Theatre Arts, M.F.A.

Learning Outcomes

Acting Subprogram
Graduates must demonstrate:

- the ability to employ a broad range of acting knowledge and skills in the creation and presentation of roles;
- the ability to perform in plays and roles of various types, and from various periods;
- the acquisition of advanced understanding and capabilities in voice and speech, movement, and play analysis;
- a working knowledge of historical, critical, and theoretical content and the ways they inform playwriting and dramatic writing, the creation of roles, and other aspects of production;
- the ability to utilize digital media as a creative platform for self-promotion and in live performance;
- a working knowledge of skill sets and business-related tools to manage a professional acting career; and
- the ability to collaborate at a professional level with actors, directors, designers, playwrights, dramaturgs, and stage managers in the processes of production.

Design Subprogram
Graduates must demonstrate:

- development of new work and new artists through a creative, collaborative process; and advanced abilities in the unification of all design elements used in professional production through effective collaboration with diverse groups of artists and technicians with a range of life experiences and perspectives;
- thorough knowledge of health and safety practices associated with theatre production;
- with respect for the great global traditions, push the boundaries of theatre, using sophisticated tools and technologies; exhibit advanced knowledge in and the ability to integrate the following into production design: history of décor/fashion and cultural modes; skills drawing, color theory, lighting; analog and digital facility in 2D and 3D design in tactile, lighting and audio arts; and aesthetic, theoretical, and/or technical approaches to create compelling stories and experiences that incorporate new technologies and digital art-making practices in live performance, interactive art installations, and user-based live events;
- creative and technical ability to develop the design of a production from concept to finished product, and produce full design packages for at least two realized productions;
- provide space for diversity and foster social responsibility and change through a working knowledge of script analysis, which includes the ways that historical, critical, cultural, and theoretical perspectives and content inform playwrights, actors, stage managers, directors, and designers; and
- the ability to work with theatre professionals in their processes of production.

Directing Subprogram
Graduates must demonstrate advanced professional competence in directing including, but not limited to:

- the ability to integrate advanced understanding and capabilities in play analysis, performance, and design in creating the concept of a production;
- the ability to develop and guide fully mounted productions of a wide variety of performance style and plays from statement of concept through public performance;
- a broad knowledge of dramatic literature and/or theatre history, including a demonstrated ability to undertake inquiry, investigation, or research associated with various aspects of performance and production;
- the ability to work with collaborators (actors/performers, playwrights/dramaturgs and designers) in the processes of production, including the ability to conduct rehearsals effectively;
- an understanding of basic design principles and of aural and visual comprehension in the theatre and other dramatic media;
- an understanding of all the theatre arts and crafts at a sufficient level of knowledge to communicate with other artists and producers and to make informed critical judgments in all areas of the theatre;
- a basic understanding of the aesthetic, theoretical, and/or technical approaches to create compelling stories and experiences that incorporate new technologies and digital art-making practices in live performance, interactive art installations, and user-based live events;
- the ability to develop and direct various forms of new work that engages diverse writers with multiple life experiences and perspectives; and
- direct at least two full-length, public productions, one of which must receive full technical support.

Dramaturgy Subprogram
Graduates must demonstrate:

- a broad knowledge of the various elements of theatrical production;
- a broad knowledge of theatre history, theory, criticism, and performance studies;
- awareness of current issues and developments in the fields of theatre, playwriting, and dramaturgy;
- advanced skills in the practice of production dramaturgy, including dramaturgical research and writing, and script analysis;
- advanced skills in the practice of new play dramaturgy, including awareness of the creative and dramaturgical potential of digital media in the making of new work; and
- advanced competence in theatrical collaboration, including evidence of collaborating successfully with playwrights, directors, actors, designers, and stage managers in the development and production of new work; an understanding of professional ethics and practice; and awareness of issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as they relate to collaboration.

