THEATRE ARTS AND STUDIES

http://krieger.jhu.edu/theatre-arts

The program offers a comprehensive approach to the arts of acting, directing, playwriting, and theatre history, along with the fundamentals of technical direction, play production, play analysis, and theatre management.

For those students who intend to prepare for a career in the theatre, the courses offered are taught exclusively by established professionals with experience on Broadway, in the best of regional theatres, and in many countries of the world.

For those students not focused on a career in theatre arts, the courses offer a broader perspective, an understanding of societal traditions and culture, and an appreciation for the arts, whether theatrical, literary, musical, or visual. Students pursuing careers in medicine, engineering, law, international relations, science, and others have been challenged and enriched by the school's courses in theatre arts.

For those who seek careers in the arts, the acting and directing workshops, playwriting courses, and independent study opportunities provide rigorous training in acting and other theatre crafts, as well as an appreciation for and an understanding of the history of dramatic arts, its cultural significance, and the industries it has produced.

Located in the program's home, the historic Merrick Barn, The Johns Hopkins University Theatre provides a vehicle for the fulfillment of student lab requirements. The University Theatre produces several plays each year in the John Astin Theatre and occasionally in the Meyerhoff Auditorium at the Baltimore Museum of Art, which adjoins the Homewood campus. Classes are also held in the Barn.

Theatre Arts and Studies Minor

All courses for the minor here must be taken for letter grades and receive a grade of C- or higher. Courses taken at another institution may not apply towards the minor without permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

AS.225.100  Introduction to Theatre  3
or AS.225.300  Contemporary Theatre & Film
AS.225.301  Acting I  3
AS.225.302  Acting & Directing Workshop II  3
AS.220.105  Fiction/Poetry Writing I  3
One theatre history course  3
One drama course in other program *  3
One additional theatre course **  3
Total Credits  21

* Courses are identified by the POS-Tag THEA-DRAMA. Alternatively, another theatre history course from within the program (not counted towards another requirement) may apply towards this requirement with permission of the director of undergraduate studies.

** This course may be an acting, theatre production, playwriting, or theatre history course.

Faculty
Director
John Astin
Homewood Professor (Dramatic Arts), Writing Seminars: acting, directing, theatre history, production and management.

Professor Emeritus
Richard A. Macksey
Professor Emeritus

Decker Professor in the Humanities, Writing Seminars
John T. Irwin
Decker Professor in the Humanities, Writing Seminars: criticism and poetry in the theatre.

Professor
Ronald Walters
Professor, History: American cultural and social history.

Visiting Instructors
Margaret (Peg) Denithorne
Instructor: acting, directing, theatre history.

James Glossman
Instructor: directing, acting, theatre management, theatre history.

Joseph Martin
Instructor: theatre history, dramaturgy.

William Roche
Instructor: technical direction, theatre crafts, theatre management.

For current faculty and contact information go to http://krieger.jhu.edu/theatre-arts/people/

Courses

AS.225.100. Introduction to Theatre. 3.0 Credits.
An introduction to the drama: how and why the theatre came into being; its role in human history; and how changing social structures in different regions and epochs have shaped different kinds of theatre, plays and performance. Also: how theatre “works” for us and on us, and the major plays of world drama.
Instructor(s): J. Martin
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.212. Voice and Speech for the Actor. 3.0 Credits.
It has been said that 90% of what an actor does onstage is dependent on being effortlessly heard and understood by their audiences. This course is designed to establish the tools for the actor to begin to create this foundation. Using a combination of both the benchmark texts by Edith Skinner and Kristin Linklater, along with in-class exercises and monologues, we will begin the process of exploring both vocal power through breathing and breath control, and the fundamental tools of clarity in the speaking of a dramatic text onstage.
Instructor(s): J. Glossman
Area: Humanities.

