

DRAMATURGY BENCHMARKS

INTRODUCTION

The graduate program in dramaturgy prepares students to compete effectively for professional positions in the areas of dramaturgy and literary management. For some of our students, the MFA degree may also be the precursor to a Ph.D. and a career as a dramaturg-scholar-educator.

When evaluating students' progress in the program, the faculty looks for *significant growth* in the benchmarks listed below. Although there is no quantitative determinant of what constitutes *significant growth*, the overriding goal is to achieve a professional level of competence by the end of the three-year residency. That is something the faculty can assess, based on the student's progressive mastery of the program's benchmarks.

Acceptance into the program conveys the faculty's sense of the students' potential to achieve the program's overriding goals. Once in the program, students' continuation from year to year is contingent on the demonstration of *reasonable progress* towards achieving that goal. Such progress is determined by faculty review and will be communicated to students by their advisors over the course of every semester and, again, by their full committee, during the end-of-year meetings.

BENCHMARKS

I. Leadership and Producing Skills

- Students are expected to gain experience as producing artists, with the understanding that dramaturgs often spearhead projects and become a driving force in theater companies, serving as founders, producers, curators, artistic directors, creators, visionaries, etc. These leadership qualities encompass many of the skills listed above.
- Students should be able to coordinate and moderate events in conjunction with productions, including lectures, discussions, panels and exhibits.

II. Conceptual / Analytic Skill

- Facility working with a variety of dramatic texts, whether as new plays-in-development or as precursors to a specific production; and the ability to make meaningful, constructive contributions to either of these processes.
- The ability to think analytically, conceptually and critically about texts from diverse periods and cultures.
- The ability to balance an understanding of the text (its literary, historic, social context) with a fresh, original approach to the material.
- An understanding of the production implications of specific dramaturgical choices.

III. Communication Skills

- Facility expressing oneself clearly and persuasively in oral and written formats.
 - a) Oral Format
 1. Interact effectively with members of a production team.
 2. Present theoretical, analytical and critical materials concisely and effectively in one-on-one or group settings.
 3. Distill the product of research into its essentials for clear and concise presentation in one-on-one or group setting. Listen closely and consider carefully the ideas of one's production collaborators.
 4. Give effective public addresses and conduct educationally viable public discussions to diverse audiences (at team meetings, talk-back sessions, class discussions).
 5. Give effective constructive feedback when working with playwrights and directors on new plays.
 6. Perform one's assigned teaching responsibilities effectively--both as discussion leaders in THR 100 and as teachers in THR 120.
 7. Collaborate effectively in the selection of a production season.
 - b) Written Format
 1. Competence in expository writing--including syntax, grammar, organization, and style.
 2. Production criticism (journalistic model and TJ model).
 3. Production materials
 - Students should be able to prepare a production book (also called a protocol) for the use of the dramaturg, director and other artists involved in a production.
 - Actor packets
 - Rehearsal room displays and presentations
 4. Educational materials
Study guides and classroom materials.
 5. Audience/production materials
 - Program books—including research, writing, editing including visual design—collaborating with directors and graphic designers.
 - General audience guides, either on-line or in print.
 - Effective and visually impressive lobby displays that complement, enhance and expand the experience of the production.
 6. Extended writing (thesis).
 7. Specialized Writing
Students are expected to develop skills in at least one of these special forms of writing:
 - playwriting for stage, radio or screen
 - scholarly writing
 - translation

- adaptation
- grant-writing
- performance documentation and archival work

IV. Research

- Students are expected to become adept at locating, assimilating and organizing information for oral and written presentation. In that respect, they should work comfortably and effectively with the basic tools of research:
 - a) library
 - b) internet
 - c) off-site microfilm and special collections

V. Workstyle and Professionalism

- punctual and regular attendance at meetings
- meet all deadlines
- understand and encourage the collaborative nature of theatrical production