Playwriting Subprogram
Graduates must demonstrate advanced professional competence in playwriting and dramatic writing including, but not limited to:

- advanced technical skills in dramatic construction;
- the ability to employ and integrate a broad range of knowledge and skills in the various elements of theatrical production;
• the acquisition of advanced understanding and abilities to use theories and methods of script analysis, criticism, and dramaturgy in the development of theatrical and dramatic works;
• the ability to develop a work from concept to finished product and working knowledge of theatre history and theory, as well as of the creative and dramaturgical potential of digital media, and various ways each may influence the creative process;
• an original full-length or equivalent work for their M.F.A. thesis; and
• advanced competence in theatrical collaboration, including evidence of collaborating successfully with directors, dramaturgs, actors, designers, and stage managers in the development and production of new work: an understanding of professional ethics and practice; and awareness of issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as they relate to collaboration.

**Stage Management Subprogram**

Graduates must demonstrate:

• advanced knowledge of all production elements and the ways they can be combined and integrated, including digital media;
• advanced ability to coordinate multiple aspects of production both in rehearsal and in performance, including digital media;
• an understanding of stage management for a broad range of genres including drama, musical theatre, dance, opera, concerts, industrials, and special events;
• the ability to collaborate with actors, designers, directors, musical directors, dramaturgs, choreographers, and special events planners (all other artists) in their processes of creation, performance, and planning; and provide space for diversity and foster social responsibility and change; and
• an understanding of union rules and legal issues relevant to the field.

**Requirements**

The Master of Fine Arts program in theatre arts requires a minimum of 61 s.h. of graduate credit, plus additional courses and production requirements depending on the student’s specialty area of concentration. Students normally must complete six semesters in residence (internships may be substituted).

The graduate program is dedicated to creative development of theatre artists. Graduates have a solid background in major performance theories, dramatic literature, and practices of the past and present as well as in the craft of their chosen specialties.

Special attention is given to understanding the role and importance of live theatre in society. Interactions among the various theatre disciplines are emphasized, both in classes and through the department’s extensive production program. Particular emphasis is placed on the development of new works for the theatre.

Students must make normal progress toward completion of the degree requirements to remain in the program: they must maintain a g.p.a. of at least 2.75 overall and 3.00 in all coursework within the primary area of concentration, they must receive no letter grade in the primary area below B-minus and no grade of U (unsatisfactory) in the primary area, and they must build a record of substantial creative work of high quality. Students who fail to make normal progress are placed on academic probation and given one additional semester to demonstrate their qualifications for earning the degree.

Contact the Department of Theatre Arts for specific information on any of the M.F.A. specialty areas.

**Admission**

Students who demonstrate exceptional ability in acting, directing, dramaturgy, playwriting, design, or stage management may apply for admission to the program of study and production leading to the M.F.A. degree. Admission is based on an interview, audition, and/or a portfolio of relevant work, the undergraduate record or other proof of artistic accomplishment, and letters of recommendation.

Submission of playscripts is the most important element in gaining admission to the Playwrights Workshop.

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

**Career Advancement**

The graduate program in theatre develops not only talent but discipline, self-confidence, and personal vision. Through their work in courses and productions, through teaching and production assistantships, and through the intensive, individual mentoring they receive from faculty, graduate students prepare themselves to contribute to the nation’s culture. They can then enter the profession, joining hundreds of other University of Iowa graduates who have made their mark in theatre, film, television, and the entertainment industry.

**Academic Plans**

**Sample Plan of Study**

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

**Theatre Arts, M.F.A.**

- Acting Subprogram [p. 2]
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**Acting Subprogram**

**Course** | **Title** | **Hours**
--- | --- | ---
Academic Career
Any Semester
Minimum of 72 s.h. of graduate level coursework; graduate transfer credits allowed upon approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on department website. 

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\[ a, b \]
Students must maintain a Graduate College program GPA of 3.00 or higher. 

MFA actors are required to audition for all mainstage productions presented by the department and to perform as cast. Every student is required to perform a minimum of one role each semester.

### Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>First Year Spring</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Year Any Semester</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Year Any Semester</td>
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**Design Subprogram**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Hours</th>
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<td>Academic Career</td>
<td>Foundational elective</td>
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<td>Fall Any Semester</td>
<td>Graduate Design Seminar</td>
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<td>Fall Any Semester</td>
<td>Orientation to Graduate Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall Any Semester</td>
<td>Projects in Theatre Advanced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall Any Semester</td>
<td>Design I course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall Any Semester</td>
<td>Design II course</td>
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<td>Spring Any Semester</td>
<td>Graduate Design Seminar</td>
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<td>Projects in Theatre Advanced</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Any Semester</td>
<td>Theatrical Analysis course</td>
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### Hours

Total Hours 72

*a Maximum of 82 s.h. may be counted toward the degree.

b Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.

c Graduate College program GPA is comprised of all courses that are approved degree requirements. If a student takes more than the minimum required number of semester hours to complete the degree, but all courses taken are eligible to count toward the degree, those courses will be included in the Graduate College program GPA. Must maintain GPA in all coursework within the primary area of concentration and receive no letter grade below B-minus or a U (unsatisfactory) in the primary area.

d Complete at least 9 s.h. for requirement; see the department website for specifics. Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence.

e Usually completed at the end of the second year. Students need to complete a special assignment designed by each program and meet with their Graduate Committee for a comprehensive evaluation (comps) of work to date. This evaluation will determine whether the student will continue their work into the third year and proceed to do a thesis.

f Consists of two components: 1) a written analysis of the actor’s personal creative process, and an annotated resume of roles performed at Iowa; 2) the actor’s professional online presence that is developed, strengthened, and maintained during their tenure at Iowa.

g Successful completion of all requirements.
Complete at least two courses from THTR:3230, THTR:3240,
work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence.
Complete at least two courses from THTR:4230, THTR:4240, THTR:4250; second course taken counts as a foundational elective.
Maximum of 82 s.h. may be counted toward the degree.
Take for six semesters, 1 s.h. each time.
Students must complete specific requirements in the Graduate College program GPA is comprised of all courses that are approved degree requirements. If a student takes more than the minimum required number of semester hours to complete the degree, but all courses taken are eligible to count toward the degree, those courses will be included in the Graduate College program GPA. Must maintain GPA in all coursework within the primary area of concentration and receive no letter grade below B-minus or a U (unsatisfactory) in the primary area.
d 18 s.h. total required; work with academic advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence. Note: THTR:3211 and THTR:4270 are both typically offered only once every three years.
e Take for six semesters, 1 s.h. each time.
f Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate assignments and semester hours; maximum of 5 s.h. in one semester.
g Complete at least two courses from THTR:3230, THTR:3240, THTR:3250.
h Complete at least two courses from THTR:4230, THTR:4240, THTR:4250; second course taken counts as a foundational elective.
i Complete at least 9 s.h. for requirement; see the General Catalog and department website for specifics. Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence.
j Usually completed at the end of the second year. Students need to complete a special assignment designed by each program and meet with their Graduate Committee for a comprehensive evaluation (comps) of work to date. This evaluation will determine whether the student will continue their work into the third year and proceed to do a thesis.
k 12 s.h. total required; work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence.
l Complete at least two courses from THTR:5230, THTR:5240, THTR:5250; second course taken counts as a foundational elective.
m Consists of two parts: 1) a searchable digital portfolio that is housed in the Iowa Research Online, and a summary document (pdf); and 2) the thesis defense, which is a formal portfolio.
n Successful completion of all requirements.

### Directing Subprogram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<td>THTR:3230</td>
<td>Scene Design I</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:5410</td>
<td>Dramaturgy</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:5600</td>
<td>Orientation to Graduate Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:6180</td>
<td>Director’s Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THTR:7300</td>
<td>Playwrights Workshop</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THTR:2880</td>
<td>Installations and Interactive Performance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THTR:5110</td>
<td>Acting for Graduate Non-Actors</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:6180</td>
<td>Director’s Seminar</td>
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<td>THTR:7300</td>
<td>Playwrights Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:7601</td>
<td>M.F.A. Thesis</td>
<td>3</td>
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### First Year

**Fall**
- THTR:3230: Scene Design I: 3
- THTR:5410: Dramaturgy: 3
- THTR:5600: Orientation to Graduate Studies: 1
- THTR:6180: Director’s Seminar: 3
- THTR:7300: Playwrights Workshop: 3

**Spring**
- THTR:2880: Installations and Interactive Performance: 3
- THTR:5110: Acting for Graduate Non-Actors: 3
- THTR:6180: Director’s Seminar: 3
- THTR:7300: Playwrights Workshop: 1
- THTR:7601: M.F.A. Thesis: 3

### Second Year

**Any Semester**
- MFA Comprehensive Evaluation: 3

**Fall**
- THTR:6180: Director’s Seminar: 3
- THTR:7300: Playwrights Workshop: 1
- Design course: 3
- Movement course: 3
### Theatre Arts, M.F.A.