For current course information and registration go to https://sis.jhu.edu/classes/
AS.225.215. Performing Musical Theatre. 3.0 Credits.
Effective performance in musical theatre demands a committed analysis of the musical and dramatic values of the song and the libretto from which it springs, in order to develop a fresh, organic interpretation. This course will provide you with the training to both analyze and interpret musical theatre scenes and songs and to make the most of them in performance. Instructor Permission Only.
Instructor(s): M. Denithorne
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.218. ANGELS IN AMERICA (The Play) The Millennium Shift in American Culture and Politics. 3.0 Credits.
Tony Kushner’s epoch-making play weaves together astonishingly diverse sides of America in a broad tapestry; a modern work that emerged at the end of the 20th Century, and provides keys to understanding the American zeitgeist and the coming transformations of the culture. In one pivotal work we find the emergence of LGBT rights, the Mormon Church, the AIDS epidemic, the new “spirituality,” the Reagan-era transformation of both government and business, and the looming figure of Roy Cohn whose influence in American politics “behind the scenes” ranged from the Rosenberg trial to his work as counsel for the McCarthy Committee in the 1950s: and even his legacy in the 2016 as primary political and business mentor of a 2016 presidential candidate.
Instructor(s): J. Martin
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences.

AS.225.300. Contemporary Theatre & Film. 3.0 Credits.
An introduction to the performing arts, including an overview of theatre history, acting styles and the interaction of art and society. A personal view from inside.
Instructor(s): J. Astin
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.301. Acting I. 3.0 Credits.
An introduction to the fundamentals of acting through exercises, improvisation, and work on scenes from established plays and Shakespearean sonnets, based on the teachings of Stanislavsky, Greet, Boleslavsky, Michael Chekhov, Clurman, and Meisner. This course also includes a brief survey of major playwrights. Plays will be read, analyzed, and employed in scene work.
Instructor(s): J. Astin
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.302. Acting & Directing Workshop II. 3.0 Credits.
As in Workshop I, the principal classroom activities will consist of scene work, exercises, lectures, and discussion. Some rehearsal will also take place during school hours. It is expected that substantial out-of-class time be spent on rehearsals and exercises. Recommended Course Background: AS.225.301
Instructor(s): J. Astin
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.303. Acting & Directing Workshop III. 3.0 Credits.
Special attention is given to the development of spontaneity and emotional freedom using the principles of Workshops I and II. Hands on work with John Astin’s “The Process” and the second Silverberg workbook are employed, along with the Uta Hagen text. Boleslavsky and Michael Chekhov are introduced. The Clurman, Meisner, Stanislavsky and Strasberg approaches are included. Substantial out of class time is required. Recommended Course Background: Two acting courses.
Instructor(s): J. Astin
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.304. Acting for Musical Theatre. 3.0 Credits.
Workshop IV is an advanced class for actors who have gained some control over their instruments and are ready for character work and full performances. Work will be co-ordinated with productions in which the actor performs and in which the directors direct. Play analysis, characterization, fullness of performance, diction, accents, and other elements of building a performance are covered. Permission only, signature required. Recommended Course Background: AS.225.302, AS.225.303
Instructor(s): M. Denithorne
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.307. Directing Seminar. 3.0 Credits.
Fundamentals of mounting, casting and staging the play; various theories of directing; students must commit to a practical lab. It is understood that students have a working familiarity with acting fundamentals.
Instructor(s): J. Glossman
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.308. Shakespeare in Performance. 3.0 Credits.
The techniques and craft of following a Shakespearean text directly into character and action. Students will work with a selection of Shakespeare’s plays --- AS YOU LIKE IT; HAMLET; and RICHARD III --- in exploring specific ways in which the power of the lines can be translated dynamically and immediately into vocal and physical performance. This course can be repeated for credit, because it covers different topics. (Some background in the acting sequence is encouraged).
Instructor(s): J. Glossman
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.310. Stagecraft. 3.0 Credits.
A hands-on approach to the technical and theoretical elements of production. Meets in the Merrick Barn Scene Shop. Permission Required.
Instructor(s): W. Roche
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.311. Scene Study. 3.0 Credits.
Classes and scenes tailored to the needs of the actors. Some rehearsal will take place during school hours. It is expected that substantial out-of-class time be spent on rehearsals and exercises.
Instructor(s): J. Astin
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.314. Theatre: Tech Direction. 3.0 Credits.
An introduction to Technical Direction including pre-production and production with an overview of materials, tools, rigging and safety, together with design and its implementation.
Instructor(s): W. Roche
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.315. Scene Study 2. 3.0 Credits.
Classes and scenes tailored to the needs of the actors. Some rehearsal will take place during school hours. It is expected that substantial out-of-class time be spent on rehearsals and exercises.
Instructor(s): J. Astin
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.320. Performance. 3.0 Credits.
The student is given specific acting assignments, and develops them as special projects for public performance under the direct supervision of the instructor. A professional level performance is the goal. Audition Required. Out of class rehearsal time required. Permission only, signature required.
Instructor(s): J. Astin
Area: Humanities.
AS.225.321. The Lab - The Actor/Director/Playwright Lab. 3.0 Credits.
Student actors, directors, and playwrights will explore their respective crafts with emphasis on process and individual artistic growth. Participants in the class will also collaborate on the creation of new material for the stage. Recommended Course Background: one course in Acting, Directing, or Playwriting.
Instructor(s): M. Denithorne
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.323. Design for the Stage. 3.0 Credits.
The fundamentals of stage design, with an emphasis on process, including script analysis, research, conceptualization, and implementation, from the first reading of the play to opening night, along with an overview of theatre architecture from the Greeks to the current day and into our imagined future.
Instructor(s): W. Roche
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.324. Adaptation for the Stage. 3.0 Credits.
For aspiring playwrights, dramaturgs, and literary translators, this course is a workshop opportunity in learning to adapt both dramatic and non-dramatic works into fresh versions for the stage. Students with ability in foreign languages and literatures are encouraged to explore translation of drama as well as adaptation of foreign language fiction in English. Fiction, classical dramas, folk and fairy tales, independent interviews, or versions of plays from foreign languages are covered.
Instructor(s): J. Martin
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.225.328. The Existential Drama: Philosophy and Theatre of the Absurd. 3.0 Credits.
Existentialism, a powerful movement in modern drama and theatre, has had a profound influence on contemporary political thought, ethics, and psychology, and has transformed our very notion of how to stage a play. Selected readings and lectures on the philosophy of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Camus and Sartre – and discussion of works for the stage by Sartre, Ionesco, Genet, Beckett, Albee, Pinter, Athol Fugard (with Nkani & Nthowe), Heiner Müller and the late plays of Caryl Churchill. Opportunities for projects on Dürrenmatt, Frisch, Havel, Witkiewicz, and Mrózek.
Instructor(s): J. Martin
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.225.329. Acting and Directing Musical Theatre. 3.0 Credits.
Musical Theatre is a unique form of theatrical expression that requires special skills of its actors and directors. In this course, students will study the form and structure of musicals as they apply to acting and directing. Students will direct and perform musical numbers as well as book scenes from classic and contemporary American musicals.
Instructor(s): M. Denithorne
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.330. Playwriting Strategies. 3.0 Credits.
A seminar and workshop in playwriting with Dr. Joe Martin, playwright and dramaturge. Student writers, developing their plays, will learn how to open up to the creative process, "brainstorm," refine their work, and shape it toward an act of artistic communication. Writer's techniques, such as attending to plot or "story," delineation of character, creating effective "dialog," even overcoming "writer's block," will be addressed. This course is designed to be complementary to – not a replacement for – playwriting classes in the Writing Seminars.
Instructor(s): J. Martin
Writing Intensive.

