

# THEATER MAJOR

## MAJOR DESCRIPTION

The mission of the Theater Department (THEA) is to graduate self-empowered, well-informed, creative storytellers engaged in their communities. The Theater Department considers the critical and creative study of the theatrical discipline to be an essential component of a liberal arts education. Offerings include courses in **Theater Arts** (acting, design, directing, playwriting, stage management), **Theater Methods** (dramatic literature and criticism, performance studies, theater history), and **Technical Theater** (lab and hands-on technical production). Foundational coursework introduces theater techniques, theories, literature, and discourses. Advanced courses prepare students to articulate their visions of theater both on stage and in writing, and to engage in deep scholarly and artistic research. The department embraces a broad definition of theater and encourages artistic innovation.

The Theater department welcomes students who seek to develop a strong passion for expressing themselves or communicating about meaningful human issues through the artistic process. They are interested in developing their confidence and empathy, embodiment, and collaborative skills. Theater majors acquire many valuable and transferable career skills such as public speaking and presentation, teamwork, creative problem-solving, adaptability, emotional intelligence, time and project management, and attention to detail.

## ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

The theater department has created a wide array of options for students to begin their path through the study of theater in areas other than acting, such as playwriting, design, or performance practice.

The following chart details the Gateway Course Categories that must be completed or underway by the fourth semester in order to be approved as a theater major:

Degree type	Area of Study
<b>Gateway Courses</b>	
Technical Theater (0.5 CR)	THEA105 (One 0.5 credit in the technical aspects of scenic/lighting or costumes)
Theater Arts (1.0 CR)	This includes courses in the areas of design, acting, playwriting, advanced technical theater, and performance practice
Theater Methods (1.0 CR)	This includes courses in the areas of dramatic literature, theater history, criticism, applied theater and service learning. (See list of courses shown below)

## MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Theater Major Requirements (These requirements are in addition to the Gateway courses)

- Three (3) credits in **Theater Arts** courses, which must include one design course (THEA359 - set design, THEA383 - costume design, THEA360 - media design or THEA305 - lighting design). One credit (and only one credit) of Performance Practice\* (THEA427/THEA428/THEA431/THEA432/THEA433/THEA435/THEA437) is also required for this category. One instance of the course THEA183 (The Actor's Experience) or THEA180 (Reading Plays for Production) may be counted towards the Performance Practice requirement (for .5CR).
- Two (2) credits in **Theater Methods** courses. Only one course may be 100-level.
- One (1) credit of **Technical Theater** (THEA329/THEA331/THEA335) earned in .25, .5 and 1.0 credit increments through participation in department production related positions.\*\* These opportunities are posted on the Theater Department Virtual Callboard (<https://bit.ly/CBLanding/>) throughout the year as projects/production needs develop.
- One (1) credit Theater Elective, which includes THEA courses and courses cross-listed with the department in all areas, including Technical Theater, Theater Arts, and Theater Methods. This will allow students to deepen their knowledge within an area of theater that they are interested in, or conversely to increase the diversity of courses that they take in the major during their time at Wesleyan. For this category, majors will need to select a course to count as their elective and submit that choice in their major certification form to be approved by their major advisor.

\*Performance Practice credits are earned by participating in a Theater Department project (Mainstage or Capstone Productions) as a performer/actor, director, assistant director, stage manager, assistant stage manager, dramaturg, designer or assistant designer. Auditions and opportunity info for these will be posted on the Theater Department Virtual Callboard (<https://bit.ly/CBLanding/>) throughout the year as projects/production needs develop.

\*\*Beginning with the class of 2027: in order to be eligible for any senior capstone project, students must have completed their Technical and Performance Practice credits by the end of their junior year.

**Total major program requirements: 2.5 credits (Gateways) + 7 credits = 9.5 credits**

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Theater Arts</b>		
THEA110	Drafting for Theatrical Design	1
THEA125F	Performing Contemporary Playwrights (FYS)	1
THEA143	Gospel, Rap, and Social Justice	1
THEA145F	Clash of the Titans: Classical vs. Contemporary Voices in Theater and Film	1
THEA180	Reading Plays for Production: Conceiving for Performance	.5
THEA183	The Actor's Experience	.5
THEA185	Text & Visual Imagination: Introduction to Eco Design for Performance	1
THEA199	Introduction to Playwriting	1
THEA221	Rescripting America for the Stage	1
THEA237	Performance Art	1
THEA239	Songwriting Workshop	1
THEA245	Acting I	1
THEA248	Ethical Design for Stage and Fashion	1
THEA259	Face the Blank Page	1
THEA265	Acting for the Camera: Film, Theater, and Television in the "Post"-Pandemic World	1

