

THEATER

Arts Programs

Students may complete a minor in Dance or Theater and qualified students may submit an application to major in Dance, or Theater through the independent major program. Students may complete a major in Fine Arts or a major or minor in Music at Haverford College.

Courses in the arts are designed to prepare students who might wish to pursue advanced training in their fields and are also for those who want to broaden their academic studies with work in the arts that is conducted at a serious and disciplined level. Courses are offered at introductory as well as advanced levels.

Students may complete a minor in Theater and may submit an application to major in Theater through the independent major program. Although this is an additional step, the faculty will aid students in the process.

Courses in theater are designed to prepare students who might wish to pursue advanced training in the field and are also for those who want to broaden their academic studies with work in theater that is conducted at a serious and disciplined level. Theater is an essential component of any academic proposition that engages with innovation, core human concerns, and the advancement of critical thinking. Theater helps us to imagine what MIGHT be and propose a better future.

Courses are offered at introductory as well as advanced levels.

Theater

The curricular portion of the Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges' Theater Program focuses on the point of contact between creative and analytic work. Courses combine theory (reading and discussion of dramatic literature, history, and criticism) and practical work (creative exercises, scene study and performance) to provide theater training within a liberal-arts context.

Theater Performance

Numerous opportunities exist to act, direct, design and work in technical theater. In addition to the Theater Program's mainstage productions which can be done for credit, many student theater groups exist that are committed to musical theater, improvisation, community outreach, Shakespeare, film and video work, etc. Theater Program productions are open to all races, genders, and majors.

Minor Requirements

Requirements for the minor in Theater are six units of course work, three required (ARTT B150, ARTT B251 and ARTT B252) and three electives. Students must consult with the Theater faculty to ensure that the necessary areas in the field are covered. Students may submit an application to major in Theater through the independent major program.

ARTT B150 Introduction to Theater (1 Unit)

An exploration of a wide range of dramatic works and history of theater through research, analysis and discussion to develop understanding and foundations for a theatrical production.

ARTT B153 History of Formal Aesthetics for Conte (1 Unit)

Once upon a time, a playwright said in a rehearsal room, "I just think that this is the most Cubist moment of this play." That room became very quiet. Everyone's face went blank – director, actors, costume designer, stage manager – all became uncomfortable, and the subject was hastily changed. Because what is Cubism exactly? And how could a play be Cubist? In this course, students participate in hands-on explorative research to first identify and compare works across disciplines. The ideas behind each movement (Romanticism, etc.) will be teased out and examined in relation to the moment of their occurrence, but also within their manifestations in art-making across visual, musical, architectural, and performative disciplines. All to address that menacing and elusive other 4-letter F-word: FORM. What are the works of art I respond to most strongly and what is it about the way they are made that elicits this response from me? What was going on in the world at the time of these works? How do the ideas in the aesthetic movement/s of that time translate into formal expressions? And how do they resonate with the events and artwork of our own current moment? In what ways can my own work contribute to this larger conversation? These terms are meant to communicate a way of seeing the world, and thereby a set of ideas. Realism and Naturalism have certainly found a full blossoming of recognition in the Western Theater - with Absurdism and Existentialism coming in a distant third and fourth - but without knowledge of all of them and the ideas and responses at work within them, by what other means is the theater-making artist to critique our current situation? And does it not need a broad and round critiquing? And how exactly is that the artist's job? Structure, including dramatic structure, will be examined as a component of form. We will read plays together! In the Fall, we covered periods and movements of aesthetics ranging from cave art to Realism. In Spring we will review our findings and forge ahead through Modernism, Post-Modernism, to Cyber Punk and beyond. New students are most welcome. No prerequisites are necessary.

ARTT B230 Women in Theater (1 Unit)

This course explores provocative portraits of women in plays written by women. Students begin with a tenth-century nun and read their way right up to the present day. This is the subversive side of dramatic literature –the plays not included in most anthologies. We will investigate the objectification and reclamation of the female body, gendered language, intersectionality, and the politics of drama by and about women in their socio-historical contexts.

ARTT B234 Lighting Design (1 Unit)

This class is an introduction to the process of lighting design for the theatre. We will explore the steps and skills necessary to navigate the designer's path from text to production. This course will focus on how to think about light, how light can function as a dramaturgical tool, and how we can communicate lighting ideas to our collaborators.

