

## **THE CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE AT MACALESTER** (from [Academic Policies](#))

To ensure appropriate depth within an area or related areas of knowledge, students are required to elect among: 1) a departmental major; 2) an established interdepartmental major; or 3) an individually designed interdepartmental major. Within each of these types of majors the student is required to complete a capstone experience. The purpose of this capstone requirement is to give students experience with reading original research literature, doing original work, or presenting a performance. This requirement may be met in many ways, e.g., senior seminar, independent project, honors project. The means of completing this experience are designated by the major department, interdepartmental programs, and IDIM committees and so indicated in the catalog in the cases of departments and interdepartmental programs.

## **THEATRE AND DANCE CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE**

Theater and Dance majors are required to enroll in THDA 490 Capstone Seminar, and complete a senior capstone project that consists of individual research leading to an essay of 20-25 pages. Capstone proposals are due the week after spring break of the applicant's junior year. Please see Appendix 1 for guidelines.

## **MACALESTER COLLEGE HONORS PROGRAM**

Statement from the Honors Program web page:

The Honors Program enables qualified seniors to undertake substantial independent work culminating in a project of exceptionally high quality. Departments and programs that have Honors programs are indicated in the college catalog. Detailed information about the expectations of specific departments or programs is available from the chair or director or from the Director of Academic Programs and Advising. The minimum cumulative grade point average established by the college for entrance into the Honors Program is 3.30; however, some departments or programs may require a higher-grade point average. Students undertaking research projects with human participants are expected to comply with the guidelines established by Macalester's Institutional Review Board.

Please carefully review the Honors Program web page for additional requirements, calendar, and deadlines.

## **THEATER AND DANCE HONORS PROJECT**

The Theater and Dance Department participates in the Honors Program, but Honors projects are accepted at the discretion of the faculty and staff. The Department encourages majors with a demonstrated record of excellence in Department coursework and production to pursue Departmental Honors in their senior year.

The Honors Project in Theater and Dance is a year-long research project that builds on the individual research developed during the Capstone Seminar. Honors Projects may take the form of a monograph (60-90 pages) or consist of a creative component accompanied by a critical essay (30-45 pages).

The Department recommends that majors begin planning for the Honors Project as early as possible in their studies in order to meet the qualification requirements. Rising seniors should submit a Capstone Proposal the week after Spring Break (please see appendix) and begin work during the summer preceding their senior year. Students who elect to study abroad in the spring of their junior year should make all the necessary arrangements to submit their Capstone Proposals by the deadline. Those pursuing a fall graduation should enroll in the Capstone Seminar their junior year.

The Theater and Dance Department faculty and staff will determine a candidate's primary advisor and the composition of the Honors Project Committee.

### **ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL FOR HONORS IN THEATER AND DANCE**

#### Eligibility

Please note that eligibility does not guarantee the acceptance of a project for Honors. Students are eligible to pursue an Honors Project in Theater and Dance if they have a Macalester College GPA of 3.30 or better, and a Theater and Dance GPA of 3.50 or better.

Students should have completed, or be enrolled in, the following seven courses required for the Theater and Dance major:

- THDA 105 Seeing Performance in the Twin Cities **or** THDA 110, Introduction to the Study of Performance
- THDA 232 Crafting the Tangible
- THDA 245 Performance Methods
- THDA 217 Race and Gender Theory in Performance
- THDA 80 Performance Practice
- THDA 81 Technical Practice
- One Theory and Research WA course, in consultation with the Department
- One of the two electives required for the completion of the THDA major

Also, students should have completed the language requirement by the end of their junior year and have no more than one college-wide distribution course remaining for their senior year.

Finally, students must have completed the following requirements in their chosen discipline:

### Acting

- At least two intermediate/advanced acting courses with an A- average (for example: THDA 360 Acting II; THDA 294-01 Auditions; THDA 220 Voice and Speech; THDA 230 Physical Approaches)
- Act in a Theater and Dance Department production directed by a faculty member or guest director.

