

## DEPARTMENT OF THEATER ARTS

Portland State University

### GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

#### Mission Statement

*The Department of Theater Arts is committed to providing training for students seeking professional careers, pursuing interdisciplinary studies in the arts, training to be secondary educators, and preparing to enter terminal degree programs. The Master of Arts degree prepares students who want to focus their graduate study on research and scholarship in the history, literature, and criticism of the theater and who may also plan to continue graduate work in a doctoral program in theater. The Master of Science degree prepares students who wish to focus more intensively on performance and production areas in preparation for a career in the profession and/or further work towards a Master of Fine Arts degree.*

#### Masters Degree Requirements

The Master of Arts and the Master of Science in Theater Arts consist of forty-five graduate credit hours, 50% of which must be in graduate-only coursework. Twelve credits of which may be in courses taken outside the department, if specifically related to a student's course of study and approved in advance by the departmental graduate adviser.

Believing that specialization best proceeds from a broad knowledge of the field as a whole, the program recommends the completion of a bachelors degree in theater. Students with a bachelors in theater, who meet university requirements, will be admitted to regular degree status, as will prospective students who have completed the following or equivalent courses:

TA 111, 112	Technical Theater I, II, (3, 3)
TA 114, 115	Technical Theater Productions (1, 1)
TA 248	Acting I: Process (4)
TA 301	Script Analysis (4)
TA 311	Scene Design I (4) <u>or</u> TA 314 Lighting Design I (4) <u>or</u> TA 321 Intro to Costume Design (4)
TA 454	Directing I (4)

(Students with lower division deficiencies are admitted with qualified status; regular degree status is conferred only after deficiencies have been removed.)

The program requires that all graduate students complete the following courses or their equivalents by the end of the Masters program. The extent to which a graduate student may specialize will partly be determined by the scope of his or her study as an undergraduate.

TA 511	Introduction to Theater Research (2)
TA 564, 565	Development of Dramatic Art (4, 4)

4 hours chosen from:

TA 567, 568	Modern Theater
TA 571	Theater History: Periods/Topics
TA 572	Theater History: Figures

## CULMINATING PROJECT

At the end of the program, the student is required to complete a project, for which no fewer than 6 graduate credits in Theater Arts will be given. The standard project will consist of two papers on subjects chosen from the fields of theater history, theory, practice, or dramatic literature/criticism. Each will probably range between 20 and 30 pages in length.

If a student fulfills the appropriate qualification process, the student may be considered for one of the following kinds of projects:

- I. A research thesis on an approved topic from fields of theater history, dramatic literature, or criticism.
- II. A research and practicum project in production design (scene, light or costume), directing, acting, or dramatic writing.

A final oral examination is required for all three options. Candidates for the MA must also satisfy the graduate foreign language requirement.

## SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES

1. Reservations of Graduate Credit (form GO-10) and Proposed Transfer Credit (form GO-11) are to be filed not later than the term following admission to a graduate degree program. A maximum of twelve graduate credits may be reserved; a maximum of fifteen may be transferred.
2. Petition for Change of Status (form GO-7) for students granted conditional admission is to be filed after conditions have been met. Students may not be advanced to candidacy before reaching regular degree status and satisfying the foreign language requirement.
3. Approved Graduate Degree Program (form GO-12) is to be filled no later than the date indicated on the Graduate Candidates Deadlines form for the intended term of graduation and after satisfying the foreign language requirement.
4. File Application for Degree form in the Office of Graduate Studies no later than the first week of the term of graduation.
5. Change in Graduate Degree Program (form GO-13) is to be filed if change of previously approved program (GO-12) is requested.
6. Appointment of Final Oral Examination Committee (form GO-16) is to be filed at least two weeks before the date desired for the exam.
7. Oral examination is to be scheduled at least two weeks before the date of commencement. If a thesis is presented, the examination is to be scheduled at least five weeks prior to commencement.
8. Thesis option students are to submit three copies of unbound thesis and four copies of abstract to the Office of Graduate Studies not later than three weeks prior to the close of the term in which the degree is to be granted.
9. Recommendation for the Degree will be filed by the chair of the students committee after the oral examination is completed.