ARTT B238 Stage Properties (1 Unit)

Stage properties is a varied discipline encompassing dozens of crafting/building challenges as well as textual analysis, historical and object research, cost estimation and planning, design analysis, and, most of all, the ability to think critically and creatively about some of the performing arts' weirdest challenges. This class will be part lectures and demos by the instructors, and a good part reading, research, presentations, and hands-on design and building work by the students. We'll explore a wide variety of construction and craft techniques as we learn about organizing, researching, acquiring, designing, and building the objects required to create the worlds in which the plays we read are set. This class will exercise students' abilities to think creatively about unexpected and unusual design issues and give them a chance to solve problems in an experiential way.

ARTT B245 Staging the Revolution (1 Unit)

We will look at and engage with the tradition of revolutionary acts of theater, such as Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre, which used plays to critique social issues and incite change, The Living Theatre's performances protesting war and capitalism, Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed empowering marginalized communities, and more recently, the movement started by We See You W.A.T. (White American Theater). Our readings will also include plays by Vaclav Havel, that influenced Czechoslovakia's Velvet Revolution. We will create our own piece of revolutionary theater to be performed both at Bryn Mawr and in Prague, asking if theater can provoke revolution, or if it is, as Boal says, merely rehearsal for revolution.

ARTT B251 Acting I (1 Unit)

This studio course provides an introduction to the basic processes of acting to students of various experience levels. We develop tools and a shared vocabulary using performance exercises, games, improvisation and scene work.

ARTT B252 Technical Theater I (1 Unit)

This course is an introduction to the building blocks of technical theater production and covers a wide range of topics in various technical disciplines. Through a combination of lectures, in-class demonstrations, and hands-on experience, students gain a basic understanding of terminology, materials, techniques, personnel, and processes involved in technical theater production. Students will gain some proficiency with tools and technology that will be useful in both theatrical and non-theatrical environments.

ARTT B253 Performance Ensemble (0.5 Unit)

An intensive workshop in the methodologies and aesthetics of theater performance, this course is open to students with significant experience in performance. In collaboration with the director of theater, students will explore a range of performance techniques and styles in the context of rehearsing a performance project. Admission to the class is by audition or permission of the instructor. The class is offered for a half-unit of credit.

ARTT B254 Fundamentals of Theater Design (1 Unit)

An introduction to the creative process of visual design for theater, exploring dramatic context and influence of cultural, social, and ideological forces on theater and examining practical applications of various technical elements such as scenery, costume, and lighting while emphasizing their aesthetic integration.

ARTT B255 Costume Design (1 Unit)

Hands-on practical workshop on costume design for performing arts; analysis of text, characters, movement, situations; historical and stylistic research; cultivation of initial concept through materialization and plotting to execution of design.

ARTT B258 Intermediate Topics in Technical Theater Production (1 Unit)

This course is a deeper exploration of the process of technical theater production introduced in ARTT B252 – Fundamentals of Technical Theater Production. Through a combination of lecture, in-class and out-of-class analysis, and hands-on experience students will gain a more thorough understanding of the processes of technical theatrical production. The course focuses on five sections of technical production: basic technical drawing, advanced scenic construction techniques, electricity for the entertainment industry (lighting, sound, motors), basic rigging, and basic sound system design and execution. While mathematics is not the focus of the class, basic math and some algebra and trigonometry will be necessary. Prerequisite: ARTT B252 or Permission of Instructor

ARTT B262 Playwriting I (1 Unit)

An introduction to playwriting through a combination of reading assignments, writing exercises, discussions about craft and ultimately the creation of a complete one-act play. Students will work to discover and develop their own unique voices as they learn the technical aspects of the craft of playwriting. Short writing assignments will complement each reading assignment. The final assignment will be to write an original one-act play.

ARTT B263 Playwriting Adapting Mythic Cycles to the Stage (1 Unit)