THEA265Z	Acting for the Camera: Film, Theater and Television in the Age of Zoom	1	THEA150F	Introduction to Performance Studies (FYS)	1
THEA279	Music Theater Workshop	1	THEA172F	Staging America: Modern American Drama (FYS)	1
THEA281	Introduction to Directing	1	THEA175F	August Wilson (FYS)	1
THEA284	Dressing the Imagination: From Page to Stage	1	THEA202	Greek Drama: Theater and Social Justice, Ancient and Modern	1
THEA285	Acting II: It's All Greek to Me	1	THEA203	Playing in the Theater Archive: An Introduction to Performance Studies	1
THEA286	Solo Performance	1	THEA204	A Nation and its Theater: Cultural and National Identity in Performance	1
THEA301	Immersive Theater: Experimental Design, Material Culture and Audience-Centered Performance	1	THEA210	Shakespeare	1
THEA305	Lighting Design for the Theater	1	THEA215	Latinx Theater in the U.S.: Analysis & Performance	1
THEA315	Stage Management	1	THEA216	Performance Curation as Relational Praxis	1
THEA319	Advanced Acting: Shakespeare/Shakespeare Deconstructed	1	THEA217	Performing Democracy: Theater, Activism, and Community Engagement	1
THEA328	Breaking New Ground Residency: The Masses Are Asses Radio Play	.5	THEA231	Classic Spanish Plays: Love, Violence, and (Poetic) Justice on the Early Modern Stage	1
THEA345	Advanced Scene Study: Modern Times and the Old School World	1	THEA232	Instrument-Body	1
THEA355	Voice & Movement for Actors: Embodying Imagery and Language into Acting Text	1	THEA233	All Ah We: Contemporary Afro-Caribbean Drama & Performance	1
THEA359	Space Design for Performance	1	THEA235	Writing on and as Performance	1
THEA360	Media for Performance	1	THEA236Z	Writing the Body	1
THEA381	Directing II	1	THEA238	The Intercultural Stage: Migration and the Performing Arts in the Hispanic World	1
THEA383	Introduction to Costume Design for Performance	1	THEA243	Chinese Theater and Drama	1
THEA384	Advanced Costume Design & Construction	1	THEA254	The World of Federico García Lorca: Tradition and Modernity in the Spanish Avant-Garde	1
THEA385	The Working Theatermaker: Acting Beyond the University	1	THEA261	Sites of Resistance & Memory: Theater, Performance & Political Consciousness in Contemporary Spain	1
THEA385Z	The Working Actor: Acting Beyond the University	1	THEA263	Mythic & Modern: Reappropriating Classical Themes in Contemporary Drama and Performance	1
THEA386	Musical Theater Performance	1	THEA266	Black Performance Theory	1
THEA390	Performance Ensemble	1	THEA267	Revolution Girl-Style Now: Queer Performance Strategies	1
THEA399	Advanced Playwriting: Long Form	1	THEA269	Introduction to Performance Studies	1
THEA427	Theater Projects - Performance Practice	0.25	THEA280	Award-Winning Playwrights	1
THEA428	Theater Projects - Performance Practice	0.25	THEA290	Staging Race in Early Modern England	1
THEA430	Theater Projects - Performance Practice	0.5	THEA291	French and Francophone Theater in Performance	1.25
THEA431	Mainstage Production - Performance Practice	0.5	THEA292	Spectacles of Violence in Early Modern French Tragedy	1
THEA432	Theater Projects - Performance Practice	1	THEA297	Latin American Theater and Performance	1
THEA433	Mainstage Production - Performance Practice	1	THEA302	Contemporary Theater: Theories and Aesthetics	1
THEA434	Applied Scenography: From Idea to the Stage	0.5	THEA310	Shakespeare's Macbeth: From Saga to Screen	1
THEA435	Performance Practice in Design A	0.5	THEA316	Advanced Topics in Performance Studies	1
THEA437	Performance Practice in Design B	1	THEA323	Staging Blackness: African American Theater	1
<b>Theater Methods</b>			THEA327	Dangerous Acts: Theater, Transgression, and Social Justice, Ancient and Modern	1
ENGL369	Performance Remains: Slavery in the Black Dramatic Imagination	1	THEA353	Destroying the Audience: Limits of Performance and Representation in the Theater of (Non) Being	1
FGSS353	Destroying the Audience: Limits of Performance and Representation in the Theater of (Non) Being	1			
MUSC232	Instrument-Body	1			
THEA114Z	Incarcerated Stories: Documenting In/Justice	1			
THEA115	America in Prison: Theater Behind Bars	1			
THEA135F	Documentary Performance: Theater and Social Justice (FYS)	1			
THEA150	Introduction to Performance Studies	1			

