

Theatre and Dance

Websites: Theatre (<https://new.sewanee.edu/programs-of-study/theatre-arts/>), Dance (<https://new.sewanee.edu/programs-of-study/dance/>)

All students are invited to participate in the curriculum and production program of the Department of Theatre and Dance.

The major in theatre is designed to offer the student a strong foundation in all areas of the theatre: acting, directing, design, dance, playwriting, history, literature, and performance theory. The department expects its majors to augment their knowledge and experience in these disciplines by active participation in the full production program of Theatre Sewanee, the University theatre. The department also encourages its majors to supplement their work in theatre with courses offered by other departments—particularly in language, literature, music, art, and art history.

A few students each year decide to combine their theatre major with another major, such as English, psychology, religious studies, or politics.

The department also offers minors in dance and theatre for those students who choose to major in another discipline.

Faculty

Professors: Backlund, Crawford (Chair), Matthews

Associate Professor: World

Assistant Professors: S. Hamilton, Vera

Instructor: J. Marshall

Major

Requirements for the Major in Theatre

The major requires successful completion of the following:

Code	Title	Semester Hours
Course Requirements		
THTR 111	Fundamentals of Theatre Production	4
THTR 114	Fundamentals of Design	4
THTR 131	Fundamentals of Acting	4
Select two of the following:		8
THTR 221	Global Theatre I: Antiquity to Early Modern Theatre and Performance	
THTR 223	Global Theatre II: Modern and Contemporary Theatre	
THTR 229	American Theatre	
Select one of the following:		4
THTR 342	Scene Design	
THTR 344	Lighting Design	
THTR 361	Costume Design	
Select twenty additional semester hours from courses in theatre (THTR), dance (DANC), or playwriting (WRIT 207 only) in any combination.		20
Total Semester Hours		44
Code	Title	Semester Hours
Additional Requirements		
A comprehensive examination ¹		

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In addition to a written examination covering all aspects of theatre, the comprehensive exam includes a senior project that demonstrates a particular competence in acting, dance, directing, design, history, playwriting, literature or theory.

Honors

The student desiring a more intense concentration in theatre may become a candidate for departmental honors. The successful candidate: a) completes with distinction eleven (forty-four semester hours) courses in theatre and all other related courses; b) passes the comprehensive examination with distinction; and, c) demonstrates a particular competence in acting, directing, design, history, playwriting, literature or theory and criticism.

Minors

Minors

- Dance (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2023-2024/arts-sciences/departments-interdisciplinary-programs/theatre-dance/dance-minor/>)
- Theatre (<http://e-catalog.sewanee.edu/archives/2023-2024/arts-sciences/departments-interdisciplinary-programs/theatre-dance/theatre-arts-minor/>)

Courses

Dance Courses

DANC 104 Ballet I (2)

An introduction to the vocabulary and techniques of classical ballet as a foundation of skills within the dance form.

DANC 105 Experiencing Dance History and Culture (4)

Dance literacy and appreciation are established through a combination of theory and practice. Dance history is examined through alternating political, social, and economic lenses, guided by the premise that movement expresses culture.

DANC 111 Fundamentals of Movement (4)

A physical exploration of human movement potential and the development of body-mind awareness through expressive, rhythmic patterns that is particularly relevant for dancers, actors, musicians, and athletes. Concepts and theories underlying movement skills are practiced and analyzed as a means of experiencing the world more dynamically and intentionally in performance and in life.

DANC 113 Jazz I (2)

An introduction to the vocabulary and techniques of classical ballet as a foundation of skills within the dance form.

DANC 116 Beginning Dance Techniques (2)

An introduction to the basic techniques of Western concert dance as applied to ballet, modern, and jazz dance that provides a foundation for students without formal dance training and prepares them for continued study in any of those three forms.

DANC 118 Dance Improvisation (2)

The study of the spontaneous creation of movement for the purpose of discovering, investigating and enhancing sensation, awareness, and creativity. Theories of movement and improvisational structures, strategies, and techniques are examined and practiced in solo, duet, and group explorations, including contact improvisation. This course includes physical touch.

DANC 123 Tap: Sounds of American Dance (4)

An introduction to the percussive, rhythmic, improvisational, and choreographic traditions and innovations of American tap dance. A basic foundation of skills within the form are established through technique studies and creative expression.

DANC 154 Contemporary Dance I (2)

An introduction to the vocabulary and techniques of contemporary dance that draws upon modern and post-modern traditions to build a basic foundation of skills for the dance form.

