

Theatre Department Graduate Handbook

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Quick question about graduate studies?

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History and Development of the Department of Theatre

Nineteenth-century literary and debating societies and professors who taught elocution, oratory, and argumentation were forerunners of the present Department of Theatre. The Athenaeian Society founded by Arts and Science Dean Frederick Tisdell and Professor Wilbur Gilman, sustained forensics activities until regular professorial positions in Speech and Theatre were established in the Department of English. Donovan Rhynsburger joined the English faculty in 1925 and established the Missouri Workshop Theatre.

English faculty in Speech and Theatre formed a Department of Speech and Dramatic Art on May 15, 1940. A graduate program in Speech and Dramatic Art was established in 1940. The first master's degree, with all work done in the newly established department, was awarded in 1942 to Clifton Cornwell. The first PhD in Speech and Dramatic Art was awarded in 1950 to Elbert Bowen.

Largely due to the efforts of Donovan Rhynsburger, a new Fine Arts Building became a reality in 1960, and a faculty of three in the Theatre area of the Department moved to offices in the new facility.

Prior to 1980 the Department of Speech and Dramatic Art was made up of four areas scattered around the MU campus: the Theatre area in the Fine Arts Building; the Radio/TV/Film area in Swallow Hall; Speech Pathology-Audiology in Parker Hall; and Speech Communications in Switzler Hall.

In 1986, Dean Milton Glick of the College of Arts and Science established the Department of Theatre, made up of eight faculty of the Theatre area of the Department of Speech and Dramatic Art.

Today, the Department of Theatre has thriving undergraduate and graduate degree programs. We offer a Master's degree and a Ph. D in Theatre and Performance Studies.

Structure of the Department

Department Leadership

Department Chair

Professor Clyde Ruffin

Director of Graduate Studies

Dr. Heather Carver

Director of Undergraduate Studies

Dr. David Crespy

Graduate Faculty

Dr. Kevin Brown

Dr. Suzanne Burgoyne

Dr. Cheryl Black

Professor Brad Carlson

Professor Jim Miller

Professor Clyde Ruffin

Teaching Faculty

Professor Jon Drtina

Dr. Cat Gleason

Technical Director

Professor Dean Packard

Costume Director

Professor Kerri Packard

Costume Shop Supervisor

Mary Francis Hodson

Coordinator of Advertising and Promotions

Charles Willis

Graduate Coordinator

Tina Edholm

Fiscal Officer

Phebe Lauffer

Procedures and Regulations

ADVISERS

As new students are admitted to the MA program, the Director of Graduate Studies assigns them temporary (interim) advisers. If the faculty member or the student later thinks reassignment is advisable, the Director of Graduate Studies can facilitate a change.

The adviser helps the student establish and carry out a program of study. No later than the second semester of study the student will prepare and submit to the Graduate School the M-1 form, "Program of Study for the Master's Degree." After completion of the MA Final Examination the adviser will prepare the M-3 form, "Report of the Master's Examining Committee."

As new students are admitted to the doctoral program, the Director of Graduate Studies assigns each to an interim faculty adviser, who will assist the new student with registration for the first semester. The Director of Graduate Studies schedules the Diagnostic Examination during the first semester of doctoral course work, and reports the results on the D-1, "Qualifying Process" form. Doctoral students must choose a dissertation advisor (who may or may not be the interim advisor) as soon as possible. The adviser will help the student to plan a program of study and choose a Doctoral Program Committee. The student is responsible for preparing copies of a trial plan of study. The adviser coordinates the committee to review the program, after which the approved plan of study and the D-2 form, "Doctoral Program of Study," will be sent to the Graduate School.

The interim adviser guides the student through each step of the program, assisting with forms if the plan needs to be modified slightly or recalling the doctoral committee should the plan need more thorough revision. The program adviser may or may not become the dissertation adviser.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP AND INFORMATION

Graduate students are responsible for understanding departmental procedures and Graduate School regulations. Study carefully the Catalog of the Graduate School on such matters as deadlines, grading, candidacy, and graduation requirements. When in need of information or advice about some aspect of your work at MU, please ask the Director of Graduate Studies.