## USE OF OMIBUS COURSE NUMBERS

- A. In most cases, credits for production projects will be divided between TA 501 Research, TA 502 Independent Studies, TA 506 Special Projects and TA 509 Practicum.
- B. The following limitations are placed on the use of credits in 501, 503, 505, 508, 509:
  - 501/505 combined, maximum of 12 credits
  - 508/509 combined, maximum of 9 credits
  - 503 Thesis, 6-9 hours, used for traditional thesis only

**Current procedures appear in detail in each catalog under the heading Summary of Procedures for Masters Degree**

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE THESIS OPTION

### I. Subject Selection and Approval

Students are advised to begin exploring possible topics during the first or second quarter in residence. The process of selection can be time consuming and complex. The most typical way to go about it is to discuss ideas with one or more faculty members to determine general subject area and to set supervisor. The student may consult with any member of the faculty directly or request assistance of the graduate adviser.

The faculty member who agrees to supervise usually will be appointed chairperson and at least one other Theater faculty member will be appointed to the students committee.

To obtain staff approval, a written prospectus is to be submitted to the supervisor. It should be brief (normally no more than a page or two in length) and state as clearly as possible: (1) the subject, scope, and aims of the study, including the central question to be answered, and (2) the general procedures to be followed. After the supervisor approves the prospectus, he or she will present it to the staff with recommendation for approval. An approved prospectus is important to both the student and staff, since it should minimize later misunderstandings.

### II. Procedure

For instructions, contact the Office of Graduate Studies to acquire the publication "Thesis Style Manual", in most cases, a student will assemble bibliography and an outline for one quarter and devote a second quarter to developing the written material. The Office of Graduate Studies requires three copies of the approved thesis and four copies of an approved abstract three weeks prior to the close of term in which the degree will be granted.

### III. Committee Participation

At the beginning of the quarter in which the student expects to complete the thesis and in accordance with current Graduate Office procedures, the student will request that the Office of Graduate Studies assign a faculty member from outside the Theater Arts Department to the student's thesis committee. When the thesis is finished but before it is typed in final form and at least two weeks before the students oral exam on the thesis is scheduled, a copy of the thesis should be submitted to each committee member. Each member will have an opportunity to make suggestions. As a rule, it is the supervisor who must assess the suggestions, since it is impossible for a student to write for several persons. The other members of the committee are essentially advisory, although they hold the power of veto when they judge the quality of a thesis to be unsatisfactory.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROJECT OPTIONS

### General Instructions Applicable to All Projects

1. Production projects may be undertaken in the following areas:
  - Acting
  - Costume design
  - Directing
  - Dramatic writing
  - Lighting Design
  - Scene Design
2. A student's qualifications for undertaking such a project will be determined by a minimum of two staff members. Procedure for demonstrating qualification is outlined in the instructions for each separate project.
3. After qualification is approved, the student is to submit a project proposal to the graduate adviser for consideration by the staff at one of its regular meetings. The proposal is to be approved by the staff before the student is advanced to candidacy. Becoming qualified does not guarantee the student that a proposed project will be accepted by the staff or even that an appropriate project will be available.
4. Because of the complexity of advance scheduling, proposals involving main stage production must be submitted by April 1 for the following season and by January 1 for the summer season. Proposals involving studio theater production must be submitted no later than twelve weeks prior to the beginning of rehearsals.
5. Because projects require the active cooperation of many persons, the steps to be followed are specified so that everyone's time may be used efficiently. A project may be canceled at any point if the student fails to follow procedures or meet deadlines.
6. Students considering the production project option should keep in mind the time required for qualification and production. Additional quarters may be needed to complete the degree.

## LIGHTING DESIGN PROJECTS

### I. QUALIFICATIONS

#### A. Qualifications will be demonstrated by:

1. Submitting visual evidence of completed lighting design projects developed for course work and/or actual production. This evidence should consist of some or all of the following: black-and-white photographs, color slides, a light plot, circuit charts, and a prompt script with cues. In the event that the evidence is insufficient, the student may be required to submit an additional light design project. The project may be undertaken in conjunction with advanced lighting courses.
2. Providing scholastic transcript records of the completion of the following courses or their equivalents: TA 111, 112, 114, 115, 311, 313, 316. Course work in scene painting, rendering and technical drawing is recommended. TA 314 and three graduate credits of lighting design must be taken at Portland State University.
3. Supervising the installation and board operation for a major departmental production

#### B. Procedures:

1. A request for consideration of qualifications, including an indication of the work to be submitted, is to be filed with the department's graduate adviser.
2. The graduate adviser will arrange for two Theater faculty members to review qualifications for determination. If the two do not agree, a third will be consulted.

### II. PROJECT SELECTION

- A. After securing approval, the student may submit to the graduate adviser a proposal to do a particular play. The proposal will be considered by the staff at one of its regular meetings.
- B. Projects will necessarily be limited to the selected repertoire; but whenever possible, the student's preferences will be honored.

