

# THEATRE STUDIES (THEA)

Chad Phillips, Visiting Assistant Professor, Academic Chair/Advising  
Beth Ritson, Visiting Assistant Professor, Production Chair

Guilford's Department of Theatre Studies is unique in providing rigorous professionally oriented undergraduate theatre training within the context of a well-rounded liberal arts education that can prepare students for a broad range of future careers. An interested undergraduate can pursue theatre training in classes as challenging as those offered in any conservatory in the nation, while simultaneously obtaining a solid undergraduate education that keeps other options open as the developing student explores the work of a professional artist. The department seeks to produce creative individuals with intellectual acuity and the analytical and problem-solving skills of the theatre worker. Many alumni have gone on to prestigious graduate theatre programs, professional internships, and employment in theatre, film, and television, while others have pursued graduate work and careers in fields as diverse as law, medicine, psychology, education and social work. Guilford believes that theatre training develops skills and thought-processes applicable to problem-solving in all areas of life.

The program offers both majors and non-majors the chance to experience the collaborative process by which actors, designers, directors, scholars and technicians interpret a playscript and translate a shared vision of its meaning into the medium of theatrical production. Classes develop the skills essential to this process: critical thinking, research methods, intuitive reasoning, communication, project planning and time management, problem-solving, teamwork and leadership. The department strives also to instill in students awareness of the transformative power of theatre as an instrument of social change and the corresponding ethical responsibility of the artist for the integrity of the transaction between actor and audience.

The integration of theory and practice is fundamental to the program, as it is to successful theatre, and the conceptual learning of formal coursework is therefore augmented by laboratory work in the form of theatrical productions. Productions are chosen with attention to the developmental needs of the current student population. In a four-year period, students will experience a broad range of styles and periods of dramatic literature in performance.

Faculty members and staff have worked as practicing theatre artists in the professional theatre as actors, directors, designers or technicians. Recognizing that guest artists are essential to the vitality of any theatre program, the department also brings practicing theatre artists of high caliber to the campus to work with students.

Distinguished guests have included playwrights Edward Albee, Simon Bent, Maria Irene Fornes and Tony Kushner; actors Tandy Cronyn, Sidney Poitier, Anna Deavere Smith, Mickey Solis and Jack Wetherall; designers Dominic Abbenante, Jesse Belsky, Burke Brown, Gabriel Clausen, Roslyn Fulton-Dahlie, Elisheba Ittoop, Badger Koon, Robbie MacLean, John Wolf and Maria Wurttele; directors Mark Rucker and Danny Scheie; and master teacher Larry Singer.

## Degree Offered

The Bachelor of Arts degree is offered in theatre studies.

- Theatre Studies Major (<https://catalog.guilford.edu/catalog/academic-departments-majors/theatre-studies/theatre-studies/>)

- Theatre Studies Minor (<https://catalog.guilford.edu/catalog/academic-departments-majors/theatre-studies/theatre-studies-minor/>)

### THEA 100. The Wonder of Dance (SPST114). 4.

This course is an introduction to many aspects of dance. Students develop an awareness and appreciation for dance as art and expression through an exploration of history, contemporary trends, social themes, personalities, sample dance class experiences and choreographic projects. Fulfills arts and diversity in the U.S. requirements (1998). Arts/humanities and sociocultural engagement requirements (2019).

### THEA 110. Introduction to Theatre. 4.

Introduces and explores the methods of the entire collaborative creative process by which theatre is made. Focuses on text selection, text analysis, theater history, directing, casting, acting, design (set, costume and lighting), props, stage management, marketing, house management and box office. The outcome of the class is a gallery of the students' textual and visual work. Fulfills the arts requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

### THEA 111. Backstage Production. 4.

Explores methods of theatre stage craft through experiential learning. Students work directly in support of a department production as both individuals and members of a collaborative team. Focuses on the elements of planning, drafting, tools, and scenic construction. Limited outside reading, but laboratory work required outside class time. Fulfills the arts requirement (1998). Arts/humanities and embodied and creative engagement requirements (2019).