#### Third Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<td>THTR:6150</td>
<td>Vocal Technique</td>
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<td>THTR:6180</td>
<td>Director's Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:7300</td>
<td>Playwrights Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:7601</td>
<td>M.F.A. Thesis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Theatrical Analysis course</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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#### Spring

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<tr>
<td>THTR:6180</td>
<td>Director’s Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:7300</td>
<td>Playwrights Workshop</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Hours</strong></td>
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</table>

- a Maximum of 82 s.h. may be counted toward the degree.
- b Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.
- c Graduate College program GPA of 3.00 or higher.
- d Students must maintain a Graduate College program GPA of 3.00 or higher.
- e Theatrical Analysis course typically consists of a full-length work presented by the department and a written document; includes analysis and preparation materials. The production and the written document form the basis for the student's final evaluation.
- f THTR: 7601 can be taken during either fall or spring of the third year. In the semester when registered for THTR:7601, students may register for one additional course. In the semester not registered for THTR:7601, one elective is typically taken, but students may opt to take two courses this semester.
- g One elective is typically taken, but students may opt to take two electives this semester; choose from design, digital arts, entrepreneurship, literature or dance courses. Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework.
- h The thesis is typically taken, but students may opt to take two electives this semester; choose from design, digital arts, entrepreneurship, literature or dance courses. Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework.
- i The thesis typically consists of a full-length work presented by the department and a written document; includes analysis and preparation materials. The production and the written document form the basis for the student's final evaluation.
- j Theatrical Analysis course typically consists of a full-length work presented by the department and a written document; includes analysis and preparation materials. The production and the written document form the basis for the student's final evaluation.

#### Dramaturgy Subprogram

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:3401</td>
<td>Topics in Dramatic Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:5420</td>
<td>Dramaturgy Practicum</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:5600</td>
<td>Orientation to Graduate Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:7300</td>
<td>Playwrights Workshop</td>
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<td>THTR:4420</td>
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<td>Playwrights Workshop</td>
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<td><strong>Hours</strong></td>
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#### Second Year

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:3401</td>
<td>Topics in Dramatic Literature</td>
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<td>Dramaturgy</td>
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<td>THTR:5420</td>
<td>Dramaturgy Practicum</td>
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<td>THTR:7300</td>
<td>Playwrights Workshop</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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<td>THTR:3401</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:5420</td>
<td>Dramaturgy Practicum</td>
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<td>THTR:6310</td>
<td>Special Topics in Playwriting</td>
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<td>Playwrights Workshop</td>
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<td><strong>Hours</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
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<td>THTR:5420</td>
<td>Dramaturgy Practicum</td>
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<tr>
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Note: a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z.
The Playwriting Subprogram

Graduate College program GPA is comprised of all courses. Maximum of 82 s.h. may be counted toward the degree. Students need to be enrolled for at least 9 s.h., but no more than 15 s.h., each semester.

Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.

Graduate College program GPA is comprised of all courses that are approved degree requirements. If a student takes more than the minimum required number of semester hours to complete the degree, but all courses taken are eligible to count toward the degree, those courses will be included in the Graduate College program GPA. Must maintain GPA in all coursework within the primary area of concentration and receive no letter grade below B-minus or a U (unsatisfactory) in the primary area.

Complete at least 9 s.h. for requirement; see the General Catalog and department website for specifics. Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate level coursework.

Students must complete specific requirements in the area; work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence.

Usually completed at the end of the second year. Students need to complete a special assignment designed by each program and meet with their Graduate Committee for a comprehensive evaluation (comps) of work to date. This evaluation will determine whether the student will continue their work into the third year and proceed to do a thesis.

Select a course in collaboration, directing, or other creative area; work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate level coursework.

