ACTING THESIS GUIDELINES

Prerequisites: Audition for and be cast in a main stage production.

Deadline: One week prior to the faculty meeting after you are cast.

Length: Brief, but compelling.

WRITTEN PROPOSAL

State the name of the play and the role you would like to use for your Acting Thesis. In an effort to persuade the faculty that this role rises to the degree of challenge required of an Acting Thesis project, describe what you hope to learn through the rehearsal and performance of the role, and in what ways you think this role will help you grow as an actor. Refer to the questions asked in After the Production Opens below to help generate your ideas. This proposal should be brief but compelling. Allowing ample time for rewrite, review your proposal with the Acting Thesis Advisor. The proposal is due in Acting Thesis Advisor-approved form no later than one week prior to the faculty meeting after you are cast.

AFTER THE PROPOSAL IS ACCEPTED

After your proposal receives faculty approval, the Acting Thesis Advisor will ask two additional theatre faculty members to serve on your committee, excluding the director of the production.

During rehearsals, keep a comprehensive and detailed rehearsal journal.

AFTER THE PRODUCTION OPENS

Use your journal notes to write a paper analyzing your rehearsal and performance process. Copies of the paper are to be distributed to your committee by the Friday following the show’s closing performance. The paper is a means for you to reflect on your performance critically, and for the committee to evaluate it further. The paper may figure prominently in your Thesis Project Defense.

In your paper, feel free to write about whatever arises for you in order of importance, but be sure to touch on the following in any sequence that seems appropriate:

1. PREPARATION
   a. Describe your preparation for the role. What outside research did you undertake? What dramaturgical information was useful? How did you prepare physically and vocally?

2. EDUCATION
   a. In what way did your work on the role intersect with class work from your course of study here at Villanova?
3. **COLLABORATION**

   a. Describe your work with the director. What did you understand as his/her vision for the play? To what extent were you successful in contributing to the realization of the vision? What were rehearsals like for you? What kind of collaboration were you able to establish with the director? What elements contributed to the success of your work with the director and what were the obstacles, especially your own?

4. **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

   a. What were you most afraid of in playing the role/ how did you manage your fears? What were the traps of the role? Did you fall into any of them?

   b. What were the greatest challenges in rehearsal and performance? How did you attempt to meet the challenges?

   c. What new ground, if any, have you broken with the rehearsal and performance of the role? How has working on the role changed you as an actor? Describe a specific turning point or breakthrough you experienced in a rehearsal or performance.

**THE ACTING THESIS PROJECT DEFENSE**

Arrange a date with Acting Thesis Advisor for your Thesis Project Defense, which should take place no later than two weeks after the closing performance.

Be prepared to speak on some aspect of the process for 10-15 minutes. You may use your paper as a reference point to discuss your experience of the role, but do not read from it. Don’t repeat what is in your paper; feel free to extend outward from what it contains. Be prepared to answer questions from the committee that will arise in response to this presentation and to the work seen in the production.

The Committee votes Pass or Fail at the end of the Thesis Project Defense, but may choose to wait a week before issuing the decision in order for one or more Committee members to write a response to be issued along with it. A response may also be written even if a Pass or Fail is issued at the conclusion of the Thesis Project Defense.