### THEA 125. Acting 1:Basic Tools. 1-4.

Explores the challenges facing actors of realistic drama: living truthfully within a play's specific imaginary world. Focuses on the ability to discern, define and embody given circumstances, dramatic action and character. Special emphasis on goals, obstacles, tactics and expectations. Fulfills the arts requirement (1998). Arts/humanities and embodied and creative engagement requirement (2019).

### THEA 130. Theatre and Culture I. 4.

Study of Western theatre from the Greeks through the English Renaissance. Examines play texts and theatre architecture as primary source documents that reflect the artistic, philosophical, political and social contexts of a particular cultural moment in history. Fulfills the arts requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

### THEA 131. Theatre and Culture II. 4.

Study of Western theatre from the late Renaissance through the present. Examines play and theatre architecture as primary source documents that reflect the artistic, philosophical, political and social contexts of a particular cultural moment in history. Fulfills the arts requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

### THEA 150. Special Topics. 1-8.

May also be offered at 250, 350 and 450 levels.

### THEA 161. Masterpieces of the Cinema I. 4.

Exploration of film as an art form that visually represents ideas under the influence of a single person, group of creative people or society and culture. Introduces basic film terminology and analytical techniques used for contemplation of a film and its basic components. Fulfills the arts requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

**THEA 171. Introduction to Theatrical Design. 4.**

Introduction to the principles and techniques of theatrical design. Develops the basic core of knowledge needed to create informed designs that manifest a "world" in which the performance of a playscript can take place. Includes units on scenery, costumes, lights and sound. Fulfills the arts requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

**THEA 190. Mainstage Actor. 1-4.**

Academic credit for performing in a department production. CR/NC. May be repeated for credit.

**THEA 195. Mainstage Tech. 1-4.**

Academic credit for advanced technical work on a department production. CR/NC. May be repeated for credit.

**THEA 204. Choreography (SPST115). 4.**

This course is a formal introduction to the art of dance composition. It is designed for students that have had previous dance experiences in technique, the creative process leading to performance and the critical viewing of works; for students working toward a minor in dance, it is preferred that this be the final course completed. Prerequisite: SPST 114 or THEA 100. Fulfills the arts requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

**THEA 211. Technical Productions. 4.**

Explores methods of theatre stage craft through experiential learning and individual projects. Students choose specific areas of focus for the duration of the semester. Personal projects will be assigned, along with work that will contribute directly towards the department production. Focuses on the categories of theatrical carpentry, paint, props, sound, lights, and costumes. Prerequisite: THEA 111 or instructor permission. Fulfills the arts requirement (1998). Arts/ humanities requirement (2019).

**THEA 215. Play Analysis (ENGL215). 4.**

Explores the methodology of script analysis used by actors, designers and directors as they prepare to execute a stage production. Students also develop the interpretive skills needed by artists working in a theatre that responds to and addresses issues of oppression and social justice. Fulfills humanities requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

**THEA 223. Masterpieces of Cinema II. 4.**

A more advanced overview of film studies, history, and theory with significant motion pictures of the world's cinema, from the silent period to the present, with an emphasis on film movements, auteurs, and genre. This course is a continuation of Masterpieces of Cinema I. This course fulfills an Arts Requirement, a portion of the Film track in the Theatre Studies major, and is a four-credit course.

**THEA 227. Acting 2: Playing the Action. 4.**

Examines the pursuit of objectives through interaction with onstage scene partners. Techniques explored include, but are not limited to, sending and receiving; eliciting response; identifying progressive change in oneself through what is received from the partner. Exercises investigate action utilizing repetition, speech, song, gibberish, physicalization and improvisation. Scene work concentrates on American realism. Prerequisite: THEA 125 or instructor permission.