### Choreography

- THDA 221 Dance Composition
- One of the following: THDA 213 Cultures of Dance, THDA 215 Dance History, THDA 250 Experiential Anatomy
- Assistant choreograph with a faculty member in a Theater and Dance Department production

### Dancing

- THDA 221 Dance Composition
- THDA 31 Dance Improvisation
- Four credits of Advanced Technique (levels III or IV) in African-Based Movement, Ballet, Dance Improvisation, or Modern Dance
- Perform in a Theater and Dance Department production led by a faculty member or guest director/choreographer

### Design (Scenic, Costume, Lighting, Media)

- Two additional courses in design with an A- average (for example: THDA 235 Fundamentals of Scenography; THDA 255 Lighting Design; THDA 285 Clothing in Performance; THDA 145 Make-Up Design and Application)
- Assistant design with a faculty member in a Theater and Dance Department Production

### Directing

- A- average in THDA 350 Directing & Devising
- At least one course in design with an A- or better grade (for example: THDA 235 Fundamentals of Scenography; THDA 255 Lighting Design; THDA 285 Clothing in Performance; THDA 145, Stage Make-Up Design and Application)
- Stage manage or assistant direct with a faculty member in a Theater and Dance Department production

### Theater and Dance Research (monograph)

- Completion of Theater and Dance history and literature, theory, criticism, or ethnography requirements for the major with an A- average
- Two courses in Acting, Dance Composition, Design, or Directing with an A- average

### Performance Technologies

- A- average in THDA 232 Crafting the Tangible
- A- average in either THDA 125 Technical Theater or THDA 287 Creative Technologies
- Minimum of one course in design
- Successful leadership role in at least one THDA 81 Technical Practice

### Playwriting

- A- in THDA 242 Playwriting and Text Analysis
- One additional course in creative writing

## **EVALUATION OF HONORS PROPOSALS**

Each proposal will be evaluated based on the candidate's preparation; quality of preliminary research; clarity of the objectives of the process; and, when applicable, the rationale for staging a given production.

The Theater and Dance Department may request the submission of a revised proposal addressing the faculty's questions and/or concerns.

## **APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND TIMETABLE**

Please note that the deadlines below are strict, and no extensions are possible. For Theater and Dance Department specific dates, please contact the Department Coordinator; for Macalester's Academic Programs and Advising deadlines, please consult <https://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/honorsprogram/>.

### Mid-April, Junior Year

The applicant should submit a three to five-page proposal to the Theater and Dance faculty. Please see Application Guidelines for Honors in Theater and Dance (Appendix 1).

### First week of classes, Senior Year

Student should submit a two-page progress report to the faculty, along with an updated bibliography.

### Fall, Senior Year

Student should develop individual research and write an essay in THDA 490 Capstone Seminar.

October, Senior Year

First production meeting.

Mid-November, Senior Year (for students graduating in December)

Abstracts are due to Academic Programs and Advising.

First week of November

The Theater and Dance faculty evaluates the student's progress and approves/denies continuation of the Honors project.

Mid-December, Senior Year (for students graduating in December)

Deadline for submission of honors project to the Academic Programs and Advising Office in hard copy and pdf form.

Honors project is due to primary faculty advisor and readers. The Department Coordinator will schedule the student's oral defense within two weeks of receipt of the manuscript.

In addition, Honors candidates should make a public presentation of their research to Departmental faculty and students. Preparation for this presentation should be undertaken in close guidance with faculty advisor. The student's presentation may include *brief* elements of performance or demonstration, and/or other media (slides, film clips, etc.) that support and elucidate the student's research presentation (approximately 15 minutes).

After the oral defense, the Honors Committee will recommend conferral or non-conferral of Honors to the Theater and Dance Department. The Department faculty and staff, upon receipt of the Committee's recommendation and with satisfaction that the proper procedures were followed in the advising and examination processes, will officially confer Honors to the student at graduation.