DANC 201 Dance Techniques (2 or 4)

A dance technique course in a designated style chosen by the instructor. Chosen styles frequently include ballet, jazz, or contemporary. Course is open level, for students with previous study of dance techniques. May be repeated for a maximum of 14 credits. A course with the same subtitle may be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Prerequisites vary by topic.

DANC 204 Ballet II (2)

Continued study of classical ballet technique that extends the vocabulary and develops technical skills. *Prerequisite: DANC 104, DANC 116, or placement.*

DANC 213 Jazz II (2)

Continued study of jazz dance technique that extends the vocabulary and develops technical skills. *Prerequisite: DANC 113, DANC 116, or placement.*

DANC 223 Tap II (2)

Continued study of tap dance technique that extends the vocabulary and develops technical skills. *Prerequisite: DANC 123 or placement.*

DANC 224 Dance Composition (4)

An exploration of the creative process of choreography and the craft of dance composition. Dance studies are created as a means of investigating and developing a unique artistic voice and utilizing compositional skills to effectively express and communicate ideas. Dance experience or previous knowledge of composition in visual arts, music, or creative writing is recommended.

DANC 250 Dance Ensemble (2)

Participation in the creative process of choreography as a dancer and the study of dance performance techniques culminating in the performance of an original dance in the annual departmental production of DanceWise. May be repeated once for credit. Concurrent enrollment in a 200 or 300 level dance technique course required.

DANC 254 Contemporary Dance II (2 or 4)

Continued study of contemporary dance techniques that draws upon modern and post-modern traditions to extend the vocabulary and develop technical skills. *Prerequisite: DANC 116, DANC 154, or placement.*

DANC 301 Special Topics in Dance (2 or 4)

A study of specialized topics in dance which may focus on history, theory, pedagogy, analysis, criticism, etc. *Prerequisite: Prerequisites vary by topic..*

DANC 304 Ballet III (2)

A study of advanced techniques of classical ballet that offers and in-depth investigation of movement principles through the development and integration of technical skills and personal artistry. *Prerequisite: DANC 204.*

DANC 313 Jazz III (2)

A study of advanced techniques of jazz dance that offers an in-depth investigation of movement principles through the development and integration of technical skills and personal artistry. *Prerequisite: DANC 213.*

DANC 315 Dance Science and Somatics (4)

An exploration of fundamental principles of movement to ensure safety, development, and growth as a performing artist through studies of somatic techniques, anatomy, kinesiology, injury prevention, and nutrition. This course is equal parts lecture and embodied movement practice. *Prerequisite: DANC 105 or DANC 116 or DANC 123 or DANC 204 or DANC 213 or DANC 215 or DANC 223 or DANC 224.*

DANC 354 Contemporary Dance III (2 or 4)

A study of advanced techniques of contemporary dance that offers in-depth investigation of movement principles through the development and integration of technical skills in the form with personal artistry. *Prerequisite: DANC 254. Prerequisite: DANC 254.*

DANC 444 Independent Study (2 or 4)

An opportunity for students to explore a topic of interest in an independent or directed manner. This course may be repeated for credit when the topic differs. *Prerequisite: Instructor prerequisite override required.*

Theatre Courses**THTR 101 Introduction to Theatre (4)**

An introduction to aesthetics and the art of the theatre through an analysis of stage development and production technique.

THTR 111 Fundamentals of Theatre Production (4)

An examination of the collaborative contributions costumes, scenery, lighting, and property technicians make to the art of theatre. An introduction to the materials, technologies, equipment, structures, and best practices used in contemporary theatre production. *Open only to first-year students and sophomores.*

THTR 112 Elements of Performance (4)

An analysis of theatre as a collaborative art form with an introduction to the materials, forms, and functions of theatrical art. A discussion of genre, dramatic structure, and theory of performance. The course is designed for majors and minors in theatre arts. *Open only to first-year students and sophomores.*

THTR 114 Fundamentals of Design (4)

An analysis of theatrical design as a collaborative art form with an introduction to the materials, forms, and functions of design. An introduction to the research, analysis, graphics, materials, and techniques used in contemporary theatre design. *Open only to first-year students and sophomores.*

THTR 131 Fundamentals of Acting (4)

An introduction to the actor's art. Understanding the demands of performance. The execution of dramatic action. Students are expected to perform frequently in exercises and scenes. *Open only to first-year students, sophomores, and juniors.*

THTR 201 Masks and Millinery (2)

An introduction to the methods used in the design and creation of masks and hats for stage costumes. *Prerequisite: THTR 111.*

THTR 202 Stage Makeup and Masks (4)

Students learn the stage makeup and mask techniques used by actors, technicians, and designers in the development of character design. The creation of designs will be aided by the study of performance analysis and the application of the elements of design.