In this course we are learning to write performance texts that transcend the mere personal/psychological, move through the cultural/aesthetic realms, and reach into the epic - to the mythic order. We begin by examining the origins of theater within the functional technology of ritual practice, and look at universal myth and ritual structures across cultures. At the same time, we are locating the vectors of our own creative impulses, and allowing them to hold sway over the process of writing for the stage, and we write ourselves into unknown territory. Students are encouraged to set aside received and preconceived notions of what it means to write plays, or be a writer, along with ideas of what a play is "supposed to" or "should" look like, in order to locate their own authentic ways of seeing and making. Students will be encouraged to connect more deeply their own subconscious and, in so doing, to tap into the collective unconscious as a source material. In other words, disarming the rational, the judgmental thinking that is rooted in a concept of a final product and empowering the chaotic, spatial, associative processes that put us in immediate formal contact with our direct experience, impressions and perceptions of reality. Emphasis on detail, texture and contiguity will be favored over the more widely accepted, reliable, yet sometimes limiting Aristotelian virtues of structure and continuity in the making of meaningful live performance. Readings will be tailored to fit the thinking and inquiry of the class. We will likely look at theoretical and creative writings of Gertrude Stein, Walter Benjamin, Toni Morrison, Marlon James, Leslie Marmon Silko, George Steiner, Mac Wellman, Maria Irene Fornes, Adrienne Kennedy, Graham Harvey, Mircea Eliade, Roland Barthes, as well as work that crosses into visual art realms and radical scientific thought from physicists David Bohm and F. David Peat. The course will be conducted in workshop fashion with strong emphasis on the tracking and documenting of process.

ARTT B265 Spaces of Possibility: Shakespeare and the Classroom (1 Unit)

Focused on creating and collaborating, this course examines how we access Shakespeare and make Shakespeare accessible while working with 8th graders in Philadelphia. We will work as performers, creators, directors, designers, mentors and audience members. This course will be collaborative, sharing ideas and working as an ensemble comprised of college students and 8th graders. Prerequisite: ARTT B251 Fundamentals of Acting or permission of the instructor.

ARTT B270 Ecologies of Theater: Performance, Play, and Landscape (1 Unit)

Students in this course will investigate the notion of theatrical landscape and its relation to plays and to the worlds that those landscapes refer to. Through readings in contemporary drama and performance and through the construction and evaluation of performances, the class will explore the relationship between human beings and the environments they imagine, and will study the ways in which those relationships impact how we think about our relationship to the world in which we live. The course will culminate in a series of public performances. Suggested Preparation: Any course in theater, design, film, dram, or permission of the instructor.

ARTT B332 The Actor Creates: Performance Studio in Generating Original Work (1 Unit)

This course explores the actor as creator, inviting the performer to become a generative artist with agency to invent their own work. Building on skills introduced in Fundamentals of Acting, we will introduce new methodologies of training to construct a framework in which students can approach making original solo and group work. Students will use processes employing visual art, found dialogue, music, autobiography, and more. Emphasizing guided, individual, and group collaboration, we will examine the role of the actor/creator through exercises and readings that relate the actor's creative process to an understanding of self and the artist's role in communities. Prerequisite: ARTT B251 (Fundamentals of Acting)

ARTT B351 Acting II (1 Unit)

A continuation of the methods of inquiry in Fundamentals of Acting, this course is structured as a series of project-based learning explorations in acting. Recommended preparation: Prior experience in theater is recommended but not required, ARTT B251 (Fundamentals of Acting) or permission of instructor.

ARTT B353 Advanced Performance Ensemble (1 Unit)

An advanced, intensive workshop in theater performance. Students explore a range of performance techniques in the context of rehearsing a performance project, and participate in weekly seminars in which the aesthetic and theatrical principles of the play and production will be developed and challenged. The course may be repeated. Prerequisite: ARTT B253 or permission of the instructor.

ARTT B354 Shakespeare on the Stage (1 Unit)

An exploration of Shakespeare's texts from the point of view of the performer. A historical survey of the various approaches to producing Shakespeare from Elizabethan to contemporary times, with intensive scene work culminating in on-campus performances. Prerequisite: ARTT B251 Fundamentals of Acting or permission of the instructor.

ARTT B356 Theaters Of and After Samuel Beckett (1 Unit)

An exploration of Beckett's theater work conducted through both reading and practical exercises in performance techniques. Points of special interest include the monologue form of the early novels and its translation into theater, Beckett's influences (particularly silent film) and collaborations, and the relationship between the texts of the major dramatic works and the development of both modern and postmodern performance techniques.

ARTT B359 Directing for the Stage (1 Unit)

A semiotic approach to the basic concepts and methods of stage direction. Topics explored through readings, discussion and creative exercises include directorial concept, script analysis and research, stage composition and movement, and casting and actor coaching. Students rehearse and present three major scenes. Prerequisite: ARTT B252: or permission of instructor.