Ask the chair of the department about assistantship appointments and stipends, teaching assignments, and other assistantship duties.

Ask the course director about textbooks, syllabi, and other concerns related to the classes you teach and the students in them.

Ask your adviser about what courses to take, what steps are involved in admission to candidacy, and how to schedule comprehensive examinations. The Department of Theatre maintains and periodically updates a projection of courses to be offered in coming years. Graduate students should be aware of the long-range implications of their immediate enrollment decisions.

Ask the instructors whose courses you are taking about your work in those courses.

When in doubt about the appropriate person to consult, please see the Director of Graduate Studies or the chair.

Assistantships

APPLICATIONS

To apply for a graduate assistantship, simply include a brief statement within your cover letter expressing your interest in receiving an assistantship and/or fellowship. Contact the Director of Graduate Studies with any questions.

APPOINTMENTS

Procedure: Your application will be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee and the Director of Graduate Studies, who will make recommendations to the Chair. The Chair will make the final decision about appointments.

Assignments: The policy of the Department of Theatre is to assign graduate students to no more than 12 semester hours of teaching or its equivalent for the academic year, unless there is a special need because of enrollment pressure. If a student is considered for an extra assignment, the Chair will confer with the student's adviser to determine if such an assignment might be detrimental to the student's progress toward a degree.

Eligibility: Applicants will be considered according to the following priorities:

1. Current graduate students making satisfactory progress toward the degree and whose teaching is deemed satisfactory by the Course Director:
 - (a) Doctoral students who have held an assistantship 3 years or less; 4 years or less in the case of students who were supported while earning an MA at MU and who have gone on directly into the doctoral program.
 - (b) Master's students who have held an assistantship 2 years or less.
2. Incoming graduate students whose credentials are satisfactory:
 - (a) New students entering the PhD program;
 - (b) Students who have held an assistantship while working toward an MA in Theatre at MU and who are now applying for admission to the doctoral program.
 - (c) New students entering the MA program.
3. Students requesting an extension:
 - (a) Doctoral students who have held an assistantship for three years;

(b) Masters students who have held an assistantship for two years.

Students should request an extension in a letter setting forth the circumstances deserving consideration, based on progress toward their degree. The letter should be sent to the Chair, who will confer with the Graduate Studies Committee before reaching a decision.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS

The teaching mission of the department is important, and we want to provide high quality instruction across the curriculum. We also believe that graduate teaching assistants develop professionally through supervised teaching and through observation of the work of teachers on the faculty.

The Graduate Faculty Senate has established general job descriptions for funded graduate student job categories. The Senate's description of "Graduate Teaching Assistant" is:

- Teaching responsibilities will generally include any of the following:
- Teach one to three three-hour classes
- Teach one to two five-hour classes
- Lead one to five discussion or laboratory sections of a course
- Proctor and grade large lecture exams
- Prepare and grade lab exams
- A quarter-time appointment requires an average of 10 hours per week.
- A half-time appointment requires an average of 20 hours per week.

Enrollment requirements are determined by departments and generally stipulate an enrollment of 6 to 9 hours per semester and 1 to 4 hours during summer session. Post comp doctoral students are required to maintain continuous enrollment of 2 hours of Research each fall and winter semester and 1 hour of Research each summer session.

Some Department of Theatre assistantships involve assignment to tasks in areas of technical theatre, audience development, front-of-house, and box office operations. For these appointments, the department has established a minimum of 10 clock-hours per week for a quarter-time assistantship and a minimum of 20 clock-hours per week for a half-time assistantship. Assistantships run from the first day of regular registration until the last of examinations each term and may involve duties that begin as early as July 1 and end as late as June 30 and continue during the winter intersession

Since most of the courses to which assistants are assigned are multi-sectioned, responsibility is vested in course directors to see that all sections offer substantially the same content and experiences to the student, that teaching strategies are regulated and coordinated, and that grading is standardized from section to section of a course.