THTR 221 Global Theatre I: Antiquity to Early Modern Theatre and Performance (4)

An exploration of global theatre and performance, from Classical Antiquity through the Early Modern era, with particular emphasis on the development and evolution of theatrical literature, theory, and presentation within various cultural, social, and historical contexts. *Open only to sophomores, juniors, and seniors.*

THTR 222 Queer America on Stage and Screen (4)

This course examines the evolution of LGBTQ+ characters in American plays and films of the last one hundred years. Students will examine the recurring stereotypes, coded language and images used to identify characters in the early decades of the twentieth century, and how their portrayal changes when Queer playwrights and film makers tell their own stories. Topics will include shifting perspectives on drag, camp, intersectionality and gender identity, and the impact of feminism, the civil rights movement, and the AIDS crisis.

THTR 223 Global Theatre II: Modern and Contemporary Theatre (4)

An exploration of global theatre and performance, from the advent of Realism and Modernism up to the present day, with particular emphasis on the development and evolution of theatrical literature, theory, and presentation within various cultural, social, and historical contexts. *Open only to sophomores, juniors, and seniors.*

THTR 225 Intermediate Acting (4)

Designed to help students further develop their vocal and physical strength and flexibility, as well as their analysis of text and character, this scene study course builds on the principles of Fundamentals of Acting (THTR 131). Students will work on challenging scenes from plays of classic realism, and from contemporary playwrights whose work is less realistic. *Prerequisite: THTR 131.*

THTR 227 Classic Plays on the Modern London Stage (4)

An exploration of how changing cultural values and aesthetics of the late 20th and early 21st centuries have shaped approaches to the staging of classic British plays. Topics will include changing styles of acting, design, theatre architecture, stage speech, and non-traditional casting. The work of several groundbreaking contemporary theatre directors will be studied and the dramatic literature will be chosen to match productions that students can see on stage in London. *Prerequisite: Only open to students admitted to the Sewanee Summer-in-England program.*

THTR 228 New York Theater (4)

The class will highlight the personal, cultural, and professional value of theater through attending eight live performances at a variety of venues: including Broadway, the center of the global commercial theater world, New York's Public Theater, the non-profit home where many great artists and new plays have been developed and nurtured, as well as others. The class will also over weekly discussions highlighting the history/mission of each institution and discussing different professional disciplines within the field. The lectures will be supported by reading of current articles written on key issues within the industry, and post show discussions with artists involved in the various productions.

THTR 229 American Theatre (4)

An exploration of American theatre and performance, from its beginnings to the present day, with particular emphasis on the development and evolution of theatrical literature, theory, and presentation within various cultural, social, and historical contexts. Texts for the course include well-known classics of the American canon as well as lesser-known but equally critical works representing the evolution of American theatre, such as works from the Black Arts Movement, the Chicano Farmworkers Movement, the Feminist theatre movement, works by LGBTQI practitioners, Asian American practitioners, and more. *Open only to sophomores, juniors, and seniors.*

THTR 232 Shakespeare and the Actor (4)

Intensive rehearsal of selected monologues and scenes. Exercises in this course help students develop vocal and physical expressiveness and skill in speaking heightened language. *Prerequisite: THTR 131 or ENGL 357 or ENGL 358.*

THTR 235 Voice and Interpretation (4)

Work in voice production, articulation, and interpretation through readings of literary and dramatic texts. A substantial amount of memorization is required. *Prerequisite: THTR 103 or THTR 131.*

THTR 236 Acting with an Accent (4)

An advanced scene study course in which students master the International Phonetic Alphabet and apply it to scenes written in a variety of dialects. Particular attention is given to regional American dialects and to the dramatic literature of English, Irish, and South African playwrights. *Prerequisite: THTR 131.*

THTR 237 Feminist Perspectives on Theater and Performance (4)

This course examines plays and performances by women and nonbinary artists from the last two hundred years. Students will investigate how artists through the ages have influenced and been influenced by feminist thought, and how theatre and performance as public, embodied art forms are uniquely positioned to explore issues related to gender and identity. The course will consider how the stakes of writing and performance vary for women and nonbinary writers of different racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, and class backgrounds. Works by Black, Latinx, Asian American, Native American, White, lesbian, queer, and trans writers will be included.

