

## PLAYWRITING THESIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

### Prerequisites

- Course Requirements: Playwriting

**Budget:** Playwriting Thesis students are afforded a \$100 budget. Students whose projects have been approved should contact the Business Manager to ascertain which kind of expenses can be reimbursed, and how to document expenses for reimbursement.

**Proposal Deadline:** Proposals must be submitted for review no later than one week before the faculty meeting at which the proposal will be discussed.

### Timetable

- Candidates should initiate projects by **contacting the Director of Graduate Theses** (Prof. Michael Hollinger) to discuss their interest and the scope of their project.
- Following this initial step, Michael will connect the student with their **Playwriting Thesis Advisor** (typically, though not always, himself).
- Under the guidance of the Advisor, the candidate should develop a **written proposal**, including a preliminary bibliography. Most likely, this proposal will go through three or more revisions before it will be considered by the full faculty.
- The proposal should be submitted to the faculty at least one week before the faculty meeting at which it will be discussed. **Revisions may be requested by the faculty prior to project approval. Proposals are not always approved.**
- Once approved, the candidate will be invited by **Director of Graduate Theses** to request a committee. In addition to the Thesis Advisor, the committee is composed of two members of the Villanova theatre faculty, or faculty and appropriate production staff. The director of the production cannot serve on the committee. **Students should not personally invite faculty members onto their committees.**
- The candidate and Thesis Advisor should work together to establish the **timeline** for the development of the project, including draft due dates, booking of space for rehearsals and the final reading, casting of actors, and the oral defense (often immediately following the public reading). **A completed budget form, with receipts, must be submitted to the Business Manager at the time the defense is scheduled.**
- At the defense, the student will meet with the committee to discuss the work completed and how the Thesis Project has influenced and will impact their growth and development as an artist. The student will lead off this conversation with a **10-minute presentation on their process and completed work**, including observations made as a result of collaborating in rehearsal and responses to the public reading. Following the entire discussion (approximately 45-50 minutes), the committee will announce its Pass/Fail decision.

## **Written Proposal:**

Length of Proposal: **6-12 double-spaced pages**. The written proposal should include the following:

- I. Title Page** that lists:
  - Title for Thesis
  - Proposed reading date
  
- II. Introductory Narrative** (2-3 pages)
  - Discuss why you have chosen a Playwriting Thesis as the culminating project of your study. Be certain to scaffold in a discussion of your coursework and how it prepares or relates to your project. Consider challenges and opportunities.
  - Included here, briefly describe:
    1. Your **development** as a playwright prior to your thesis work.
    2. What you hope to learn about yourself as a playwright through the process.
    3. In what ways you think this project in particular will help you grow and challenge you as a theatre artist.
  
- III. Project Description** (2-4 pages)
  - A prose outline or synopsis of the basic plot elements needed to tell the story.
  - A character list identifying all characters, including a brief description of each character and that character's function in the play.
  - The thought and intentions behind the play. What does the writer wish to explore with this piece?
  - A brief description of style and genre, including approach to language, use of setting, and acting style.
  - If at the time of proposal the play has already been partially drafted, the writer should briefly summarize the writing process to date – course work on the play, major decisions or changes of direction, areas of research already explored, etc.
  
- IV. Proposed Timeline**
  - A list of key dates for project development, including proposed draft deadlines and periodic meetings with the advisor. This should include the delivery of a reading draft, no later than one week prior to the scheduled reading, and the final reading/defense date.
  
- V. Goals** (1 page or less)
  - Articulate the **three most important goals** that you have formulated as key outcomes of this Thesis project. These goals should go *beyond* the basic expectations of the work.

1. Briefly discuss WHY these goals are important to your development.
2. Identify your action steps toward accomplishing these goals.
3. Number these goals.

**VI. Bibliography**, identifying necessary dramaturgical research and resources

**VII. Appendices**

### **After Approval**

After your proposal receives faculty approval, the Thesis Director will seek your preferences and ask two additional theatre faculty members to serve on your committee, excluding the director of the production. **Students should not personally invite faculty members onto their committees.**

During the process:

- The Playwriting Thesis culminates in a concert reading of the play. It is up to the candidate and the Thesis Advisor to establish the development and final performance schedules, including regular check-ins, draft due dates, etc.
- It is the candidate's responsibility to book rehearsal and performance spaces, to enlist a reading director and cast. However, the Advisor can be of great use in troubleshooting production issues, so communicate any roadblocks in a timely way.
- The candidate must submit a reading draft of the script to the full Thesis Committee for review at least one week prior to the scheduled reading. If the Advisor or another Committee member determines that the work in progress is unlikely to be ready for the scheduled reading, this performance will be postponed until a later date.

### **Budget/Reimbursement**

The Theatre Department maintains a \$100 budget for the reimbursement of Playwriting Thesis expenses. Students whose projects have been approved should contact the Business Manager to ascertain which kind of expenses can be reimbursed and how to document expenses for reimbursement. **Please submit a completed Thesis Budget form (found at the end of this document) to the Business Manager and Department Chair for approval no later than one month prior to the scheduled thesis defense.**

### **The Defense**

The student will meet with the committee to discuss the work completed and how the Thesis Project has influenced and will impact their growth and development as an artist. The student

will lead off this conversation with a **10-minute presentation on their research and design work**. Following the entire discussion (approximately 45-50 minutes), the committee will announce its Pass/Fail decision.

At the end of the academic year, the full faculty will meet to discuss all thesis passes and determine whether one or more students will be officially designated “Pass With Distinction” on their academic transcripts.

# Playwriting Thesis Project Budget

Maximum request: \$100

Name:

Date submitted:

Scheduled thesis defense date:

*Must be submitted to Elisa Hibbs for approval no later than one month prior to defense.*

LINE ITEM	AMOUNT	NOTES
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED:</b>		

**OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Date received:

Circle one:

APPROVED

NOT APPROVED

REQUIRES EDITS AND RESUBMISSION