Spring, Senior Year

Rehearsals and production of the Honors project's creative component.

First Week of April, Senior Year (for students graduating in May)

Abstracts are due to Academic Programs and Advising.

Mid-April, Senior Year (for students graduating in May).

Deadline for submission of honors project to the Academic Programs and Advising Office in hard copy and pdf form.

Honors project is due to primary faculty advisor and readers. The oral defense among the student and readers should be scheduled within two weeks of receipt of the manuscript.

In addition, Honors candidates should make a public presentation of their research to Departmental faculty and students. Preparation for this presentation should be undertaken in close guidance with faculty advisor. The student's presentation may include *brief* elements of

performance or demonstration, and/or other media (slides, film clips, etc.) which support and elucidate the student's research presentation.

After the oral defense, the Honors Committee will recommend conferral or non-conferral of Honors to the Theater and Dance Department. The Department faculty and staff, upon receipt of the Committee's recommendation and with satisfaction that the proper procedures were followed in the advising and examination processes, will officially confer Honors to the student at graduation.

## **THEATER AND DANCE DEPARTMENT HONORS GUIDELINES**

### Honors

The Theater and Dance Department will award honors on the basis of the Honors Committee's evaluation. All departmental readers must recommend honors for a candidate to be successful. Students are entitled to copies of the readers' comments. The Honors Advisor is responsible for assigning a grade for the Honors Independent Study; this grade need not reflect the decision of the Honors Committee to award or deny Departmental Honors.

### Oral Defense for Honors

In the oral exam, candidates should successfully address questions related to the student's academic history/course work, the topic/subject of the written thesis, and the production, when pertinent.

### Advisor and Readers

Three readers will evaluate all components of the Honors Project: the Honors advisor and two readers. The Theater and Dance Department will appoint a candidate's advisor and readers. The Honors advisor must be a Theater and Dance Department faculty member. When the student is a double major or the field of research is outside of the Theater and Dance Department's areas of expertise, the Department may invite one outside faculty to serve as a reader.

### About the written component

As stated above, monographs should have a minimum of 60 pages and essays a minimum of 30 pages.

Please note that in the case of essays, the student should present clearly documented evidence of how the performance choices were informed by research.

Double majors should request permission to submit a Theater and Dance Honors project to another department. In their proposals, double majors are expected to provide a clear justification as to why their topic demands interdisciplinary research.

Monographs and essays should be formatted using Chicago Manual Style or Modern Language Association (MLA).

## **GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION HONORS PROJECTS**

### Monograph in Theater and/or Dance Research (Ethnography, Criticism, History, Literature), or the essay component in a creative thesis

The written document should demonstrate the Honors candidate's ability to think creatively, organize thoughts, and communicate effectively. The written document will be evaluated on content, organization, clarity, the mechanics of style (grammar, syntax, word choices, spelling, etc.) and documentation (examples, notes, quality of sources, and bibliography). It is the expectation of the Theater and Dance Department that the writing will demonstrate a command of the conceptual issues addressed in the student's program of study. An Honors written document should present:

- Originality of research and topic
- In-depth research and knowledge of the topic
- Clear statement of thesis argument or position early in the paper
- Clear development of the topic, with logical structure and progress
- Appropriate and original evidence/examples from primary and/or secondary sources such as performances, case studies, text, and so forth
- Good transition between sections/sub-topics
- Well-focused argument
- Effectively presented, spelling and punctuation according to accepted usage, no run-on sentences, and no sentence fragments
- Engaging, clear, objective, persuasive writing

### Creative Components

In evaluating the creative component of your Honors project, the committee will apply the following criteria. If a student's area of interest falls outside of these categories, please consult with your Theater and Dance academic advisor to explore submitting a special request to the Department.