**THEA 228. Acting 2: Creating the World. 4.**

Explores the work of the actor in reorganizing the self into another human being existing in the circumstances and world of the play. Includes work on sense memory and sensory endowment to bring moment-to-moment physical life to an environment; the discovery and development of immediate and historic given circumstances from textual clues. Prerequisites: THEA 125 or THEA 126 or instructor permission.

**THEA 229. Acting 2: Voice and Diction. 4.**

Development of the expressive potential of human sound (voice) and speech (diction). Vocal work focuses on breath support and control, grounding, resonance and the role of the voice in the creation and communication of meaning; speech work includes exercises in articulation, use of heightened text and work with dialects and accents. Prerequisite: THEA 125.

**THEA 232. Acting 2: Acting in Song. 4.**

This course will explore the relationship of singing to the process of acting, examining the dramatic intention of a vocal line, including phrasing and test, and its interaction with the full musical score as both relate to the fundamentals of acting technique, particularly circumstances, inner monologue, and action. Assignments will include solos, duets, and scene work. Course fee: \$100 for accompanist. Fulfills humanities requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

**THEA 244. Playwriting Workshop (ENGL210). 4.**

Twelve weekly scenes read and critiqued in class and a one-act play as a final project. Exploration of various elements of playwriting such as conflict, manipulation of chronology, life studies, character exposition and development, "found" language, passive participation in and transcription of actual events. Prerequisite: ENGL 102 and Historical Perspectives.

**THEA 250. Special Topics. 1-8.****THEA 260. Independent Study. 1-8.**

May also be offered at 360 and 460 levels. Independent research or directed study for exceptional students with strong interest in particular areas of dramatic literature, theatre history, design, technical production, acting, directing or performance theory.

**THEA 262. Queer Cinema. 4.**

Study of the impact cinematic representation has on attitudes towards gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Americans. Engages students in conceptual analysis of films and mass media using theories of representation, authenticity and identity construction. Fulfills arts and diversity in the U.S. requirements (1998). Arts/humanities and sociocultural engagement requirement (2019).

**THEA 265. Artistry in Film. 4.**

Study of the major aesthetic elements in film and video production – light, space, time-motion and sound. Develops the knowledge and skill to select and apply those aesthetic elements in order to help translate significant ideas into significant visual messages quickly and effectively. Prerequisite: THEA 161 recommended but not required. Fulfills arts requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

**THEA 272. Digital Sound Design. 4.**

Exploration of sound design in theater and the psychological impact it can have on an audience during a live performance. Topics of discussion include the role of the sound designer, sound reinforcement systems, mixing, editing and playback for film as well as live events. Fulfills the arts requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019). Fulfills arts requirement. Prerequisite: THEA 171 recommended but not required.

**THEA 273. Lighting Design. 4.**

Examination of the power of light and the ways in which it shapes audience perceptions of a staged performance. Focus on basic elements of lighting, especially composition and mood, and the manner in which each supports the "ruling idea" of a play. Includes exploration of the technical dimensions of design: instruments, lightplot, lightwright and computer lighting control. Fulfills humanities requirement (1998). Arts/ humanities requirement (2019).

**THEA 274. Digital Graphic Design (CTIS 274). 4.**

Introduction to basic principles and elements of graphic design, form / symbol development, color theory and typography. Provides practical experience in essential software processes and procedures including Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign. Develops facility with the tool pallets and art boards for each program and comfort with visual methodology. Students will become aware of "good" graphic design through the creation of original digital designs followed by critiques and group discussions. Fulfills humanities requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

**THEA 275. Costume Design. 4.**

Introduces the studio practices of costume design for theater and film. Students will learn about modes of dress throughout history by designing costumes for plays or films set in specific eras. Drawing techniques will be developed throughout the course with an emphasis on drawing the human figure in proportion, and capturing silhouettes from period research. No drawing experience is required. Fulfills humanities requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

**THEA 290. Internship. 1-8.**

Internships in the professional theatre are strongly encouraged. May be applied to the practicum requirement where appropriate. May also be offered at the 390 level.