THEA363	(Un)Popular Performances/Performances (Im)Populaires	1
THEA364	Friendship and Collaboration: In Theory, In Practice	1
THEA365	Greek Tragedy: Euripides	1
THEA369	Performance Remains: Slavery in the Black Dramatic Imagination	1
THEA371	Sister Acts: Black Feminist/Womanist Theater of the African Diaspora	1
THEA391	The Live Event: Politics and Practice of Creating Site-Specific Performance	1
THEA393	Afterparty: End Times, Pleasure, and Clean Up	1

- For Wesleyan policy on the programs not on the approved list, contact the Office of Study Abroad (<http://wesleyan.edu/studyabroad/>).

## PRIZES

**Rachel Henderson Theater Prize:** Awarded annually to the student who, in the estimation of the theater faculty, has contributed most to theater at Wesleyan over the course of their undergraduate career.

**Outreach and Community Service Prize:** Awarded to the senior theater major who, through their work in the Theater Department, has done a significant service in the community.

**J.Peter Adler '90 Memorial Fund:** Established in 1997 with gifts from family and friends in memory of J.Peter Adler '90, the J.Peter Adler Memorial Fund provides two awards per year to support a student theater production: one in the fall and one in the spring semester. An avid theater lover, J.P. participated in Second Stage while at Wesleyan as a non-theater major. He died suddenly in 1995. The Adler Fund is awarded with preference to first-time directors of non-academic theater productions and, whenever possible, to non-theater majors. The fund may also support student theater productions associated with the Theater Department or other entities, such as senior thesis productions.

## GENERAL EDUCATION

In order to be eligible for Honors in Theater through a Capstone Thesis Project, students must be Gen Ed Stage1 compliant. In order to be eligible for High Honors in Theater through a Capstone Thesis Project, students must be Gen Ed Stage 2 compliant. See Guidelines and Proposal Requirements for Senior Capstone Projects in Theater (<https://bit.ly/WesTheaterCapstoneGuidelines/>) for more information.

## STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

The theater department teaches the fundamental tools of theater-making and emphasizes collaborative, exploratory work in order to give our students the ability to operate in and change the real world without hesitation and with confidence. Our goal is to graduate self-empowered, well-informed, creative storytellers engaged in their communities.

We believe that theater can be created from multiple points of entry, such as utilizing plays and text; movement and physical composition; objects and visual elements; sound and music, to name a few. Therefore, we invite and welcome all students; particularly, those with a strong passion to express themselves and to be willing to fail, fall, laugh, and grow, while changing themselves and others in the process.

The theater department faculty believes in the power of performance as a transformational discipline, as an embodied process that, through technique, methodology, study, and commitment, has a unique capability to ask hard questions about who we are as a society, and serve as a rehearsal space for alternate futures.

## STUDY ABROAD

Students are encouraged to spend a semester at Wesleyan-approved programs abroad or to petition for approval of other programs in countries of their choice. For information, contact the Office of Study Abroad (<http://wesleyan.edu/studyabroad/>).

### Wesleyan pre-approved programs with focus on theater:

- British American Drama Academy, London
- CIEE, Buenos Aires
- C.V. STARR, Chile

## HONORS

Preliminary honors proposals are due during spring of junior year. Students can submit proposals for either critical or creative honors theses.

Preliminary proposals will be judged based on clearly expressed objectives and evidence of research and preparation. Judgments will be based equally on preliminary research, clarity of the objectives of the process, and rationale for staging a given production. Please consult Guidelines and Proposal Requirements for Senior Capstone Projects in Theater (<https://bit.ly/WesTheaterCapstoneGuidelines/>) (inclusive of honors thesis projects), as well as honors eligibility details.

The Honors Committee will award honors on the basis of the readers' evaluations. All departmental readers must recommend honors for a candidate to be successful. Students are entitled to copies of the readers' comments. The honors tutor is responsible for assigning a grade for the courses THEA409 and THEA410; this grade need not reflect the decision of the Honors Committee to award or deny departmental honors.

The Honors Committee will evaluate eligible theses according to the following criteria: consideration of the readers' evaluations, originality of research and thesis topic, the student's performance in courses as reflected in his or her transcript, compliance with the General Education Expectations, and the extent to which the student's educational experience reflects the philosophy, goals, and diversity of the department.

## CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

Theater Capstone Optional  
SENIOR THESIS - two semesters  
SENIOR PROJECT - one semester