### Acting

- Text work: understanding of and ability to work with the structural and rhythmic demands of the given text, ability to analyze the playwright's language, depth of research and contextual analysis of the play.
- Command of the instrument: stamina to sustain agile physical and vocal engagement throughout the performance; creativity and variety in physical and vocal characterization; ability to create repeatable and expressive physical and vocal scores for the chosen character; awareness of self in space; building the spatial relationship to stage partners,

design elements, and the audience; volume, diction, and vocal clarity; awareness and command of rhythmic and dynamic variations of the playwright's language.

- Character work: creating an internal logic of the character consistent with the world of the play; demonstrating specificity, commitment, and risk-taking in acting choices; ability to convey moment-to-moment and overall arcs of a character; shaping a character through manipulation of and gestural relationships with set, costumes, lights, props, sound, make-up, and so forth; sensitivity to genre and style offered by the playwright, director, and designers.
- Creativity and ensemble work: excellent work ethic; active contribution to the collaborative rehearsal process; punctuality, commitment, and attitude; modeling creativity and teamwork to other members of the ensemble.

### Choreography

- Choreography: demonstrates clarity of concept, depth of exploration, depth of research, and originality of expression. It achieves a unified, focused sense of the whole. Choreographic structures are intelligently designed in support of clear communication of concept. Tools of space, time, and energy are utilized with fluency. An effective collaboration with members of production team (lighting, scenic, sound, costumer designers and/or dramaturge) leads to a realized vision. Choreography embodies a mature awareness of representation and the cultural, historical, social contexts of the work.
- Performance: executed with precision and clarity. The strengths, weaknesses, and individuality of performers are skillfully crafted.
- Rehearsal Process: the choreographer demonstrates an excellent work ethic, active leadership in the collaborative rehearsal process, punctuality, seriousness, and commitment to an artistic vision. They provide a model of creativity and teamwork to members of the ensemble. They create a healthy working environment.

### Dancing

- Technique: the student demonstrates a highly refined understanding of the vocabularies of a given genre. Depending on the technique, this may include musicality, rhythmic precision, dynamic alignment, energetic extension and texture, sense of weight, release, flow; partnering skills, skills in improvisation.
- Performance: the student demonstrates physical stamina, concentration, and confidence in execution of their role, as well as suppleness and range of artistic expression, character development, expanded awareness of ensemble, and comprehension of purpose.
- Rehearsal process: the student demonstrates an excellent work ethic. They understand the rehearsal process as one of active collaboration with the choreographer and fellow dancers. They understand the range of choreographic methods and are committed to the creative process as defined by the choreographer. They are punctual, serious and open to other members of the ensemble. They contribute to a healthy rehearsal atmosphere.



## Design

In evaluating the student's production/ installation or showing, readers will take into account the following: the originality of the project; execution; preparedness; craft; pertinence and aesthetic understanding; as well as process (meeting of deadlines, collaboration, etc). Each area of design has its own specific evaluation components.

### Scenic Design

- Design preparation: research; rendering; drafting; model-making.
- Concept and Design: appropriateness of thematic choices; articulation of content; control of design elements and principles. Project: execution; craft; and collaborative process as a member of the creative team.

### Costume Design

- Design preparation: research; rendering; patterning and draping.
- Concept and Design: appropriateness of thematic choices; articulation of content; appropriateness of individual character choices; control of design elements and principles.
- Project: execution; craft; and collaborative process as a member of the creative team.

### Lighting Design

- Design preparation: research; collaboration with director and other designers; drafting and accompanying paperwork.
- Concept and Design: appropriateness of lighting choices in creating a design that works with all the other production elements to effectively communicate.
- Project: execution; craft; and collaborative process as a member of the creative team.

### Media Design

- Design preparation: research; collaboration with director and other designers; editing when applicable; accompanying select visual research.
- Concept and Design: appropriateness of thematic choices; articulation of content; appropriateness of image choices; control of design elements and principles.
- Project: execution; skill; and collaborative process as a member of the creative team.