**THEA 295. Practicum. 1-4.**

Theoretical and practical work in one of the following areas: costuming, lighting, sound, properties management, makeup, scene painting, box office, house management, publicity, film festival staff and stage management. All practicums include work on a mainstage production with documentation of outcomes presented in a digital portfolio. Prerequisite: Instructor permission.

**THEA 320. Acting 3: Shakespeare. 4.**

Explores the relationship of Shakespeare's uses of language and form to action and acting, bringing the self to the specific demands of formally structured material and identifying the tools for action-playing in various text structures and styles. Prerequisites: THEA 125, THEA 229 and either THEA 227 or THEA 228 or instructor permission.

**THEA 325. Acting 3: Modern Realism. 4.**

Synthesizes the tools acquired from previous acting classes into a coherent, integrated, and systematic approach to creating a role in scenes and monologues. Focus on tools of action, imagination, and the senses in the context of detailed actor's analysis. Prerequisites: THEA 125, and either THEA 227 or THEA 228.

**THEA 350. Special Topics. 1-8.****THEA 360. Independent Study. 1-8.****THEA 361. Narrative Film Production. 4.**

Study and practice of the narrative film production process from screenwriting to postproduction, utilizing skills in video and audio acquisition, lighting and editing systems. Students develop skills in aesthetic development, storytelling and evaluation through examples and applications in filmmaking based on a narrative story.

**THEA 365. Documentary Film Production. 4.**

Study and practice of documentary production and post-production utilizing video and audio acquisition and editing systems as well as the development of aesthetic as well as technical capabilities through lecture and hands-on experience. Prerequisite: THEA 265 or instructor permission. Fulfills humanities requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

**THEA 366. Filmmaking Capstone. 1.**

The practice of narrative, experimental or documentary film production from preproduction to postproduction, utilizing skills developed throughout the student's experience in the film concentration. Students produce a semester-long project utilizing a defined film concept from narrative or documentary genres.

**THEA 375. Advanced Theatre Design. 4.**

Develops an understanding of the principles and processes of set design for the stage. Explores how this design area echoes and utilizes other art forms and functions in relation to theatre production as a whole; emphasis on spatial aesthetics, critical analysis, creative interpretation, research for design, conceptual collaboration and the oral, written and graphic communication of the design idea. Fulfills humanities requirement (1998). Arts/humanities requirement (2019).

**THEA 381. Play Direction. 4.**

Explores the "choice-making" process of creative play direction. Exercises in interpretation of a playscript, actor coaching, ground plans, composition, picturization, movement and formulation of a production "concept." Prerequisites: THEA 125 or THEA 215 or instructor permission.

**THEA 390. Internship. 1-8.****THEA 450. Special Topics. 1-8.****THEA 460. Independent Study. 1-8.****THEA 470. Senior Thesis. 1-8.**

A required performance or production capstone project in a student's specific track or area of expertise as determined by faculty in consultation with the student, drawing on the cumulative academic experience in theatre and emphasizing issues of collaboration and ensemble. Involves pre-production preparation, execution of a production assignment in either the fall or spring semester as an actor, dramaturg, or technical, documentation of work in a portfolio, and post-production self assessment and oral defense.

**THEA 490. Departmental Honors. 1-8.**

4.

**THEA 494. Senior Company I. 2.**

Theatre studies majors graduating in the spring and/or following fall prepare for an end-of-year senior capstone project. Fulfilling the roles of their declared track in the major, students form a prototypical theatre company, choose a play and mount it in a studio production for the general public. Preparation includes play selection, assignment of responsibilities, initial research and analysis and planning that leads to an approved production calendar for the coming spring.

**THEA 495. Senior Company II. 2.**

3. A capstone thesis project growing out of the cumulative academic experience in theatre and emphasizing issues of ensemble performance, collaboration across areas of specialization and the dynamics of forming a prototypical theater company. Projects involve group work with other seniors, but allowances for individual projects are considered on a case-by-case basis.