Should consist of a significant piece of dramaturgical research that, with subsequent revision and editing, would be publishable in a journal of dramaturgy, history, theory, or criticism.

Successful completion of all degree requirements.

### Playwriting Subprogram

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THTR:7300</td>
<td>Playwrights Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>THTR:7601</td>
<td>M.F.A. Thesis</td>
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<td>Theatrical Analysis course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Total Hours**: 11

### Academic Career

**Any Semester**

Minimum of 64 s.h. of graduate level coursework; graduate transfer credits allowed upon approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on department website. Students must maintain a Graduate College program GPA of 3.00 or higher.

- **Fall**
  - THTR:5600 Orientation to Graduate Studies
  - THTR:6310 Special Topics in Playwriting
  - THTR:7300 Playwrights Workshop
  - Dramatic Literature course

**Hours**: 0

- **Spring**
  - THTR:6300 Guest Seminar

**Hours**: 10

**Second Year**

**Any Semester**

- **Fall**
  - THTR:6310 Special Topics in Playwriting
  - THTR:7300 Playwrights Workshop
  - Dramatic Literature course

**Hours**: 9

- **Spring**
  - THTR:6310 Special Topics in Playwriting
  - THTR:7300 Playwrights Workshop
  - THTR:7601 M.F.A. Thesis
  - Theatrical Analysis course
  - Final Exam

**Hours**: 12

**Total Hours**: 64

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a Maximum of 82 s.h. may be counted toward the degree. Students need to be enrolled for at least 9 s.h., but no more than 15 s.h., each semester.

b Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.

c Graduate College program GPA is comprised of all courses that are approved degree requirements. If a student takes more than the minimum required number of semester hours to complete the degree, but all courses taken are eligible to count toward the degree, those courses will be included in the Graduate College program GPA. Must maintain GPA in all coursework within the primary area of concentration and receive no letter grade below B-minus or a U (unsatisfactory) in the primary area.

d Complete at least 9 s.h. for requirement; see the General Catalog and department website for specifics. Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate level coursework.

e Work with THTR:3401 or other dramatic literature course. Choose from THTR:3401 or other dramatic literature course. Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate level coursework.

f Complete at least 9 s.h. for requirement; see the General Catalog and department website for specifics. Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence.

g Usually completed at the end of the second year. Students need to complete a special assignment designed by each program and meet with their Graduate Committee for a comprehensive evaluation (comps) of work to date. This
Stage Management Subprogram

Course Title Hours

Academic Career

Minimum of 69 s.h. of graduate level coursework; graduate transfer credits allowed upon approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on department website. Students must maintain a Graduate College program GPA of 3.00 or higher.

Any Semester

Select a course in directing, dramaturgy or collaboration; work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate level coursework.

Consists of a full-length play, along with a short (4-6 pages) Introduction placing the work in the context of the students’ work in THTR:7300. The thesis play must represent substantial creative work undertaken in the third year of enrollment, and may consist of a play newly written in the third year or a major revision of a play that has been read and/or produced in the first two years.

Successful completion of all requirements.

Evaluation will determine whether the student will continue their work into the third year and proceed to do a thesis.

Select an acting course for non-graduate actors; work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence.

Maximum of 82 s.h. may be counted toward the degree. Students need to be enrolled for at least 9 s.h., but no more than 15 s.h., each semester.

Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.

Graduate College program GPA is comprised of all courses eligible to count toward the degree, those courses will be included in the Graduate College program GPA. Must maintain GPA in all coursework within the primary area of concentration and receive no letter grade below B-minus or a U (unsatisfactory) in the primary area.

Course topics typically offered on a three-year rotation.

Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework.

For stage managers; work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework.

Complete at least 9 s.h. for requirement; see the General Catalog and department website for specifics. Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence.

Usually completed at the end of the second year. Students need to complete a special assignment designed by each program and meet with their Graduate Committee for a comprehensive evaluation (comps) of work to date. This evaluation will determine whether the student will continue their work into the third year and proceed to do a thesis.

Complete at least 9 s.h. of Individualized Path electives; work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence.

May consist of either a major production or a research project.

Successful completion of all requirements.