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

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:

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<th>Degree type</th>
<th>Area of Study</th>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Theater (0.5 CR)</td>
<td>THEA105 (One 0.5 credit in the technical aspects of scenic/lighting or costumes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theater Arts (1.0 CR)</td>
<td>This includes courses in the areas of design, acting, playwriting, advanced technical theater, and performance practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater Methods (1.0 CR)</td>
<td>This includes courses in the areas of dramatic literature, theater history, criticism, applied theater and service learning</td>
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Course Category Designations: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uubYPjn42GR0oHeGftWrIL7wH4LGBt9/view?usp=sharing

**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 requirements.**

**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 .5CR course THEA183 (The Actor’s Experience, formerly known as Directed Experiences in Acting) may be counted towards the Performance Practice requirement.
- 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.**
- 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.

* Students that have already fulfilled this credit under the Expanded Field category will still be able to count this course towards the major. Otherwise, students may use any THEA course that hasn’t already been marked for other Theater Major requirements.

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

For course category designations, please consult the categorization list on the Theater Department website (here) (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uubYPjn42GR0oHeGftWrIL7wH4LGBt9/view?usp=sharing) and posted in the lobby of the Theater building.

GENERAL EDUCATION

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

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

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.

**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 (https://www.wesleyan.edu/theater/about/seniorprojects.html) for senior capstones (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

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