

THE FIELD

The department's broad-based liberal arts approach to theater gives students a shared vocabulary and understanding of all areas of the field. By learning to communicate effectively and to respect all voices in the room, students grow adept at collaboration and create exciting theater. Our commitment to mentoring fosters productive relationships between students and faculty, between graduates and undergrads, between accomplished alumni and students, and between those at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and artists in the profession. Students leave ready for success in a wide variety of fields.

THE MAJOR

The course of study in the Department of Theater is grounded in the belief that the performing arts draw on a unique combination of intellectual and artistic skills and talents, which are most fully developed when theory and practice are integrated into the learning experience. Students pursue a multifaceted course of study divided into dramaturgy, performance (acting and directing), and design and technology. We are a warm, welcoming, tight-knit community that prides itself on interpersonal relationships.

Students take courses in all these areas within a flexible program that allows them to take additional classes in areas of individual interest. In addition to coursework, students participate in productions, serving as actors, designers, directors, and dramaturgs, both in the theater department's season and in independent undergraduate productions and informal events. Undergraduate theater majors also participate in many special events designed to supplement the curriculum, ranging from hands-on master classes with guest professionals to career-development workshops.

No audition is required for admission to the theater major. To complete the bachelor of arts (BA) degree, majors must fulfill all UMass Amherst General Education requirements, as well as appropriate requirements of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts. In addition, students must complete at least 36 credits in theater. At least 12 credits must be completed in dramaturgy, at least nine in performance, and at least nine in design and technology. Students also receive credit for participating in backstage practice three times. Students fulfill the university's Junior Year Writing requirement via the dramaturgy requirement. A number of our courses also qualify as Integrative Experience.

THE MINOR

Students who want to pursue creative and scholarly inquiry into the world of theater on a more limited basis can complete a 16-credit minor in theater. Students must take introductory courses in two of three areas: performance, dramaturgy, or design and technology, as well as two upper-level courses in those same areas (each for three credits), and one credit of backstage practice. One additional three-credit theater course rounds out the requirements for the minor. No audition is required for admission, and theater General Education courses can count toward the minor. Students can finish the minor alongside their major in as little as two years.

MULTICULTURAL THEATER CERTIFICATE

The Multicultural Theater Certificate offers students a unique opportunity to explore the roles of artists of color within and outside of the American theater canon. A central component of the certificate is the in-depth and lively consideration of what future direction theater practice and theory might take, and how ideas of multiculturalism and diversity are part of that future. The work in the classroom is enhanced through internships that bring students into direct contact with professionals in the field at multicultural arts organizations locally, regionally, and nationally.

HONORS

Many of our students are members of Commonwealth Honors College, and create ambitious and exciting creative projects as part of their senior-year thesis. Contact the department's honors coordinator for more information.

STUDY ABROAD

Majors are encouraged to study abroad if it supports their academic and career goals. Students should contact the International Programs Office (413-545-2710, umass.edu/ipo) and work closely with their academic advisor to choose the appropriate courses in preparation. The Department of Theater co-sponsors, with the University of New Mexico, an annual summer study-abroad course at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The broad base of knowledge students gain at UMass gives them a toolbox of skills that makes them attractive to employers in theater, arts administration, and a wide variety of other fields including law, education, and industry. It is also a superb preparation for graduate work in the field. Theater alumni include Broadway performers and designers, a stunt performer in blockbuster films, the tour manager/performer of one of the most successful podcasts in the world, administrators at renowned performance venues, artistic directors of theater companies, playwrights, scholars, and more.

THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND FINE ARTS

The humanities focus on human creativity, endeavor, and culture. The imaginative and creative arts—literary and performing—derive from life and teach about human behavior and constructs of social reality. The history of social, political, and economic systems illuminates and shapes the present and future. Students in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts are expected to broaden their perspectives on individual and cultural expression within their own and other societies, to understand the development and evolution of the discipline of study in relation to the culture from which it emanates, and to learn the methods by which knowledge in the discipline is gained.

Office: 112 Fine Arts Center
Phone: 413-545-3490
Website: umass.edu/theater