### III. PROJECT PROCEDURE

#### A. In preparing the production, the student shall:

1. Attend the conferences with the director, scenic designer and project supervisor.
2. Submit to the project supervisor and scenic designer an analysis of the play as it relates to the lighting design, prepare a statement about the stylistic approach to be used, present evidence of necessary historical research, and make an analysis of the problems to be solved as they relate to the play, the personnel, facilities, and lighting.
3. Prepare cost estimates and supporting documentation to meet departmental standards, including gel and any special equipment planned.
4. Submit, within a month after a play has been assigned, a schedule of deadlines indicating when each phase of the project will be completed to meet departmental standards.
5. Present lighting plot and written conceptual data of intentions until the final design has been approved by the project supervisor, scenic designer, and director.
6. Prepare light plots (both in plan and section), job specifications, instrument schedules, & cue sheets. Plugging charts, switchboard setup charts, lamp data charts to meet dept. standards.
7. Supervise mounting and focusing of instruments and the execution of the lighting plans.
8. Attend all technical rehearsals and the first performance to note and correct difficulties.
9. Work with the control board operators to insure proper realization of the design during performance. Provide instruction in cue operation and emergency procedures to insure a complete and artistic production.
10. Keep the design uniform and technically correct throughout the performance period.
11. Be responsible for maintenance of all lighting and control equipment.
12. Supervise striking of lighting and electrical equipment.

### IV. EVALUATION

Not later than one month after the final performance, the student will submit three copies of role analysis, a production diary, and a written evaluation of the project in terms of objective and results. This must conform to P.S.U. Graduate Office deadline requirements.

## SCENIC DESIGN PROJECTS

### I. QUALIFICATIONS

#### A. Qualifications will be demonstrated by:

- i. Submitting visual evidence of completed design – technical projects developed for course work and/or actual production. This evidence should consist of some or all of the following: black and white photographs, color slides, detail drawings and renderings. The latter shall include a painter's elevation and a perspective sketch or model of the set.

If the evidence is deemed insufficient, the student may be required to submit an additional design project consisting of some or all of the following: a ground plan, detail drawings, painter's elevations and set model or perspective sketch in color. The project may be undertaken in conjunction with advanced design and technical theater courses.

- ii. Providing scholastic transcript records of the completion of the following courses or their equivalents: TA 111, 112, 114, 115, 311, 313. TA 316 and three graduate credits of scenic design must be completed at Portland State University.
- iii. Supervising the construction and installation of a major departmental production.

#### B. Procedure:

- i. A request for consideration of qualifications, including an indication of the work to be submitted, is to be filed with the department's graduate adviser.
- ii. The graduate adviser will arrange for two Theater faculty members to review qualifications for determination. If the two do not agree, a third will be consulted.

### III. PROJECT SELECTION

#### A. In preparing the production, the student will:

- i. Attend conferences with the director and supervisor.
- ii. Submit to his project supervisor and analysis of the play as it relates to design, prepare a statement about the stylistic approach to be used, present evidence of necessary research, and make an analysis of the problems to be solved.
- iii. Present sketches of drawings until a final design has been approved.
- iv. Make color elevations of the completed design.
- v. Make complete technical drawings.
- vi. Follow through on building of the settings in the shop.
- vii. Paint all scenery and direct paint crew.
- viii. Assist in supervising the mounting of the settings.
- ix. Supervise construction and acquisition of properties and furniture.
- x. Dress the set and work with the property master in coordinating set dressing with properties.
- xi. Attend rehearsals as needed.
- xii. Work with the running crews to insure proper realization of the design during performance.
- xiii. Be responsible for maintenance of the setting and properties throughout the performance period.
- xiv. Supervise striking of sets and properties.

### IV. EVALUATION

No later than one month after the final performance, the student will submit to the committee three copies of the analysis and a written evaluation of the/her work. This must conform to P.S.U. Graduate Office deadline requirements.

## DRAMATIC WRITING PROJECT

### I. QUALIFICATIONS

- A. The student will have completed eight hours of dramatic writing courses and further indicate competence by submitting samples of previous work as a playwright. A minimum of two completed one-act plays 25-50 pages each in length should be submitted. In addition to plays, monologues, scenes, poems, short stories, and novels may be submitted as supplementary evidence of competence.
- B. Procedure:
  - i. A request for consideration of qualifications, including an indication of the work to be submitted, is to be filed with the department's graduate adviser.
  - ii. The graduate adviser will arrange for two Theater faculty members to review qualifications for determination. If the two do not agree, a third will be consulted

