

Mississippi University for Women

Department of Theatre

Student Handbook

2017 – 2018

Theatre Faculty

Mr. David Carter
Associate Professor of Theatre and Chair, Department of Theatre
dbcarter@muw.edu
Office: 233 Cromwell 329-7353

Mr. William “Peppy” Biddy)
Professor of Theatre and Director of Graduate Studies
wgbiddy@muw.edu
Office: 235 Cromwell 329-7260

Mr. Lee Crouse
Associate Professor of Theatre
dlcrouse@muw.edu
Office: 236 Cromwell 329-7162

Mrs. Sarah Shotts
Instructor, Online Theatre Appreciation
Lowell, Arkansas
sdshotts@muw.edu

DEGREE INFORMATION

Mississippi University for Women offers the following degrees for a major in theatre:
Bachelor of Arts in Theatre (BA), Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Education, Master of Fine Arts in
Physical Theatre at the Accademia dell’Arte in Arezzo Italy.

ACCREDITATION

Mississippi University for Women is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern
Association of Colleges and Schools.

INTRODUCTION

The following Mission Statement and Educational Goals have been designed by Theatre
faculty to serve as guides for the activities of the department. It is our hope that work in the
classroom and on the stage is reflective of these principles, which strive to view the Performing
Arts not only as an entertainment, but also as a means to transform the lives of those affected by
it.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Theatre Program aims to empower students through study of theory, history, and aesthetics of the performance event; strives to develop an appreciation of Theatre as a complex means of artistic expression of humanity's struggle to understand itself; and is committed to the development of dynamic, personal experiences with those essential skills necessary to create, teach, and/or perform.

The Program encourages each student to exercise aesthetic judgment; think critically; work collaboratively; synthesize and apply principles in the process of production; engage in creative expression; develop personal discipline and constructive work habits; and foster respect for one's self, colleagues, audience and community.

The Theatre Program makes available to all students at Mississippi University for Women opportunities to participate in an environment which attempts to propagate, disseminate, and nurture an understanding of the truths which the art of Theatre has to offer, through experiences which are joyful, beautiful, and passionate as they reflect the toughness and vitality of modern life.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

- To serve as an educational /artistic resource for our campus and community.
- To provide each student with opportunities to strengthen basic organizational, communication, and analytical skills, enhance leadership potential, and an understanding of the human condition.
- To enhance student appreciation of our cultural diversity within the arts.
- To encourage students' potential to make cognitive connections with work of his/her academic studies and the social, historical, philosophical and humanistic issues they illuminate.
- To introduce people of all ages to the joys and beauty of live performance and the potential as a learning tool with which to better understand and participate in contemporary life.

REQUIREMENTS / POLICIES / GUIDELINES

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all classes with the exception of illness, emergency or University approved activity.

The Department of Theatre attendance policy requires attendance at 85% of all classes. That permits a maximum of the following unexcused absences:

- 2 absences in a class meeting once a week
- 4 absences in a class meeting twice a week
- 6 absences in a class meeting three times a week

UTILIZATION OF CROMWELL HALL

Students have access to Cromwell Hall from 7 a.m. until Midnight Monday through Friday.

The doors at Cromwell are locked by 6 p.m., but the building is not officially closed until midnight on Monday through Friday. If you are in the building working on a project, you will need to leave by midnight.

A limited number of after-hours-access cards are available to students with a demonstrated need to be in the building after hours. Students will sign for these cards, and the cards must be turned in the week of final exams. Failure to turn in the cards will result in penalties. The cards operate a card reader attached to a door on the north end of Cromwell Hall.

Campus police may walk through the building and check on students. When you leave, please make SURE the door closes behind you.

Smoking, Food, Drink:

By State Law there can be no smoking in a public school in the state of Mississippi. Cromwell Hall is designated as a smoke-free area. Therefore, **no smoking is permitted within Cromwell Hall or within 20 feet of any exit.**

DO NOT SMOKE ON THE FRONT PORCH OF CROMWELL. THE SMOKING BUCKET IS FOR EXTINGUISHING ONLY.

Food and drinks are prohibited in classrooms, rehearsal studio, and the theatres. The Green Room is the only appropriate place to have food and beverages.

General:

In case of an emergency, Campus Security may be reached at MUW extension 7777.

Combination locks are now installed on Rooms 238 and 239. Students enrolled in theatre courses who need access to 238 and 239 will receive combination to those doors.

It is the responsibility of the student to schedule a time for applied lessons. Scheduling must be accomplished during the first week of classes each semester.

Theatre majors are required to attend a predetermined number of scheduled events publicized at the beginning of each semester. Attendance at these events will be reflected in your TH 400 grade.