## Directing

- Concept: understanding of and ability to work with the structural and rhythmic demands of the given text; reading the given text in its depth and thematic complexity; ability to analyze the playwright's language, imagery, and symbolism; depth of research and

contextual analysis of the play; the originality of the vision, sensitivity to genre and style offered by the playwright; ability to articulate the relevance of the story to the contemporary audience.

- Working with actors: creativity and variety in physical and vocal characterizations; ability to create repeatable and expressive physical and vocal scores for the characters; awareness and command of rhythmic and dynamic variations of the playwright's language; creating an internal logic of the characters consistent with the world of the play; encouraging specificity, commitment, and risk-taking in acting choices; ability to convey moment-to-moment and overall arcs of a play.
- Realization of the directorial vision through design elements: ability to communicate the directorial concept in collaboration with designers and craftsmen; clarity of storytelling through manipulation and gestural relationships with set, costumes, lights, props, sound, make-up, etc; consistency of design with the world of the play and acting style; awareness of space architecture in developing the production; building the spatial relationship between actors, design elements, and the audience; ability to sustain visual and aural unity of a production.
- Rehearsal process: excellent work ethics; active leadership in the collaborative rehearsal process; punctuality, seriousness, commitment, and attitude; providing a model of creativity and team work to other members of the ensemble; ability to create a healthy rehearsal atmosphere.

### Playwriting

- Command of the craft of playwriting, theatrical storytelling, and narrative.
- An understanding of the genre and style in which the student is working, as well as their models and innovators.
- A thirty-page play in which the student has done substantial rewrites. The thirty-page limit emphasizes quality and rewriting based on the incorporation of feedback.
- Realization of the playwright's vision based on originality, content, dialogue, language, characters, style, depth and thematic complexity, imagery, symbolism, relevance of story to contemporary audience, theatrical viability, and the artist as a model of creativity.

### Performance Technologies and Management

In evaluating the student's production/ installation or showing, readers will take into account the following: the originality of the project; execution; preparedness; craft; pertinence and aesthetic understanding; as well as process (meeting of deadlines, collaboration, etc). Each area of design has its own specific evaluation components.

#### Technical Direction

- Design preparation: cost analysis; budgeting; material selection; shop drawings.
- Design Implementation: construction supervision; project management; time and cost management; safety management.

- Design Installation/Demolition: safe and timely installation of the design elements in the performance space; effective coordination with all other technical staff; ultimate removal and reuse/disposal of the design elements.

### Stage Management

- Pre-production preparation: prepare blocking script and prompt book; confirm production calendar; review rehearsal space and safety issues; collect ground plans, prop list, and costume plot; meet with director; coordinate auditions.
- Rehearsal Process: develop solid communication lines with actors and all production staff; document rehearsals and communicate information in a timely and accurate manner; organize and run weekly production meetings.
- Technical Rehearsal Process: coordinate a paper tech or confirm cueing process per production; familiarize yourself with performance spaces and design elements; prepare space for actors' arrival; run efficient and productive technical and dress rehearsals; continue to ensure solid communication between all performers, production staff and designers.
- Performance: assure and maintain safe and consistent performance standards; communicate performance information in a timely and accurate manner.
- Post Production: communicate and document any pertinent information for future use.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR SENIOR CAPSTONE ESSAY, HONORS MONOGRAPH, OR HONORS ESSAY IN THEATER AND DANCE**

Name:

Date:

#### 1. TITLE AND TOPIC OF YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT

Title and briefly describe your thesis project in 250-300 words

#### 2. RATIONALE

Describe the goal of your proposed project: what do you hope to accomplish and why do you want to pursue this investigation? In one paragraph, clearly state your thesis, methods of investigation, and the theories you will apply to your subject. How is your approach to your topic original? In short, what is your contribution to the field and to the Macalester community? How will this research contribute to your educational experience at Macalester?

### 3. CANDIDATE'S JUSTIFICATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

The project should be regarded as a culmination of a student's intellectual growth during their career at Macalester. Demonstrate, citing all relevant experience, your qualifications and background research to undertake the project you propose. Please include a list of completed Theater and Dance requirements for the Theater and Dance major and respective grades (See Appendix 3), productions, an unofficial transcript, and extracurricular workshops, and detail their influence on your choice of a proposed topic.