### II. THE PROJECT

- A. Once permission is granted, the student will seek a project supervisor in consultation with the graduate adviser.
- B. The student will submit a detailed scenario and any additional material the adviser deems necessary. The responsibility for approving the project rests with the project supervisor. Once the project is approved, however, the student is to report on the nature of the project to the Theater Arts faculty. This does not replace the required committee approval at the conclusion of the project.
- C. Scope:
  - i. The student must present an original full-length play (roughly two hours of playing time), or two or three shorter plays that together constitute a full evening in the theater.
  - ii. Under special circumstances, the requirements may be met with a translation, adaptation, or with a dramatization of a novel or short story. The length must be the same as noted in C.1.
  - iii. In the case of a translation and/or adaptation, a person literate in the language will be called upon to aid in determining the student's language qualifications and to serve as co-supervisor for the project.
- D. If necessary, a student working on a playwriting project may be required to submit, in addition to the scenario, up to three complete drafts before the final draft.

### III. THE WRITTEN RECORD

- A. The play script is the principal document.
- B. When appropriate, an appendix will discuss historical materials utilized, unconventional or unusual dramaturgical devices employed, and the intentions of the playwright.
- C. When appropriate, notes on the translation and/or adaptation will be included in an appendix.

### IV. EVALUATION

Three copies of the written record as described in III will be submitted to the student's committee. This must conform to P.S.U. Graduate Office deadline requirements.

## ACTING PROJECT

### I. QUALIFICATIONS

- A. Qualifications will be demonstrated by written analysis and performance of a major role in a full-length or one-act play. Use of the role for qualification must be declared by the start of rehearsal and be approved as suitable by staff.
- B. Qualifications will be judged by a minimum of two members of the acting-directing staff. The faculty director (or the faculty supervisor of a student director) shall be one of the two appointed in advance to determine qualification.
- C. The following courses must be completed before qualification: TA 248, 144, 147, 252, 340, 341, 342, and 454. The following may be completed before or after qualification: TA 346 Dialects, TA 455. TA 440 and three additional graduate credits in acting performance must be completed at Portland State University. TA 241 Improvisational Acting and Costume History are recommended.

### II. PROCEDURES

- A. After a student has established qualifications to undertake an acting project, the student must be cast in a role that has been deemed suitable for a graduate project by the Theater Arts staff.
- B. The supervisor for the project normally will be the director of the play with staff-directed productions and the supervisor for the director in student-directed productions.
- C. As soon as possible after being cast, the student will make a written analysis of this role; its significance in the play; the problems relating to its performance; and historical information about earlier performances, when pertinent. The exact nature of the analysis will be determined by the supervisor.
- D. Procedures to be followed in rehearsal and performance will be left to the discretion of the director of the play.
- E. Maximum credit for graduate acting projects is six hours, including credit for research and preparation of written materials.

### III. EVALUATION

Not later than one month after the final performance, the student will submit three copies of role analysis, a production diary, and a written evaluation of the project in terms of objective and results. This must conform to P.S.U. Graduate Office deadline requirements.

## DIRECTING PROJECT

### I. QUALIFICATIONS

- A. Qualifications will be demonstrated by:
  - i. Analysis and direction of a one-act play for public performance.
  - ii. Completion of the following courses or their equivalents: TA 301, 311, 321, 342, and 454. TA 555 and an additional three credits in directing must be taken at Portland State. Recommended courses are Costume History, Scene Design, Lighting and Costume Design, Voice, and Dialects.
  - iii. Completion of duties as assistant director on a faculty directed production.
- B. Procedure:
  - i. A request to use a production as demonstration of qualifications is to be filed with the department's graduate adviser not later than three weeks prior to the first performance.
  - ii. The graduate adviser will arrange for two Theater faculty members to review qualifications for determination. If the two do not agree, a third will be consulted.

### II. PLAY SELECTION

After securing approval to undertake this type of project, the student may submit a proposal for a particular play to the graduate adviser. This must contain enough information to permit consideration of its technical, budgetary, and personnel requirements. The proposal will be considered by the staff at one of its regular meetings.

### III. PLANNING THE PRODUCTION

- A. After the choice of play has been approved and the production dates established, the student will be assigned a project supervisor and committee. Whenever possible, the student's preference will be honored.
- B. In consultation with the supervisor, the student will prepare:
  - i. A written director's analysis which is pertinent to the particular production. This might cover meaning and form of the play; historical background, if appropriate; proposed production and rehearsal procedures; problems; aims of this particular concept; etc.
  - ii. A general time schedule for all phases of production.
- C. These preliminary plans must be approved by the project supervisor before tryouts are held.