AS.225.331. Acting Styles and the "Viewpoints". 3.0 Credits.
This course is designed for acting students who have already completed one or both of the first levels in acting or the first level in directing. Uses the cutting edge approach to enhanced physicality and presence in acting – The Viewpoints, originally developed by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau. The second half of the course involves work on scenes from Commedia dell'Arte to modern absurdist plays.
Instructor(s): J. Martin
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.332. Acting and Directing Workshop IV. 3.0 Credits.
Workshop IV is an advanced class for actors who have gained some control over their instruments and are ready for character work and full performances. Work will be co-ordinated with productions in which the actor performs and in which the directors direct. Play analysis, characterization, fullness of performance, diction, accents, and other elements of building a performance are covered.
Prerequisites: AS.225.302 OR AS.225.303
Instructor(s): J. Astin
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.333. Scene Study 3. 3.0 Credits.
Classes and scenes tailored to the needs of the actors. Some rehearsal will take place during school hours. It is expected that substantial out-of-class time be spent on rehearsals and exercises.
Instructor(s): J. Astin
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.336. Science and Theatre. 3.0 Credits.
Innovative modern playwrights and have gone beyond the boundaries of the living room, the kitchen and the front porch to explore the interaction of the human mind and human passions with the drama of the cosmos. Few elements of science remain unexplored by theatre, be it medicine, particle physics, astronomy, mathematics or chemistry. These unique plays often require experiments with new forms of theatre, and a new way of writing for theatre. We will examine prominent woks for theatre which engage with science, including: The Life of Galileo (Brecht, astronomy), Copenhagen (Frayn, physics), Arcadia (Stoppard, mathematics), Semmelweis (Bjorneboe, medicine), The Man who Mistook His Wife for a Hat (Sachs/Brook, neuroscience); Einstein's Dreams (Lightman et al). The course will include lectures, informal readings (together) of scenes to inform discussions of the works; final small group presentations; one short paper and a choice of a final essay or research paper.
Instructor(s): J. Martin
Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences.

