

## Field of Study

The Masters Program in Theatre and Dance at UT permits considerable latitude. The Program focuses on the historical development, cultural and theoretical contexts, and artistic significance of theatre and dance disciplines and institutions, as well the interrelationships of theatre arts, and the role of performance in public spheres. The program is highly influenced by interdisciplinary work in performance studies, defining performance in varied and wide cultural contexts. Students are expected to give primary attention to an area of expertise of their choice, while training in the broader theoretical, critical, and historical contexts of the field.

The Performance as Public Practice Program aims to graduate the next generation of leaders in the arts and academia. Our faculty defines "public practice" as activities that include:

- Working as an academic (a professor who melds theory and practice in his/her teaching, scholarship, production, and service)
- Producing and distributing research and scholarship
- Writing performance criticism
- Generating think pieces and op-ed essays for trade and popular publications
- Working as a dramaturg and outreach director
- Arts administration
- Working in public programming with foundations and non-profits
- Establishing public policy
- Writing grants
- Using applied theatre methods and theories
- Teaching in universities, colleges, high schools, and community centers
- Using performance as a tool for understanding communities and difference
- Theorizing performance as a site of civic engagement and often dissent
- Redefining and recontextualizing the role of performance in culture
- Promoting arts-based civic dialogue
- Case-making and agenda-setting for public culture
- Creating and/or producing performance

Graduates will contribute to the public practice of performance through:

- Writing
- Public speaking
- Teaching
- Publishing research and scholarship
- Arts programming
- Arts policy making
- Consulting
- Creating community-based performance work, as well as other modes of performance both on campus and in the Austin community, or in a broader national or international forum

The Program offers students a broad spectrum of approaches, methods, and disciplines. Generally, the Masters Program readies graduates for doctoral study; however, a number of skills, practices, and opportunities common to doctoral study also apply to individuals who have received an M.A. Students who are matriculating can be expected to:

- Make clear and cogent arguments
- Manage and complete complex projects
- Integrate performance history, theory and practice
- Address a range of audiences from scholarly to popular
- Research performance histories, theories, practices, criticism, and literature
- Forge connections among performance, communications, media, television and film studies, anthropology, cultural studies, popular culture, literary studies, gender and queer studies, and other fields and subfields
- Analyze written texts and live performance
- Work as a production dramaturg and outreach director, collaborating with playwrights, directors, production teams, and audiences
- Interpret and develop performance as a public practice in variety of contexts, including commercial theatre, activist theatre, theatre of the oppressed, and dance or physical theatre
- Teach courses ranging from large introductory lectures to specialized courses at the community college level and in community settings
- Create and implement outreach strategies that expand the meanings of performance to various audiences

### **Coursework:**

The Masters Degree Program requires successful completion of at least 36 hours of course work and thesis preparation:

#### 1. Core 1: Required Courses (3 courses at 3 credits each = 9 credits)

Note: These are skills-based courses are meant to be useful across a range of performance practices.

- Proseminar in Performance as Public Practice (TD 391)
- Research Methods (TD 388)
- Supervised Teaching in Theatre and Dance (TD 398T)

#### 2. Core 2: Required Courses (2 courses at 3 credits each = 6 credits)

Note: These courses specifically address performance theory and practice.

- 1 course in Performance Analysis - either Performance Analysis (TD 387D) or Dramaturgy (TD 387D)
- 1 course in Performance Creation - Performance Ethnography (TD 387D), Solo Performance (TD 387D), Directing (TD 481 G) or other applicable course

#### 3. Courses from PPP or the Department of Theatre and Dance curriculum

(3 courses at 3 credits each = 9 credits) Note: The actual courses are chosen by the student and the faculty advisor. The coursework should support the student's thesis research interests.

#### 4. Electives (2 courses at 3 credits each = 6 credits)

These courses must be taken "outside the major area," according to the Graduate School Catalogue. The faculty recommends that the students pursue these courses from offerings in other departments at UT and that they inform the student's thesis project.

**Undergraduate Courses:** The Office of Graduate Studies allows M.A. students to include up to nine hours of upper-division undergraduate courses on their programs of study; however, since most M.A. students are preparing to pursue a Ph.D., the PPP faculty discourages M.A. students from including undergraduate courses as part of their graduate study. Such courses should only be taken after consultation with a faculty adviser.

#### 5. Thesis Writing and Research Hours (6 credits)

Candidates for the M.A. degree must complete a thesis project as the major requirement for the degree. The process for designing the project consists of several steps:

- At the end of the student's first year of coursework, he/she proposes three faculty who would be appropriate to supervise the thesis project. The PPP area faculty consult and select one of these three faculty members as supervisor. Faculty supervisors must be members of the Graduate Studies Committee
- Prior to the end of the spring semester, the student and supervisor meet to discuss a research agenda for the summer, which will allow the student to spend time delimiting the topic and the contours of the project.
- At the beginning of the fall semester, the student and faculty supervisor meet to finalize the topic and to begin developing the thesis project proposal.

In general, the thesis proposal is a concise, descriptive document that integrates the following elements to a total of about 12 pages:

- 1) **Introduction:** This section introduces the project and gives the readers a sense of why the work is important. The author states the argument, generally as a question or challenge to the field.
- 2) **Description of Project and its Significance:** This section narrows the focus of the project, giving the reader a sense of the parameters of the study. It also emphasizes why the work is important and how it makes a contribution to research and scholarship.
- 3) **Review of Literature:** This section details the precedents of the project, explaining why and states how this thesis will use them. The review of literature also projects how the final document will fit into the larger field. In this section, the author focuses only on the works that contribute to the entire study, not just a chapter or small part of the whole.
- 4) **Methodology:** This section details how the author will conduct his/her study and what materials will be used. The methodology details what questions will be asked (to illustrate the thesis and arrive at a conclusion), how materials will be analyzed, how the parts fit together, and what criteria facilitate inclusion in the study. In short, this section demonstrates the author's ability to undertake the project.

5) Chapter Breakdown and Conclusion: This section shows how work will be divided into chapters and what will comprise each one. The author describes each chapter fully and concludes the proposal.

The thesis proposal will be reviewed and approved by a subcommittee of the PPP program faculty. Once it is approved, in consultation with the faculty supervisor, the student will select two other members of the Graduate Studies Committee to serve on the thesis project committee.

During the writing and research process, the faculty supervisor will work most closely with the student, although other committee members might be approached for additional guidance. The final draft of the thesis will be presented to the committee by the specified deadline each spring, and an oral defense of the project will be scheduled. The thesis should generally consist of three-25 page chapters.

After successfully passing the oral defense and receiving approval of the project by the committee, the student will submit the final document in accordance with the guidelines of the Office of Graduate Studies.

### **Continuing in the Masters Program**

Each semester, the PPP faculty and by the Graduate Studies Committee XCOM evaluate student progress. Continuing in the Program depends on satisfactory progress, as determined by the Graduate School policies in the most current bulletin. The PPP faculty expects a consistent grade point average of at least 3.0, and no record of lingering incompletes. Unsatisfactory process could result in rescinded financial aid awards and cancelled teaching assistant opportunities, as well as a letter from the Director of Graduate Studies detailing a period of required probation.

Students passing successfully through the M.A. Program apply to continue in the Ph.D. Program, should they wish to do so, by the application deadline set each year. Successful admission to the Ph.D. Program requires the completion of all M.A. coursework and the thesis project, and approval by the PPP area faculty and the Graduate School.