All graduate teaching assistants are expected to:

- Devise a course syllabus or outline, have it approved by the course director, distribute it to the students, file a copy with the departmental office, and follow the course plan as approved.
- Attend all required staff meetings and training sessions.
- Meet all scheduled classes including the scheduled final examination. In case of illness or other emergency arrange with the course director to see that the course plan is carried out in your absence.
- Begin and end class sessions on time.
- Establish and keep regular office hours. * delete? Check with Clyde Ruffin
- Meet deadlines for turning in grades.
- Post grades for approval by the chair at the end of the academic year or at the end of the semester if you are on a one-semester appointment.
- Administer a teacher evaluation questionnaire in each assigned section of a class. MU has standard TEQ's which may be used. Consult with your course director as to the type of TEQ to be used. In any case, administer TEQ's in a fashion, which will ensure representative results while also protecting the students' rights. Generally speaking a third party should administer TEQ's and the results withheld until after final grades are submitted. There should be a clear statement that that students' responses have no relationship to student grades in the course and anonymity must be guaranteed. While TEQ's are frequently administered late in the semester, they should never be done on the day of the final examination.

Graduate teaching assistants are observed and evaluated by the course director or a designated faculty member each semester. Advise the course director as to an appropriate time for a visit.

The graduate teaching assistant is responsible for creating syllabi, examinations and other supplementary materials for class use. The department will duplicate syllabi, examinations, and other vital class materials. Students should duplicate their own scenes for acting class. The department cannot provide secretarial service, materials, or copy service for individual class work or research.

Front office computers may be used only by those persons assigned to use them. The university maintains several well-equipped computer labs for student use. Graduate teaching assistants who don't own personal computers should use these labs.

The University provides cost-free access to Internet services and to email. Since much department business is conducted via email, graduate teaching assistants must open a university email account and check email regularly (one each day is highly recommended).

Awards and Honors

University Awards: Theatre graduate students are eligible for the prestigious Donald K. Anderson teaching and research awards (see the Graduate School website). Each year the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) honors the "Superior Graduate Student" in each department. In the Department of Theatre the Director of Graduate Studies will solicit nominations from the graduate students, runs an election, tallies the results and reports the results to the GSA.

Department of Theatre Awards: The Larry Clark Travel Award is a competitive annual award for students presenting at ATHE. The Carla Waal Award for research on women in theatre, and the Frances McCurdy Award for Performance Studies are awarded annually as well. The Director of Graduate Studies will solicit submissions for these awards.

Professional Organization Awards: Additionally the Dept. of Theatre regularly encourages its graduate students to compete for numerous awards sponsored by professional organizations such as ATDS, ATHE, NCA, and ASTR. The Director of Graduate Studies and other Theatre Faculty will alert students to these opportunities.

Overview of Graduate Degree Programs

Master of Arts Overview

A. **ADMISSION:** Applicants must present transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work showing a GPA of 3.0 (A=4.0) on the last 60 hours of the baccalaureate program. The student must also submit acceptable scores on the general examination of the Graduate Record Examination, three letters of recommendation, a statement of purpose and a scholarly writing sample. Probationary admission is possible. The director of graduate studies will advise the student in writing of what must be done to change the probationary admission to regular admission.

B. **CURRICULUM:** The degree of Master of Arts in Theatre will be awarded upon completion of the curriculum outlined below with a GPA of 3.0 or better.

1. **Undergraduate Curriculum:** Most students have completed this course of study before seeking admission to MU. However, applicants holding undergraduate degrees in disciplines other than theatre will be asked to complete those courses that were not part of their undergraduate curriculum. In some cases professional theatre experience may substitute for certain courses. Twelve courses in the undergraduate curriculum should be distributed as follows:

(a) Basic skills: at least one course in each of the following: voice and articulation, movement for the stage, script analysis, technical theatre;

(b) At least one upper-division course in each of the following: acting, directing, dramatic literature, theatre history; at least two upper-division courses in technical theatre; and two upper-division theatre electives.