### 4. RESOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please provide an annotated working bibliography and list of additional resources such as interviews, art collections, workshops, performances, and so forth.

## APPENDIX 2

### GUIDELINES FOR ASSEMBLING HONORS PRODUCTION TEAM

#### Designers

All artistic collaborators such as lighting, set, and costume designers must have full Department approval. It is the expectation of the Theater and Dance Department that each will earn credit through the appropriate faculty.

Design budgets will be determined based on the experience of each designer; preference will be given to Honors projects in design. In the event that no appropriate designer can be recruited for a particular design area (i.e., lights, sets or costumes) the Department reserves the right to eliminate or severely restrict the budget in that particular area.

Designers will be approved through the appropriate design faculty based on the presentation of a portfolio that includes images of projects, conceptual ideas, renderings and/or technical drawings, if pertinent.

Other collaborators such as composers or choreographers should be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Designers should have completed THDA 232 Crafting the Tangible and THDA 235 Fundamentals of Scenography. In addition, they should have completed or be enrolled in the course in their design area in the production: for example, THDA 255 Lighting Design; THDA 285 Clothing in Performance; or THDA 294 Sound Design. Completion of THDA 80 Performance Practice and/or THDA 81 Technical Practice is highly recommended.

#### Technical Staff

All major technical positions, Stage Manager, and the major crew heads must be approved by the Theater and Dance Department Technical Director. The minimum qualification for major technical positions is the completion of THDA 125 Technologies of Performance and THDA 81 Technical Practice.

Stage Managers must have completed the courses above and have production experience as a crew head or Assistant Stage Manager in the Theater and Dance Department (THDA 81 Technical Practice).

All of the above positions must be filled prior to the production's approval. Directors are responsible for assembling their staff, but the Theater and Dance Department will help in finding designers and technicians when necessary and possible.

### APPENDIX 3

#### THEATER AND DANCE MAJOR CHECKLIST

Please check completed or in-progress courses, internship or study away coursework, and enter grade received when applicable

- THDA 105 - Seeing Performance in the Twin Cities or  
THDA 110 - Introduction to the Study of Performance
- THDA 232 - Crafting the Tangible
- THDA217 – Race and Gender Theory in Performance
- THDA 245 - Performance Methods: Shakespeare to Butoh
- One Theory and Research WA course chosen in consultation with the department
- THDA 80 - Performance Practice
- THDA 81 - Technical Practice
- One capstone course, chosen in consultation with the department
- Eight elective credits
  - THDA 21 - African-based Movement I
  - THDA 22 - African-based Movement II
  - THDA 41 - Modern Dance I
  - THDA 42 - Modern Dance II
  - THDA 43 - Modern Dance III
  - THDA 44 - Modern Dance IV
  - THDA 51 - Ballet I
  - THDA 52 - Ballet II
  - THDA 53 - Ballet III
  - THDA 54 - Ballet IV
  - THDA 60 - African-based Movement Ensemble
  - THDA 120 - Acting I
  - THDA 125 - Technical Theater
  - THDA 145 - Make-Up Design and Application
  - THDA 210 - Community-Based Theaters
  - THDA 213 - Cultures of Dance
  - THDA 215 – Dance History: Reading the Dancing Body
  - THDA 220 - Voice and Speech
  - THDA 221 - Dance Composition

- THDA 230 - Physical Approaches
- THDA 235 - Fundamentals of Scenography
- THDA 242 - Playwriting and Textual Analysis
- THDA 250 - Experiential Anatomy and the Mind Body Connection
- THDA 255 - Lighting Design
- THDA 262 - Performing Feminisms
- THDA 263 - African American Theater
- THDA 350 - Directing and Devising: Making Meaning on the Stage
- THDA 360 - Acting II