Graduate Studies in THEATRE

Join Our Community of Scholarship and Artistic Productions

Villanova’s Master of Arts degree in Theatre is one of the only theatre M.A. programs in the United States that places equal emphasis on scholarly and creative work. Students undergo a rigorous course of study that is a combination of scholarly, artistic and practical approaches to theatre. The program is designed for the student who is ready to deepen his or her understanding of the scope and content of theatre and drama, from classic to contemporary and from East to West. Students join our program with a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university with a strong academic record and matriculate into the program from a wide variety of undergraduate majors, spanning the humanities and the sciences. The result is a vibrant, diverse community of scholars with passion for theatre as a common denominator.

Why should you choose Villanova’s Theatre Program?

• Learn by theory and practice: The experience and knowledge you gain working on theatrical productions – combined with courses in dramaturgy, script analysis and dramatic literature – will allow you to embark on a career as an actor, director, stage manager, playwright, dramaturg, administrator, teacher or critic.
• Study with faculty who are award-winning theatre practitioners actively involved in professional theater internationally, nationally and regionally.
• Study on a full- or part-time basis.
• Enjoy competitive graduate tuition rates.
• Apply for a graduate assistantships and scholarships.
• Access the robust theatre community in and around Philadelphia.

Choose Your Course of Graduate Study

Master of Arts in Theatre

• Study theatre history, theory and dramatic criticism in core courses.
• Choose from a range of elective studies in acting, directing, design and playwriting.
• Degree requirements include 36 credit hours, participation in department productions and one comprehensive examination.
• Your studies will culminate in a thesis project in a selected artistic or research area.

Master of Arts in Theatre with Certificate in Nonprofit Management

This new program combines the scholarly, creative and practical curriculum of the M.A. in Theatre with a certificate designed to facilitate a career in the nonprofit sector. In addition to the theater curriculum, you will take a course in Theatre Management and four courses from the Master of Public Administration program in nonprofit management, including Financial Management, Effective Nonprofit Management, Nonprofit Fundraising and one elective. This unique combination of creative, practical theatre and nonprofit management expertise can position you for a sustainable career in the nonprofit sector.

Graduate Certificate in Practical Theatre

• Gain a broad background in practical theatre
• Acquire the skills, vocabulary and methodology fundamental to the practice of theatre
• Complete five performance- or production-related courses (15 credit hours)
• Customize the curriculum to your areas of interest
Award-Winning Productions
Each year the theatre department produces a four-play season with selections chosen from a broad range of classic and contemporary plays and musicals. Productions are directed by faculty and distinguished guest artists, and designed by resident and freelance designers. Graduate students, supervised by a full-time production staff, are the mainstay of the season, serving as actors, stage managers and members of the production crew. Villanova Theatre productions are reviewed by the major Philadelphia and suburban media and supported by a subscriber base of over 700 patrons. Villanova Theatre is an active member of the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia, as well as the national American College Theatre Festival. Since 1995, the theatre department has received 52 nominations and six Barrymore Awards for Excellence in Theatre from the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia.

Explore Our Curriculum
Core courses include:
• Script Analysis
• Dramaturgy: Classic Traditions
• Dramaturgy: Modern Traditions
• Dramatic Vision & Form (Classic)
• Dramatic Vision & Form (Modern)

Elective courses include:
• Principles of Acting
• Sound and Movement
• Characterization
• Musical Theatre
• Acting Styles
• Scenography
• Directing
• Directing Styles
• Playwriting Structure and Style
• Irish Drama
• The Teaching of Theatre
• Solo Performance
• Gender, Politics & Performance
• Theatre Production Practicum

“Students in the program take foundational classes together (which bonds you as a group, not unlike the way a cast, a department or a team might in the world beyond school) but then are given the flexibility to pursue their own interests and talents. The producing arm of the program allowed me to put into practice that which I was learning in the classroom -- and I think that having our work be presented in such a very public way (to the entire Philadelphia/Delaware Valley Community) makes for a terrific learning experience. You learn by doing, falling (sometimes) and then are given the support to try it all over again.”

- Michele Volansky, ’92
Chair and Associate Professor, Department of Drama, Washington College
Associate Artist and Conference Dramaturg, PlayPenn

For more information:
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