THEATRE SERVICE AWARDS

Theatre service scholarships are awarded to students who actively participate in theatre productions. Awards are directly related to attendance at all rehearsals and performances. The awards may be given at various times in the school year, and may be retracted if student does not fulfill agreed upon obligations.

Any student receiving a theatre service award must be enrolled in TH 400 at time of award.

REHEARSAL DEMEANOR

- Arrive at rehearsal 10-15 minutes early so you are ready to begin at the designated time. Any tardiness or absence from rehearsal, costume fitting, or call time may result in lowering of grade in TH 400 and/or decrease in Service Scholarship, or replacement.
- Wear shoes, clothing, and hair style appropriate to the individual rehearsal. Flip flops or open toe shoes are not appropriate footwear for rehearsals.
- Bring a pencil (not a pen) and paper to every rehearsal for notes during and after rehearsal. If a director gives a note to change something for the next rehearsal, always write it down.
- Sit quietly but attentively during notes. Someone else's note might be useful to you. *Unless absolutely necessary, do not comment on or discuss each note given.*
- The only people qualified and in authority to fix even the smallest of problems are the director, the technical director, the designers, the musical director/conductor, or the stage manager. Actors never correct other actors or technicians; technicians never correct other technicians or actors unless given authority by the director or stage manager to do so.

- Upon arrival to each technical/dress rehearsal, initial the sign-in sheet on the call board. If you must leave after signing in, you must obtain permission from the stage manager.
- Inform family and friends that no one but cast and crew are allowed backstage before or during a dress rehearsal or performances. They are welcome in the lobby after the show. Actors are not permitted to be in the lobby before or after the show in costume or makeup.
- No one is permitted to rehearsal without the director's permission.
- Never show up to a rehearsal in an "altered state." Even one beer or glass of wine at dinner right before rehearsing or performing can adversely affect your work.
- Please leave your personal problems and grievances at the door when you come to a rehearsal or performance. They can be detrimental to your work and others'.
- No food and no drinks (other than water) are allowed in the theatre, costume shop, or dressing rooms. Please use the Green Room for meals. Throw away your trash, even water bottles.
- Prop tables are for props only. Props are only to be handled by the actor assigned to the prop. Return all props to prop table at end of rehearsal. Ditto for furniture. Theatre is a Collaborative Art Form, pitch in and help.
- Cell phones should be turned off during rehearsals.

POLICIES FOR PERFORMANCE (INCLUDING AUDITIONS):

Nose or tongue jewelry is not allowed on the stage during performances. Tattoos must be covered if they are not appropriate to the character being portrayed.

No flash photography is permitted during performances. Theatre productions may *never* be videotaped by an audience member.

Cellular telephones must be turned off during performances.

Children under the age of 4 may not attend a public performance of MUW Theatre production (unless the production is specifically deemed as "Theatre for Young Audiences.")

Department events strive to start **on-time**. Please ask your family and friends to arrive before the event begins, as there are times when latecomers may not be seated, and "knowing someone in the performance" is not insurance of special treatment. Because most of our Department's performances are seated on a first-come, first-served basis, please do not save seats for someone simply because they cannot arrive on-time.

AUDITION POLICY

All Theatre majors are expected to audition for all major Theatre Departments productions. Students are expected to attend auditions prepared, prompt, and in appropriate dress. Students should always wear hair and clothing styles that look professional; sloppiness is never appropriate for any kind of audition. If a student has a question about preparing for the audition, he or she should ask the director early enough to make the necessary preparations. Students are also expected to come to auditions with the dates of any commitments that may fall during the rehearsal/performance period, and write them on the audition form.

Students are expected to accept cast and crew positions to which they are assigned.

The faculty members are willing to and expect to help students in their preparation for both on-and-off campus auditions. Students should, however, rehearse with faculty members no later than 48 hours before the audition.

OFF CAMPUS PERFORMANCE POLICY

The faculty encourages all performing experiences which are educationally valid and which are in line with the student's individual abilities, needs, and goals. However, since there is more to be gained from performing than simply "experience," the faculty places highest priority on productions on the campus, which are designed with specific educational objectives as their primary goals.

Students majoring in theatre may appear in off-campus/theatrical productions, only with the approval of the faculty. The faculty will advise students as to the educational value of the off-campus opportunities. Students who hold merit or service scholarships in Theatre are expected to participate fully in on-campus performance activities, and in order to appear in an off-campus production they must have the written approval of the Chair of Theater.

BORROWING DEPARTMENTAL COSTUMES AND PROPS

Costumes and props may be borrowed for classroom use **ONLY!** These items must be checked out "in person" and returned promptly. Borrowing departmental materials is a privilege..... **NOT** a right!!!! Please treat any items you borrow as if they were your own. Failure to do so, or to return them on time, will result in the loss of your access to the shops!