2. **Graduate Curriculum:** The student must complete at least 24 graduate hours while in residence as a graduate student at MU. The academic program should be established in consultation with an adviser not later than the end of the first full semester of residence. No more than six semester hours of graduate work may be transferred from another university. The student submits Form M-1, Application for Degree of Master of Arts, to the Graduate School listing the courses to be taken to complete the graduate curriculum.

C. **INDEPENDENT PROJECT:** Each candidate for the MA must complete an independent project, which should be specified on the M-1 form as part of the program of study. There are three options:

(1) This may be a thesis, for which up to six semester hours of credit in Theatre Research may be earned.

(2) Another option is to write an original play, translate a play, or complete a project in acting, design, dramaturgy, or directing. Credit of up to three semester hours may be earned in a graduate Problems course.

(3) A student may devise and successfully execute a research project to earn three semester hours in a Graduate course in independent Research.

D. MASTER'S FINAL EXAMINATION: Each candidate for the MA is required to pass a final examination to demonstrate mastery of the fundamental principles of the work included in the course of study. An examining board consisting of at least three members of the faculty shall administer the examination. In consultation with his or her adviser the student selects four areas for examination from among those listed below:

At least two but no more than three areas may be selected from among:

- Theatre History and Historiography
- Dramatic Literature and Criticism
- Dramatic and Performance Theory
- Performance Studies and Writing for Performance

At least one but no more than two areas must be selected from among:

- History, Theory or Pedagogy of Acting
- History, Theory or Pedagogy of Directing
- History, Theory or Pedagogy of Theatrical Design
- History, Theory or Pedagogy of Playwriting/Writing for Performance

Two hours are allotted for answering the question(s) for each area, making a total of eight hours for the examination. As soon as the performance on the Master's Final Examination has been evaluated, the student's adviser informs the Graduate School, using the appropriate M-form.

If one area examination is unsatisfactory, the examining board will give the student an oral examination on that area, with special emphasis on the questions or questions missed. If two area examinations are unsatisfactory, the student is failed.

Doctorate (PhD) Program Overview

A. **PURPOSE:** The doctorate in theatre at MU aims to provide knowledge and research skills necessary to launch the successful student on a career of scholarly investigation of theatre history, dramatic theory and criticism, performance studies, playwriting and other modes of writing for performance (such as adaptation and translation), dramaturgy, performance ethnography, performance and theatre pedagogy.

B. **ADMISSION:** The student must be accepted for advisement by the department. Acceptance requires an MA or MFA and a 3.0 GPA on the last 60 hours of the baccalaureate program. The student must also submit transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work, the scores of the general examination of the Graduate Record Examination, three letters of recommendation, a statement of purpose, a scholarly writing sample, professional resume or portfolio and creative (dramatic) writing samples if appropriate.

C. **QUALIFYING EXAMINATION:** During the first semester of residence, the student completes a qualifying examination. The Graduate Affairs Committee of the Department of Theatre evaluates the examination and meets with the student to discuss the student's production experience, academic background, career goals and research interests. The adviser submits the D-1 form, Qualifying Process/Confirmation of Adviser, reporting on the departmental qualifying process.

D. **ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** Form D-2: Doctoral Program Committee, asks the graduate dean to approve a committee of five graduate faculty members to help the student plan and carry out a program. One member of the Doctoral Program Committee must come from outside the Department of Theatre.

E. **PROGRAM PLANNING:** As early as is practical, usually in the student's second semester on campus, the student should meet with the Doctoral Program Committee to plan a doctoral program. The student should prepare a trial plan in consultation with the faculty adviser who serves as chair of the Doctoral Program Committee and reports the approved plan of study to the graduate dean on Form D-2: Doctoral Program of Study.