THTR 238 Performance Tradition + Innovation in Central Europe (4)

Using the Prague Quadrennial Festival as a touchstone, students will experience groundbreaking experimental performances from around the world, with an emphasis in innovative design. Explore the future of the art by attending contemporary, cutting edge performances by global artists at the festival, while grounded in the historic roots of Central European theatre by touring historic theatres to study their architecture, innovative stage engineering, and leading visionary practitioners. Workshops and attending live performances will enhance understanding of both historic and contemporary performance practices. *Prerequisite: Open only to students who have been admitted to the World Theatre Future and Past program..*

THTR 240 Costume Technology (4)

An in-depth study of the techniques used in the creation of stage costumes. Students will explore historical and modern methods of drafting, draping, and fabric modification, including advanced construction skills. *Prerequisite: THTR 111.*

THTR 242 Stagecraft (4)

A study of the basic principles and techniques in the design and construction of scenery, lighting, properties, costumes and sound for the theatre. *Prerequisite: THTR 111.*

THTR 245 The Audition Process (2)

Selection and preparation of audition monologues from the modern and classical repertoires. This course provides information on the business of acting, various audition situations, and will include information sessions with an agent, a casting director and professional actors. *Open only to juniors and seniors. Prerequisite: THTR 131.*

THTR 246 Design and Décor Period Styles (4)

A survey of architecture, decor, and clothing from ancient to modern with special emphasis on the stylistic trends of each era. Emphasis in this class is on research and analysis of period styles. By looking at the common decorative elements of a certain era, the stage designer and director are able to understand the period style to create a more believable and unified stage picture.

THTR 261 Community Engaged Theatre (4)

Beginning with the study of grassroots community engaged theatre and case studies of devised, community playmaking, students will work with local community stakeholders and members to create theatre performances based on subjects important to the community partners. Through interviews, story circles, and improvisational theatrical techniques, students will create short works of documentary theatre for public performance in the community for which works are created. Although a theatre class, all students interested in community dialogue are invited to join this highly collaborative course.

THTR 301 Special Topics in Theatre Design and Technology (2 or 4)

This course offers an opportunity for students to explore in depth a variety of specialized topics in theatrical design or technology. Advanced, new, or experimental techniques for creating exciting visual elements for the stage are emphasized. This course may be repeated once for credit when the topic differs.

THTR 302 Special Topics in Theatre Performance (2 or 4)

This course offers an opportunity for students to explore in depth a variety of specialized topics in theatre performance theory and techniques. Advanced, new, or experimental techniques in performance will be emphasized in this course.

THTR 323 Aspects of Contemporary Theatre (4)

A seminar in the development of post-modern performance theory. Theatricalization of contemporary thought and concepts of performance are studied in the work of Antonin Artaud and Bertold Brecht, in *The Theatre of the Absurd*, environmental theatre, impossible theatre, theatre of images, and others. *Open only to juniors and seniors.*

THTR 325 Representative Stages: Diversity and Inclusion in the American Theatre (4)

In this course, students explore how African-American, Indigenous, Latinx, trans and disabled communities have been represented – and misrepresented – in American Theatre and the efforts being made to offer more equitable representation. By first establishing historical and political context, students learn about how the stories of marginalized communities have been romanticized in American storytelling before exploring how current theatre artists are rewriting that narrative by taking ownership of their stories, and how the theatre community is working to ensure that the stories being told on the American stage are reflective of America's collective identity. *Prerequisite: WRIT 207, WRIT 307, WRIT 407, one course with attribute AFS2 (African & African-American Studies – African American Track), or one course in Theatre (THTR).*

THTR 337 Writing for Solo Performance (4)

An introduction to the art of solo performance. Exercises in dramatic style, storytelling, and in writing and performing such solo genres as the autobiographical and character monologue. Consideration of selected examples of solo work from Homer, Sappho, the Medieval jongleurs, the West African griots, and such modern performance artists as Ruth Draper, Whoopi Goldberg, Danny Hoch, and Spalding Gray. Each student writes and rehearses an original performance project for public presentation at the end of the semester.

THTR 340 Acting: Classic American Plays (4)

This scene study course focuses on the plays of the 1930s-1950s, the era when American theatre first established itself internationally. Particular attention is given to the work of Eugene O'Neill, Clifford Odets, Lillian Hellman, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, William Inge, and Lorraine Hansberry as well as the approaches of prominent acting teachers during the period when the term "method acting" was coined. *Prerequisite: THTR 131.*

THTR 342 Scene Design (4)

Deals with script analysis, scenic research techniques, periods and styles of production, exercises in scale, proportion, volume, and color. The student is expected to complete a series of projects culminating in the completed design of a classic or contemporary play.