BORROWING DEPARTMENTAL BOOKS

MUW Theatre owns a collection of scripts and theatre reference books which are located in Mr. Biddy's office in Room 235. Students may check-out a script or book for classroom use (acting scenes, monologues, research, etc.) Books should be returned within two weeks. An e-mail reminder will be sent out once at the end of each semester. An unreturned book may be grounds for a hold being placed on your account and/or deduction from your service award to replace lost books.

THEATRE PRACTICUM

TH 400

All students in a cast or crew of a major season production must register for TH 400. The requirements for the successful completion of TH 400 are as follows:

1. Students must undertake at least one project on a major production during the regular semester.
2. While almost every legitimate theatre activity may be credited as a project (with the exception of ushering), all projects must be approved by the faculty supervisor before work on them begins. No credit can be assigned retroactively.
3. In addition to other assignments, all TH 400 students are required to attend the strike for each production. Students not attending strikes will be required to make up additional shop hours for each strike hour missed.
4. The following activities are considered valid projects. Others may be approved at the discretion of the faculty.

PROJECTS (full-length faculty-directed production)

- a) Cast members
- b) Stage-manager
- c) Assistant stage manager/props
- d) Props master
- e) Light crew (hang and focus/running crew)
- f) Sound crew (set up/running crew)
- g) Master electrician
- h) Set construction crew (45 hours minimum)
- i) Costume construction crew (45 hours minimum)

CREW RESPONSIBILITIES

Stage Manager (SM) - is a position of highest responsibility for which previous experience backstage and/or in 320 Directing and Theatre Management is helpful. The SM duties are described in the MUW SM guide.

Assistant Stage Manager/Props (ASM) - works with the stage manager and the prop master under the guidance of the technical director. Usually, two ASMs are needed for a Mainstage production. There are two distinct roles to this position:

- 1) Assists the Property Master in gathering the props for productions and also, with the SM, gathers the “rehearsal props” for use. Shopping may be involved, so having access to a vehicle is helpful.
- 2) Assists the Stage Manager during the rehearsal period as needed and, during the run of the production, works in concert with the Stage Manager to assure the smooth operation of the backstage areas.

Property Master (PM) - is a position of great responsibility for which previous experience as an Assistant Stage Manager and/or in TH 217 Stagecraft or TH 317 Stage Crafts II would be helpful. The PM works with the designer and the director under the guidance of the technical director and is responsible for locating all of the properties used in the production. These are all the items used on stage that are not part of the set or costumes, and may be pulled from stock, purchased, borrowed, built, painted or found. This may include shopping at antique, junk, thrift stores, etc. Having access to a vehicle is almost essential. The PM handles the money spent on purchases for the production and keeps a record of the monies spent. During the production the PM “runs” the props backstage and makes repairs as needed.

Master Electrician (ME) - is a position of great responsibility for which previous experience as a light technician and/or TH 318 Stage Lighting is helpful. The ME works under the guidance of the lighting designer (LD) and is responsible for implementing the design decisions of the LD. The ME may organize the lighting technicians that will make up the hang/focus crew, train them in proper procedure, prepare the lighting equipment for use, schedule the hang/focus, run the hang/focus sessions, locate and purchase any color media, patterns, rental and special equipment. The ME may also keep records of expenditures, take notes during the cue setting, tech and dress rehearsals, and make changes as needed by the LD. During the run or the production, the ME is responsible for completion of a sound and light check and repair of any problems before each performance.

Wardrobe Assistant - is an important position for the smooth running of the production and can be done by someone at any experience level. Usually two to three wardrobe persons are needed per production, working under the supervision of the Costume Designer (CD). They work with the CD to assist with the construction and fitting of costumes. During the production they assist actors in changing costumes and keeping track of costume pieces. The Wardrobe Crew is also responsible for maintaining and

cleaning the costumes after each performance. Any additional responsibilities are assigned by the CD.

Lighting Technician/Follow spot Operator/Board Operator - is to work with the ME during the preparation of the lighting instruments, hang and focus and gel the instruments, prepare any special effects, program the light board, run the board during all the technical and dress rehearsals and performances, assist in the light and sound check, and run the follow spots. Prior experience is not necessary.

Stage Crew - is not only necessary for any production but, is also a way for those with varying levels of experience to be involved in the production process. The duties will vary from show to show but usually include preparation of the stage for use at each performance, set up of stage units, cleaning of the stage/set floor, and setting up the furniture. It may include construction, finishing and painting of the scenery, operation of the lift/revolve system, slide or scenic projectors, fog and smoke machines, and/or other special effects, and any other responsibilities as assigned by the TD.

