THEATRE

(The M.F.A. in Playwriting program has been placed on hiatus for the 2018 - 2019 academic year. Application information and deadlines for the 2019 - 2020 academic year will be posted late summer 2019.)

The Fordham University Theatre Program is highly regarded as one of the most outstanding theatre training programs in the country. The program combines the intimacy of a small conservatory with an exceptional liberal arts education, and the rich resources and opportunities available in the world capital of the performing arts.

For more information about the Theatre department, please visit our page on the Fordham website.

Admissions

Applicants to the M.F.A. in playwriting must have completed or be in the process of completing a bachelor’s degree and need to apply to and be accepted by the Fordham University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS). In addition to the GSAS application materials, applicants to the M.F.A. in playwriting must also submit a playwriting portfolio to Matthew Maguire, director of the M.F.A. program.

Playwriting Portfolio

Your Playwriting portfolio must include:

- Cover letter
- Two plays (at least one should be full length)

Mail your playwriting portfolio to:

Matthew Maguire  
Director, Fordham University/Primary Stages M.F.A. in Playwriting Department of Theatre and Visual Arts  
Fordham College at Lincoln Center  
113 W. 60th Street, Room 423F  
New York, NY 10023

GSAS Online Application

The GSAS application requires the following components:

- Letters of Recommendation: Two from former professors, professional playwrights or directors, or employers. Please make every effort to have the letters submitted electronically. If hard copy, each must be signed and sealed across the seal.
- Resume/CV
- Statement of Intent: Maximum 500 words. Place your name on all pages of your Statement of Intent.
- Official Transcripts: Official degree transcripts confirming prior degree conferral are required for all applicants, regardless of matriculation status. These should be ordered at least one month prior to the application deadline for your program of interest. You may upload unofficial copies of your transcripts to your application while the Office of Admissions awaits receipt of your official transcripts. Please ensure that all official transcripts from previously attended post-secondary institutions are submitted in English, or are accompanied by a certified English translation.
- International Students: International applicants whose native language is not English are required to complete and submit TOEFL or IELTS scores to GSAS prior to matriculation. Official TOEFL or IELTS scores should be sent directly by the testing service to the Office of Graduate Admissions, Fordham University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences – Code # 2259.

Note that the M.F.A. in playwriting does NOT require GRE scores for admission.

All GSAS application components need to be received at GSAS admissions. Please do not send any GSAS application materials to the theatre program. Please also do NOT mail your playwriting portfolio to GSAS.

For more information about admissions to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, please visit their page on the Fordham website.

Programs

- MFA in Playwriting

Courses

THEA 5000. Theatre History I. (4 Credits)

We will seek a perspective on the developments in the theatre from Ancient Greece, Japan, and India, and through the Elizabethans using major plays as our focus. We will explore their context—when, where, and why they were written—the lives of the playwrights, and the culture and the politics of their society.

THEA 5100. Theatre History II. (4 Credits)

The course explores the major developments in Theatre from 1879 to the present using major plays of Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Wedekind, Stein, Brecht, O’Neill, Artaud, Genet, Beckett, Soyinka, Mishima, Kennedy, Hansberry, Churchill, Parks, and the movements of performance art and Butoh. We explore their context (when, where and why they were written), the lives of the playwrights, and the culture and the politics of their society. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

THEA 5700. Playwriting Workshop. (4 Credits)

The primary goals of the course are to hone basic craft and to create an environment that will guide the writers’ exploration of their individual voices. We concentrate on four major issues: storytelling, character, structure, and the poetic voice. The course is taught from overlapping perspectives of traditional and alternative techniques. Exercises are rooted in storytelling techniques and character development. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

THEA 5750. Playwriting Strategies. (4 Credits)

This course offers a series of workshop classes that focus on writing strategies, generating new work, and giving writers unique tools for confronting and overcoming obstacles and challenges the playwright faces. The playwrights will be introduced to readings and interviews by and about other playwrights on generative writing process, the act of rewriting, and new forms of creating a stage event. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.
THEA 5800. TV Comedy Writing. (4 Credits)
This course will focus on the art of creating, pitching, and selling a comedy series. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

THEA 5810. TV Dramatic Writing. (4 Credits)
This course will focus on the art of creating, pitching, and selling a dramatic series. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

THEA 6400. Design for Playwrights. (4 Credits)
Playwrights write texts to be performed in actual space, so the playwright who begins from imagining the place where action occurs is activating the essential core of the dramatic imagination. Playwrights must understand how to collaborate with designers, and benefit enormously from inviting a designer into the creative process early. It advances the playwright’s craft to learn the designer’s craft of line, shape, drawing, model making and findings way to embody thematic ideas in concrete visual images and environments. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

THEA 6430. Adaptation. (4 Credits)
Introduction to the craft of adaptation for the stage and screen. Emphasis will be placed on learning to recognize and evaluate the kinds of source material that invite adaptation, and subsequently how to effectively translate elements from that material to craft powerful stories. Class discussion, lectures, readings, and guest seminars will examine source material that includes short stories, novels, biographies, and true stories developed from journalistic sources as well as examples of its successful adaptation. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

THEA 6500. Shakespeare. (4 Credits)
An exploration of Shakespeare’s plays from a playwright’s perspective on craft. How does Shakespeare achieve what he does? What techniques does he employ to generate his vast range of characters and meanings?

THEA 6770. Screenwriting. (4 Credits)
This course focuses on analyzing and writing screenplays for film and television. Class time is devoted to exercises, lectures, and assignments that focus on creating and improving plots and premise, developing potent characters, understanding and honing structure, and sharpening dialogue. In-class activities and lectures are supplemented with guest seminars, film viewings, and screenplay readings, followed by discussion and analysis on themes of craft, including plot, character, technique, and structures.

THEA 6780. Screenwriting: Idea to Execution. (4 Credits)
Writers will explore the art, craft, and business of writing for the screen, with a focus on the “classical” principles of screenwriting. Each writer will complete the first half of a feature length screenplay. Classes will be a mixture of lecture, discussion, screenplay analysis, writing exercises, discussion of viewed films and in-class workshopping of scripts.

THEA 6980. Contemporary Theatre. (4 Credits)
A playwright is the person who has her ear to the rail, the one who channels the zeitgeist. To that end this class will obsess on the present moment. What is happening in politics now? Literature? Science? Where in New York City theatre and global theatre are these revolutions and innovations finding expression? Writers will see never-before-produced plays, meet with the makers of new work, and use those experiences to write a play that resonates with the present moment.

THEA 6990. The Playwright Prepares. (4 Credits)
This semester focuses on preparing the second-year playwrights for submitting their plays to theatres, film and television studios, contests, and agents. Visiting designers, managing directors, film and television producers will enhance the students’ understanding of the community they are entering. Contemporary theatre issues are also discussed, particularly those related to the role of the playwright in our society. Four-credit courses that meet for 150 minutes per week require three additional hours of class preparation per week on the part of the student in lieu of an additional hour of formal instruction.

THEA 7000. Production. (4 Credits)
This seminar serves as a foundational course for the full-length thesis productions that spring. Contemporary theater issues are also discussed, particularly those related to the role of the playwright in our society.

THEA 8999. Independent Study. (0 to 4 Credits)
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