F. **THEATRE DEPARTMENT COURSEWORK:** Although the Graduate School requires no specific number of hours of class work, the Department of Theatre typically requires students entering the program with a master's degree to complete 39 semester hours of graduate level course work in the theatre department, including three semester hours of Dissertation Research, devoted to writing a dissertation prospectus.

PHD PROGRAM OF STUDY: REQUIRED CURRICULUM

- 3 hrs - Research methods
- 6 hrs - History/historiography
- 6 hrs - Theory/criticism
- 6 hrs - Performance studies
- 6 hrs – Writing for Performance/dramatic literature
- 3 hrs - Advanced directing
- 3 hrs - Dissertation Research (Th 9090)
- 6 hrs - Elective

A maximum of 6 hrs directed readings/problems is recommended

G. DOCTORAL MINOR: The department also requires the student to complete a doctoral minor, a nine-semester-hour unified area of study outside the Department of Theatre.

H. RESEARCH TOOL OPTIONS:

Option One: Choose two blocks of courses. Complete with grades of B or better two blocks of course work of six hours each in graduate level courses taken outside of the department that must represent to the candidate's advisory committee a coherent unit of study. One or both blocks should provide a research tool for the candidate's dissertation.

Option Two: Present evidence of translation ability in each of two foreign languages in one of the following ways: (a) by receiving an acceptable score on a GFSLT Humanities examination if the language is French, German or Spanish (Acceptable scores at this time are: French 570, German 560 and Spanish 540); (b) by receiving certification of competence from a qualified examiner if other languages are presented; (c) by showing on one's transcript a grade of B or better on a literature course at MU. (This course must require reading of works in the foreign language. The course may be taken during the doctoral program or within the five years prior to beginning the program.)

Option Three: Demonstrate a high degree of fluency in one foreign language by individual examination conducted by the appropriate language department at MU.

Option Four: Choose one language and one block of courses. (a) Demonstrate translation ability for one language as in Option One. (b) Complete with grades of B or better six semester hours in graduate courses taken outside of the department that represent a coherent unit of study, providing a research tool applicable to the candidate's dissertation research.

I. PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCTIONS: The doctoral student is encouraged to participate in University Theatre and studio theatre productions and may, in some cases, be required to do so. Academic credit is available.

J. DISSERTATION PROPOSAL/PROSPECTUS:

Before comprehensive exams may be scheduled, students will be required to complete a 5 page Dissertation Proposal, concisely but clearly expressing the purpose, justification, method and general organizational plan for the dissertation. A bibliography is also required. The theatre department faculty members on student's doctoral committee must approve this proposal. After successful completion of comprehensive exams, the student will expand the dissertation proposal into a Dissertation Prospectus - a more detailed and thorough description of the dissertation project. The prospectus should provide a clear statement of the purpose of the dissertation, describe the need for the knowledge the dissertation report will supply, outline the research questions and demonstrate the procedures by which the scholar will answer these questions. The candidate will present the prospectus to the Doctoral Program Committee and will be prepared to defend it. After successful defense of the full prospectus the doctoral student is considered "ABD" – "all but dissertation."

K. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION: After completing the research tool option, a substantial amount of the course work and after obtaining the approval of the 5 pp. proposal from the Doctoral Program Committee, the student takes the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination provides an opportunity for the student to demonstrate a thorough grasp of the history and principles of theatre and performance studies. The examination provides the Doctoral Program Committee with a window looking back upon the student's training as well as a chance to estimate the student's potential as a problem-solving artist. Readers of the examination look for more than a reiteration of the content of standard sources of information about dramatic art. The examinee should demonstrate an ability to analyze problems and data, to formulate theses or points of view, and to locate, evaluate and organize evidence to support a contention - the essential skills of scholarship. The comprehensive examination in theatre allows candidates not only to tell what they know but also to demonstrate what they can do with information. The examination is given in two stages. Stage One consists of a written examination, over the history of theatre, dramatic theory, criticism, writing for performance, performance studies, and theatre pedagogy, and an examination, usually written, consisting of one or two questions posed by the outside member of the Doctoral Program Committee. The examination is evaluated by the student's Doctoral Program Committee, which decides whether or not the student should be advanced to the oral examination. Stage Two is the oral examination administered by the Doctoral Program Committee. This examination provides an opportunity for the student to correct, amend, or defend assertions made in the written examination, although the oral examination is not bound by any limits established by the written examination. Ordinarily of two hours duration, the oral is also an opportunity for the student to demonstrate skill in oral explanation and argument. D-3: The result of the comprehensive examination shall be marked pass if all or all but one of the Doctoral Program Committee members recommend a pass on the entire examination, both written and oral sections. Should the examination be marked fail, the committee may recommend that the candidate retake the examination after a minimum period of 12 weeks. A report of the committee's decision,

carrying the signatures of all members of the committee, is sent to the Graduate School and to the student no later than two weeks after the comprehensive examination is terminated. If a failure is reported, the committee also must include in the report an outline of the general weaknesses or deficiencies of the student's work. The student and the committee members are encouraged to work together to identify steps the student might take to become fully prepared for the next examination. If at any time the student believes that the advice given by the committee is inadequate, the student may send a written request for clarification to the committee. A copy of this request should be sent to the Graduate School. The committee must respond to this request in writing within two weeks with a copy to the Graduate School. Failure to pass two comprehensive examinations automatically prevents candidacy for the doctorate in theatre at MU.

L. COMPLETING THE DISSERTATION: The final step is completion and approval of the doctoral dissertation. The director of graduate studies can provide the student a copy of Guidelines for Preparing Theses and Dissertations. Dissertations in the Department of Theatre should be formatted according to the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, ed. Kate L. Turabian (MLA or other styles may be substituted with consent of Doctoral program). Form D-4, Report of the Doctoral Dissertation Defense, indicates that the student has defended the dissertation at an oral examination. No draft of the dissertation can be considered a final draft until the adviser (First Reader) has approved it. The final committee meeting cannot be scheduled until all committee members have approved the dissertation; therefore, a candidate should not expect to graduate in any given semester unless all committee members can have at least 10 days to read the dissertation before the last date for oral examination as published by the Graduate School. Unanimous approval of the dissertation by four committee members constitutes satisfactory completion of this examination.

Satisfactory Progress: General Guidelines

Probationary Status

The following constitute grounds for placing a student on departmental probation:

- A grade of C or below in any departmental course taken for graduate credit will result in probationary status.
- A grade of incomplete in any course will result in probationary status for the subsequent semester.
Incomplete grades must be changed to a grade of A or B by the end of the probationary semester (dissertation research incompletes are evaluated as S/U until the dissertation is defended).
- Failure to comply in a satisfactory manner with all responsibilities related to graduate assistantships.
- Graduate students in our department are expected to conduct themselves in a manner reflecting the university's commitment to professional integrity, collegiality, and good citizenship. Students who consistently fail to conduct themselves in this manner may be subject to probation or dismissal.

In the case of each student on departmental probation, the director of graduate studies will confer with the adviser (in the case of an MA student), or the members of the program committee (in the case of a PhD student) to determine the grounds for removal of probation, and will communicate this decision to the student.

Annual Review

Each spring semester the director of graduate studies convenes the Graduate Studies Committee to review the progress and performance of all graduate students. Each graduate student in residence should meet with his or her adviser within the first two weeks of each semester to determine whether satisfactory progress has been maintained, and the adviser shall report the results of this meeting to the director of graduate studies.

Losing & Regaining Financial Support

Termination of departmental financial support will result if the student is considered to be making unsatisfactory progress and the student's program may be terminated. Departmental financial support may be restored when the student has made satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree for one semester, has made an A or a B in all incomplete courses, and is judged to be off probation by the director of graduate studies.