USE OF SECOND STAGE

Second Stage may be used for class rehearsal time, but students must comply with the following rules:

1. Students may use cubes and chairs, and must return them after each rehearsal.
2. All set pieces and props must be struck after each rehearsal.
3. All trash must be disposed of appropriately before leaving the Theatre.
4. All lights must be turned off before leaving.
5. Other set pieces may NOT be brought into Second Stage without permission from a faculty member.
6. NO FOOD, and NO DRINK other than water are allowed in Second Stage at any time.

SOPHOMORE REVIEWS

Each student interested in continuing a major or minor in Theatre must complete an interview with the faculty prior to the end of the sophomore year. The interview is designed to assess the student's abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. The faculty will make recommendations to the student concerning completion of the program and goal setting.

SENIOR PROJECT

The Senior Project for Theatre Majors is designed by the college to be a capstone experience for the senior student. The faculty is committed to making sure that Senior Project will allow the student to demonstrate abilities in a significant way.

SUMMER THEATRE WORK AND INTERNSHIPS

The faculty encourages all students intending to pursue a career in Theatre to actively search out summer work and/or related internships. This type of work can prove to be an invaluable experience for a student. It provides opportunities for new learning experiences, begins a network of contacts in the field, and adds to his or her resume.

There are several ways to find out about companies offering this type of work.

1. The Bulletin Board -

Check the bulletin board in the hallway. All notices received by the department are posted there. Each notice provides specific information about how to apply to that organization.

2. Directories -

The Theatre Office has directories of Summer Theatres, Regional Theatre, and internships that are available for student use. The Theatre also subscribes to ArtSEARCH which are services that list various job openings and internships.

3. Unified Auditions/Interviews-

Several Organizations hold large “cattle call” auditions for summer work. These auditions provide the opportunity for students to audition or interview for a large number of companies at one time.

-The largest of these auditions is at the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC) held in March. Because these auditions are so large, there is a state screening process actors must go through.

-Two other organizations that hold unified auditions are the National Institute of Outdoor Drama in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the MidWest Theatre Auditions in St. Louis, Missouri. These organizations are not as large as SETC and do not have a screening audition as of yet.

-A third large audition is UPTA in Memphis. You must be a graduating senior to participate.

-Notices of these auditions will be posted on the bulletin boards.

WORK STUDY

There are a limited number of work-study hours available in the Department of Theatre. The jobs range from clerical work to scene shop maintenance. Work study is paid through MUW at minimum wage. Positions are based on skill and seniority. Any work-study student who does not report for duty may be replaced.

OTHER

All students in the Department ***MUST*** have a MUW e-mail address, and are obligated to check it every day for Departmental announcements, and/or important communication from one your instructors.

* Due to current budget adjustments, financial assistance for student travel to conferences, auditions, competitions will not be available until further notice.

All students are required to check the ***CALL BOARD*** each day for important communication.

IMPORTANT DATES: 2017-2018

August 29: General Interest Meeting Cromwell Theatre

September 4: Labor Day Holiday

September 8-11: Tennessee Williams Tribute; *Orpheus Descending*

Sept. 12: Auditions for *Silent Sky*, 6:00 PM-Cromwell Theatre

Sept 22: *Lone Star*

September 28: LAST DAY TO DROP OR WITHDRAW FROM A COURSE
WITHOUT RECEIVING A GRADE OF WP OR WF

October 9& 10: Fall Break

October 20: Midterm Grades due

October 26-28: *Silent Sky* performs in Cromwell Theatre

November 18 & 19: SETC Screening Auditions at MUW (Registration runs
September 15 to November 1)

November 23-24: Thanksgiving Holidays

December 8: Last day of regular classes

December 11-15: Final Exam Week

January 10: Spring classes begin

January 11-14: MS Theatre Association Annual Festival, right here on the MUW
Campus

January 17: LAST DAY TO ADD/DROP A CLASS VIA BANNER WEB

February 14: LAST DAY TO DROP OR WITHDRAW FROM A COURSE
WITHOUT RECEIVING A GRADE OF WP OR WF

February 21-22: *The Stinky Cheese Man* performs in Rent Auditorium

March 7-11: SETC Convention; Mobile AL

March 9: Midterm Grades due

March 12-16: Spring Break

March 30-April 2: Mid-semester Holiday

April 4-6: Directing Projects

April 22-25: Homecoming; The Last Musical Revue

April 27: ALL-CLEAN/ Last Day of Class

April 29: Theatre Planning Retreat

April 30-May 4: Final Exam Week

May 5: Commencement