ARTT B362 Playwriting Adapting Mythic Cycles to the Stage (1 Unit)

In this course we are learning to write performance texts that transcend the mere personal/psychological, move through the cultural/aesthetic realms, and reach into the epic - to the mythic order. We begin by examining the origins of theater within the functional technology of ritual practice, and look at universal myth and ritual structures across cultures. At the same time, we are locating the vectors of our own creative impulses, and allowing them to hold sway over the process of writing for the stage, and we write ourselves into unknown territory. Students are encouraged to set aside received and preconceived notions of what it means to write plays, or be a writer, along with ideas of what a play is "supposed to" or "should" look like, in order to locate their own authentic ways of seeing and making. Students will be encouraged to connect more deeply their own subconscious and, in so doing, to tap into the collective unconscious as a source material. In other words, disarming the rational, the judgmental thinking that is rooted in a concept of a final product and empowering the chaotic, spatial, associative processes that put us in immediate formal contact with our direct experience, impressions and perceptions of reality. Emphasis on detail, texture and contiguity will be favored over the more widely accepted, reliable, yet sometimes limiting Aristotelian virtues of structure and continuity in the making of meaningful live performance. Readings will be tailored to fit the thinking and inquiry of the class. We will likely look at theoretical and creative writings of Gertrude Stein, Walter Benjamin, Toni Morrison, Marlon James, Leslie Marmon Silko, George Steiner, Mac Wellman, Maria Irene Fornes, Adrienne Kennedy, Graham Harvey, Mircea Eliade, Roland Barthes, as well as work that crosses into visual art realms and radical scientific thought from physicists David Bohm and F. David Peat. The course will be conducted in workshop fashion with strong emphasis on the tracking and documenting of process.

ARTT B403 Supervised Work (1 Unit)

Research and work in a particular topic of theater under the guidance of an instructor.

ARTT B425 Praxis III (1 Unit)**ARTT B430 Practicum in Stage Management (1 Unit)**

Over the semester, the student will attend all auditions, rehearsals, and performances of the Bi-College Theater Program production, and will be responsible for managing all the details of same. With the guidance of a mentor and through reading and research, the student will learn to perform the many organizational and communications tasks involved in stage management. Students will be required to read a number of texts with the goal of understanding the vast scope of the job, the artistry and authority expected of a stage manager, the variations in styles of stage management, and the standard procedures a student stage manager can incorporate into a college setting. Each student will be expected to keep a daily journal of their experience—intellectual, artistic, and practical. The journal is their own and is meant to stimulate and deepen their thinking about the process. This practicum requires that a student be willing to engage in the production process both as an artist with an intellectual stake in the work and as an adult with a position of real authority in the group. The student will be expected to use that authority while always remaining calm, polite, kind, and generous to the artists with whom they are working. Prerequisites: Prior academic work in theater and the permission of the instructor

ARTA B251 Arts Teaching in Educational and Community Settings (1 Unit)

This is a Praxis II course intended for students who have substantial experience in an art form and are interested in extending that experience into teaching and learning at educational and community sites. Following an overview of the history of the arts in education, the course will investigate underlying theories and practices. The praxis component will allow students to create a fluid relationship between theory and practice through observing, teaching, and reflecting on arts practices in educational contexts. School or community placement 4 hours a week. Preparation: At least an intermediate level of experience in an art form. This course counts toward the minor in Dance or Theater and towards a major or minor in Education.

ARTD B144 Dance Composition: Elements and Craft (1 Unit)

This dance composition course introduces students to the craft of choreography. Foundations of dance making, such as space, time, performance, and artistry are explored and refined through the creation of short choreographic studies while observing and reflecting upon the work of peers. This course will explore structured and open movement experiences, such as: movement invention skills; compositional strategies; investigating music, language, images, and objects as sources of individual and collective inspiration. Students will be guided through solo and collaborative methods. Supplemental viewings and readings may be offered to support choreographic processes. Concurrent participation in any Dance Program technique course, either for academic or PE credit, is encouraged.

CRWT B362 Playwriting II (1 Unit)

This course challenges students of playwriting to further develop their unique voices and improve their technical skills in writing for the stage. We will examine how great playwrights captivate a live audience through their mastery of character, story and structure. Through a combination of weekly reading assignments, playwriting exercises, theater explorations, artist-driven feedback, and discussions of craft, this class will facilitate each student's completion of an original, full-length play. Prerequisite: ARTW 262; or suitable experience in directing, acting or playwriting; or submission of a work sample of 10 pages of dialogue. All students must complete the Creative Writing preregistration questionnaire during preregistration to be considered for the course.