview may be granted at the discretion of M.F.A. faculty following initial admission screening.

Non-immigrant International Students

Program Enrollment: F-1 and J-1 students are required to be enrolled full-time. The majority of their classes must be in-person and on campus. See the list of programs that satisfy these requirements (https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/admissions/international/programs-complying-j1-f1-regulations.html), and contact the International Student and Scholars Office (https://www.towson.edu/academics/international/isso) with questions.

Admission Procedures: See additional information regarding Graduate Admission policies (https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/admissions/policies.html) and International Graduate Application (https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/admissions/international) online.

**See Exceptions to Policy in Graduate Admissions (https://www.towson.edu/academics/graduate/admissions/policies.html).

Degree Requirements

The Master of Fine Arts in Theatre requires 60 units. Students will complete this requirement over the course of 24 months.
### Curriculum

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THEA 605</td>
<td>PERFORMANCE: ENSEMBLE</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA 670</td>
<td>PERFORMANCE AND SOCIETY</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA 760</td>
<td>INTERNATIONAL THEORIES AND AESTHETICS</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA 608</td>
<td>THEATRE DESIGN TECHNIQUES</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA 610</td>
<td>THEATRE SYSTEMS</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA 601</td>
<td>THEORIES OF THE AVANT-GARDE</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>THEA 602</td>
<td>HISTORY OF EXPERIMENTAL PERFORMANCE</td>
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<td>THEA 609</td>
<td>TEXT CONSTRUCTION</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>THEA 607</td>
<td>SELF-EMPOWERMENT IN THEATRE</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA 680</td>
<td>SPECIAL TOPICS (Artist as Entrepreneur)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA 675</td>
<td>SYNTHESIS I: FORMAL ELEMENTS</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>THEA 720</td>
<td>SYNTHESIS II: DIRECTING</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA 770</td>
<td>SYNTHESIS III: WORKING WITH DESIGN IN PERFORMANCE</td>
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<td>THEA 695</td>
<td>INDEPENDENT PROJECT IN THEATRE</td>
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<td>THEA 780</td>
<td>PROJECTS IN PROCESS</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA 740</td>
<td>GRADUATE PROJECT LABORATORY</td>
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<td>THEA 750</td>
<td>GRADUATE PROJECT AND PERFORMANCE</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA 880</td>
<td>MFA FINAL PROJECT</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
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<td><strong>60</strong></td>
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A project proposal and portfolio review is required before registering for the final project.

Towson University reserves the right to change degree requirements for the M.F.A. Information on changes will be available on the Towson University website or from the graduate program director.

1. Work collaboratively and individually on the creation of new work.
2. Employ a variety of methodologies, drawing from best practices in theatrical and other art forms.
3. Demonstrate a firm grounding in the history of experimental performance and theories of the historical avant-garde, and articulate the relationship between these histories and theories, and their unique individual aesthetic.

### Courses

**THEA 591 PRODUCTION DRAMATURGY (1-3)**

Practical experience in production dramaturgy, includes research, text analysis and educational outreach. Projects related to specific theatrical productions. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 credits.

**THEA 601 THEORIES OF THE AVANT-GARDE (3)**

Investigation of the historical European and American Avant-Garde, starting from the end of the 19th century through to the end of the 20th. Prerequisite: Consent of program director.

**THEA 602 HISTORY OF EXPERIMENTAL PERFORMANCE (3)**

Investigation of post-World War II experimental performance. Approach will be cross-disciplinary and intercultural, focusing on theatre, music, dance, and performance art from various nationalities and cultures. Prerequisite: Consent of program director.

**THEA 603 PERFORMANCE: SOLO (1-4)**

Creating solo performance by exploring language and environment through a variety of traditions, styles and techniques. May be repeated for up to 12 credits. Prerequisite: Consent of graduate program director.