Prerequisite: THTR 114.

THTR 344 Lighting Design (4)

Exercises in script analysis, research options, styles of production, lighting theory, techniques and equipment. Through journals and projects, students interpret and communicate with light. *Prerequisite: THTR 114.*

THTR 345 Devising Lab: Theatremaking for the Twenty-first Century (4)

This introductory course explores the fundamentals of creating and performing new work as an ensemble. Students will experiment with different modes of devising for theatre and performance, including creating and working with both original and existing texts, as well as creating work that deviates from and subverts text-based performance. Working within different frames and methods for devising, especially in collaboration and negotiation with others, students will learn the basic skills necessary for devising and performing a new work for an audience. The course welcomes performers, writers, directors, designers, visual artists, and video and film artists who want to work together to create something new. *Prerequisite: One course in Dance (DANC), Film Studies (FILM), Music (MUSC), Studio Art (ART), or Theatre (THTR).*

THTR 347 Scene Painting (4)

A study of basic techniques, tools and procedures employed by the scenic artist. Projects include exercises in color theory and mixing; problem solving; and common finishes on hard, soft, and three-dimensional scenic units.

THTR 351 Fundamentals of Directing (4)

Introduction to the theoretical and technical aspects of directing through reading, discussion, and a series of staged experiments and short scenes. *Prerequisite: THTR 131.*

THTR 360 Computer Aided Design for Performance (4)

An opportunity for advanced students to explore drafting, drawing, rendering, and modeling software used for scenery, lighting, and costume design. Designers will work together on various advanced projects and have the opportunity to experiment in each area of design using the related software.

THTR 361 Costume Design (4)

An introduction to stage costume design. By utilizing visual, verbal and written skills, the student will learn how to develop, communicate, and interpret design solutions for productions. Over the course of the semester, the student will learn the elements of design, rendering techniques, effective research methods, analysis of playscripts, basic costume history, and oral communication of design ideas.

THTR 370 Design Studio: Model Making for the Theatre (2)

This project-based course prepares the advanced scenic designer to conceive, craft and present actual 3-D scenic models to the production team. Models are explored as part of the process of exploration and discovery, initial sharing of ideas, and final presentation. Basic and advanced model-making techniques are learned and executed on a series of projects, culminating with a fully realized scenic model as the final project. *Prerequisite: THTR 342.*

THTR 372 Design Studio: Perspective and Rendering for the Theatre (2)

This project-based course prepares the advanced scenic designer to conceive, craft, and present fully rendered perspective scenic sketches to the production team. Perspective sketches are explored as part of the exploration and discovery process, initial idea sharing, and final presentation process. Basic and advanced perspective and rendering techniques are learned and executed on a series of projects, culminating with a fully realized series of scenic perspectives as the final project. *Prerequisite: THTR 342.*

THTR 401 Senior Seminar in Theatre (2)

This course prepares students to showcase artistic skills effectively as they prepare to transition to the professional theatre or graduate study. Students will complete various projects including crafting resumes, audition materials and/or portfolios. Emphasis will be placed on both verbal and visual communication skills. Sessions include lectures, workshops, professional guest speakers, and discussion sessions with mentor and peer feedback.

THTR 431 Projects in Performance (2 or 4)

An opportunity for advanced students to work on particular acting, directing, design, or technical problems-either in production situations or in special workshops. This course can be repeated twice for credit. *Open only to juniors and seniors. Prerequisite: Instructor prerequisite override required.*

THTR 444 Independent Study (2 or 4)

Advanced work for selected students. This course may be repeated for credit when the topic differs. *Prerequisite: Instructor prerequisite override required.*

THTR 447 Advanced Scene Painting (4)

Further study in scenic art, emphasizing the advanced techniques, tools, and procedures employed by the scenic artist. Advanced exercises in color theory, color mixing, color manipulation, problem solving, and painting techniques used for hard, soft, and three dimensional scenery will be explored. Major projects include stencil, spray, texture, and representative painting techniques used in the modern theatre. *Prerequisite: THTR 347.*

THTR 451 Advanced Directing (4)

A continuation of Fundamentals of Directing. Students will deepen their work on directing techniques by working on scenes of increased length from modern and classic plays. *Prerequisite: THTR 351.*

THTR 461 Advanced Costume Design (4)

A continuation of the study in the design of costumes for theatre and dance. Advanced research in the history and development of costume rendering, construction methods, and design practices. Culminates in actual design projects for theatre and dance. *Prerequisite: THTR 361.*