### IV. DIRECTING THE PRODUCTION

- A. In directing the production the student will:
  - i. Conduct meetings with and provide all detailed information needed by the scenic, lighting, costuming, sound, and property personnel, giving them adequate time for preparation and construction.
  - ii. Consider, in consultation with the supervisor and one technical faculty member, all design presentations until final designs are approved.
  - iii. Conduct tryouts and cast the play in consultation with the supervisor.
  - iv. Reserve rehearsal space, conduct planned rehearsals, and provide adequate notice of all items needed for the rehearsal period.
  - v. Provide the technical department and stage manager with adequate notice of all items needed for the rehearsal period.
  - vi. Obtain from the technical department a statement of the time needed for solution of all technical problems in final rehearsals and accommodate this time in the production schedule.
  - vii. Attend all performances and provide cast and crew with notes needed for improving performances.

### V. EVALUATION

Not later than a month after the final performance, the student will submit three copies of role analysis, a production diary, and a written evaluation of the project in terms of objective and results. This must conform to P.S.U. Graduate Office deadline requirements.

# COSTUME DESIGN PROJECT

## I. QUALIFICATIONS

- A. Qualifications will be demonstrated by:
  - i. Submitting visual evidence of completed costume design projects developed for course work and/or actual production. This evidence should consist of some or all of the following: a written analysis of the production concept, preliminary sketches and costume layouts, costume renderings including fabric swatches, drafted patterns, costume production schedule, budget estimate, makeup, and wig design, evidence of research, and specified photographs.
  - ii. Providing scholastic transcript records of the completion of the following courses or equivalents: TA 111, 112, 252, 301, 321, 325, 311, 425, 426. TA 521 and an additional three graduate credits of costume design must be taken at PSU. Course work in scene painting, lighting, rendering and technical drawing is recommended.
  - iii. Supervising the construction and wardrobe of a major departmental production.
- B. Procedure:
  - i. A request for consideration of qualifications, including an indication of the work to be submitted, is to be filed with the department's graduate adviser.
  - ii. The graduate adviser will arrange for two Theater faculty members to review qualifications for determination. If the two do not agree, a third will be consulted.

## II. PROJECT SELECTION

- A. After securing approval, the student may submit to the graduate adviser a proposal to do a particular play. The proposal will be considered by the staff at one of its regular meetings.
- B. Projects for plays not scheduled will be dependent on finding a director, and projects for scheduled plays will be limited by the repertoire selected. Whenever possible, however, the student's preference will be honored.

## III. PLANNING THE PRODUCTION

- A. After the choice of play has been approved and the production dates established, the student will be assigned a project supervisor and committee. Whenever possible, the student's preferences will be honored.
- B. In preparing the production, and in consultation with the supervisor, the student will:
  - i. Attend conferences with the director and production staff.
  - ii. Submit to the committee an analysis of the play as it relates to design, prepare a statement about the stylistic approach to be used, present evidence of necessary research, and make an analysis of the problems to be solved.
  - iii. Prepare a general time schedule for all phases of the costume design project including evaluation.
- C. These preliminary plans must be approved by the project supervisor before costume design may commence.

## IV. DESIGNING AND EXECUTING THE PRODUCTION

- A. In designing the production the student will:
  - i. Present to the director and supervisor a costume plot, a costume layout drawing, and preliminary sketches until final designs have been approved.
  - ii. Present to the director and supervisor complete costume renderings for the production, including fabric swatches, for approval.
  - iii. Supervise the cutting and construction of costumes, and accessory production in the shop.
  - iv. Provide the supervisor with a complete budget estimate for execution of the production.

- B. In executing the production the student will:
- i. Supervise the purchasing of all materials and supplies, including accessories, makeup and wigs, for execution of the costumes.
  - ii. Draft and/or supervise the drafting of all patterns necessary for execution of the costume designs in consultation with the supervisor.
  - iii. Supervise the cutting and construction of costumes, and accessory production in the shop.
  - iv. Conduct all fittings in consultation with the supervisor.
  - v. Conduct all necessary preparations for execution of makeup and hair styling in consultation with the supervisor.
  - vi. Attend rehearsals as needed to note and correct difficulties.
  - vii. Train and work with the wardrobe crew to insure proper realization of the design during performance.
  - viii. Be responsible for maintenance of the costumes throughout the performance period.
  - ix. Supervise the striking of the costumes and accessories.

## V. EVALUATION

Not later than one month after the final performance, the student will submit to his/her committee three copies of the analysis, a production diary a written evaluation of the production process and its results, the costume renderings and evidence of drafted patterns. The student will also submit black and white and color slides as designated by the supervisor. This must conform to the P.S.U. Graduate Office deadline requirements.

END