**THEA 605 PERFORMANCE: ENSEMBLE (1-4)**

Creating collaborative performance by exploring language and environment through a variety of traditions, styles and techniques. May be repeated for up to 12 credits. Prerequisite: Consent of graduate program director.

**THEA 607 SELF-EMPOWERMENT IN THEATRE (3)**

Entrepreneurial management strategies for a self-empowered life in theatre. Prerequisite: Consent of program director.

**THEA 608 THEATRE DESIGN TECHNIQUES (1-3)**

The vocabulary and background needed to develop and communicate design concepts, to work collaboratively with other design artists, and to understand the needs of designing for different sizes and types of venues. Prerequisite: Consent of graduate program director.

**THEA 609 TEXT CONSTRUCTION (3)**

Exploring a variety of means of developing theatrical text, with special attention to the relationship of language and structure. May be repeatable for a total of six credits. Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.

**THEA 610 THEATRE SYSTEMS (1-3)**

A practical overview of technology. Prerequisite: Consent of graduate program director and special permit.

**THEA 670 PERFORMANCE AND SOCIETY (3)**

Bridges the separation between the art form of theatre and the community in which it is made and with/for whom it is performed. Will undertake an examination of various cultures, communities, and identities and will seek to understand them through the creation of performance pieces inspired by and informed by this examination. Prerequisite: Consent of graduate program director.

**THEA 675 SYNTHESIS I: FORMAL ELEMENTS (3)**

Examining the formal elements of performance through theoretical study and practical exploration. Prerequisite: Consent of program director.

**THEA 680 SPECIAL TOPICS (1-4)**

In-depth study in a selected area dependent upon faculty and student interest. May be repeated for a total of no more than 16 credits. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

**THEA 681 SPECIAL TOPICS (1-4)**

In-depth study in a selected area dependent upon faculty and student interest. May be repeated for a total of no more than 16 units. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

**THEA 682 SPECIAL TOPICS (1-4)**

In-depth study in a selected area dependent upon faculty and student interest. May be repeated for a total of no more than 16 credits. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.
THEA 683 SPECIAL TOPICS (1-4)
In-depth study in a selected area dependent upon faculty and student interest. May be repeated for a total of no more than 16 credits. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

THEA 695 INDEPENDENT PROJECT IN THEATRE (1-9)
Independent project in research, acting, directing or theatre production. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 units. Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

THEA 710 TEACHING INTERNSHIP (3)
Assisting a faculty mentor with the teaching of an undergraduate theatre course. Prerequisite: Consent of department chairperson, graduate program director and instructor.

THEA 720 SYNTHESIS II: DIRECTING (3)
Development of directorial vision, emphasizing usage of text in performance. Prerequisite: Consent of graduate program director.

THEA 740 GRADUATE PROJECT LABORATORY (1-4)
Conceptualization, research and development of a graduate performance project. May be repeated for a total of no more than 16 credits. Prerequisite: Consent of graduate program director.

THEA 750 GRADUATE PROJECT AND PERFORMANCE (1-4)
Execution of a graduate performance project. May be repeated for a total of no more than 16 credits. Prerequisite: Consent of graduate program director.

THEA 760 INTERNATIONAL THEORIES AND AESTHETICS (3)
Understanding and applying specific international performance theories and aesthetics. May be repeated for up to 9 units if different topic is taken. Prerequisite: Consent of graduate program director.

THEA 770 SYNTHESIS III: WORKING WITH DESIGN IN PERFORMANCE (3)
Scenography in vocabulary and practice for the experimental theatre artist. Prerequisite: Theatre Systems or consent of Graduate Director.

THEA 780 PROJECTS IN PROCESS (3)
Researching and creating an appropriate development process for an original performance project in preparation for the MFA Final Project. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units. Prerequisite: Consent of graduate program director.

THEA 880 MFA FINAL PROJECT (1-9)
Culminating creative process that includes a research paper, and may include a production or project component.

THEA 885 PROJECT CONTINUUM (1)
Continuing work on previously started project. Prerequisites: Previous registration for project work.