Theater Major

Major Description

The theater major is an integrated program of study, one that provides a solid knowledge of the different areas of expertise that are involved in stage production and criticism. Gateway courses provide an introduction to theater techniques, principles, literatures, and discourses. Advanced courses prepare students to articulate their visions of theater both on stage and in writing. Honors theses, essays, and creative endeavors present majors with the opportunity to engage in in-depth scholarly and/or artistic research.

Students with strong interest in both theater and other fields of study may wish to pursue a double major. The option offers attractive possibilities for maximizing the benefits of Wesleyan’s broad curriculum. Such an option is not uncommon but requires careful and early planning.

Declaration to become a major is usually made in the second semester of the sophomore year. The department embraces a broad definition of theater and believes in embodied learning: process, performance, and critical perspectives are equally stressed. Our majors focus on two or more aspects of theater and learn to articulate their artistic vision both on stage and in writing. The department welcomes analysis, criticism, artistic innovation, and theater inquiry of all sorts.

Admission to the Major

Gateway Courses

Please note that these courses must be completed in the theater department by the second semester of sophomore year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>THEA105</td>
<td>Production Laboratory (One 0.5 credit in the technical aspects of scenic, costume, or lighting design)</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA203</td>
<td>Special Topics in Theater History</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEA245</td>
<td>Acting I</td>
<td>1</td>
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Major Requirements

- One course in scenic, costume, or lighting design.
- THEA302. Please note that certain courses in departments may fulfill one of two theater history prerequisites (the gateway THEA203 or THEA302) only if approved by the theater faculty. Please consult the section “Courses cross-listed with other Wesleyan departments, colleges, and programs” in the Theater Handbook.
- Two courses in dramatic literature, visual literacy, theory, criticism, and/or service learning. One of them may be an FYS course. Specialty courses in other departments may fulfill one of the two requirements only if approved by the theater faculty. Please consult the section “Courses cross-listed with other Wesleyan departments, colleges, and programs” in the Theater Handbook.
- One credit of THEA329/THEA331 (earned in .25- and .5-credit increments).
- One credit of THEA427/THEA431/THEA433/THEA435/THEA437.

General Education

Completion of Stage 1 and 2 of General Education Expectations is a prerequisite for high honors in theater.

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 preapproved programs with focus on theater:

- British American Drama Academy, London
- Moscow Art Theatre Semester
- CIEE, Buenos Aires
- C.V. STARR, Chile
- 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 his or her undergraduate career.

Outreach and Community Service Prize: Awarded to the senior theater major who, through his or her 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 Second Stage 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.

Honors

Preliminary honors proposals with a bibliography are due one week after the end of spring break in the 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 the section “Application Guidelines for Honors in Theater” in the handbook.

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.

High honors in theater is by invitation only and requires an oral exam conducted by the Honors Committee. The Honors Committee will invite qualified students 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.

Please see wesleyan.edu/theater for details on prerequisites for applying for honors theses.