AS.225.339. Exploring The Major Plays of Anton Chekhov. 3.0 Credits.
This is an advanced class for actors who are interested in delving into the "world of the play." Students will work on scenes from the four major plays of Anton Chekhov. We will also explore some modern adaptations including VANYA, SONIA, MASHA, and SPIKE.
Prerequisites: AS.225.301 AND AS.225.302 or permission of the instructor
Instructor(s): M. Denithorne
Area: Humanities.
AS.225.345. History of Modern Theatre & Drama. 3.0 Credits.
Designed to impart a deepened appreciation and understanding of today's theatre by surveying the major playwrights, historical movements, and theatre practices of the 20th century. The course also seeks to help students understand theatre's relationship to the societal and political power structure of each era and to introduce students to great dynamic literature in its intended form, which is performance.
Instructor(s): M. Denithorne
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.225.346. Creative Improvisation: For Theatre and for Life. 3.0 Credits.
An exploration of the imagination and the senses using basic techniques of improvisation: exercises, conflict resolution, ensemble building, and theatre games. Texts: Spolin, Johnstone, LaBan and Feldencreis. Open to all students.
Instructor(s): M. Denithorne
Area: Humanities.

AS.225.501. Independent Study. 1.0 - 3.0 Credits.
Permission only.
Instructor(s): J. Astin; J. Glossman; J. Martin; M. Denithorne.

AS.225.502. Independent Study. 1.0 - 3.0 Credits.
Instructor(s): J. Astin; J. Glossman; J. Martin; M. Denithorne.

AS.225.520. Projects in Theatre. 3.0 Credits.
Special projects created for and tailored to the individual theatre student. Enrollment limited. Permission Required.
Instructor(s): J. Astin.

AS.225.590. Summer Internship in Theatre. 1.0 Credit.
Instructor(s): J. Astin.

AS.225.599. Independent Study. 3.0 Credits.
Instructor(s): J. Astin.

Cross Listed Courses

German Romance Languages Literatures
AS.211.312. Acting French: learning about French language and culture through theater. 3.0 Credits.
Performing a play in a foreign language not only improves language skills, but develops the ability to express oneself through the body and to communicate both efficiently and elegantly. Using excerpts from popular French stage plays by Camus, Sarthe, Feydeau, Ionesco, Pagnol and Rostand among others, this course aims to help students to 1) improve French pronunciation, intonation, syntax, and vocabulary; 2) appreciate and understand linguistic nuance and socio-cultural practices; 3) learn fundamentals of acting that carry over into everyday communication, from body language and vocal projection to the expression of emotion and improvisation. Students will view filmed representations of select plays as well as present an end-of-semester staging. Recommended course background: AS.210.301.
Instructor(s): K. Cook-Gailloud; M. Alhinho
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.225.346. Creative Improvisation: For Theatre and for Life. 3.0 Credits.
An exploration of the imagination and the senses using basic techniques of improvisation: exercises, conflict resolution, ensemble building, and theatre games. Texts: Spolin, Johnstone, LaBan and Feldencreis. Open to all students.
Instructor(s): M. Denithorne
Area: Humanities.

AS.300.113. Freshmen Seminar: Drama and Gender in Shakespeare's England. 3.0 Credits.
In this seminar we will read male and female authored plays and discuss how they reflect contemporary social expectations in Tudor and Stuart England. Authors include William Shakespeare; Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke; Christopher Marlowe; Elizabeth Cary; Ben Jonson; and Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth.
Instructor(s): E. Patton
Area: Humanities.

AS.300.133. Freshmen Seminar: Women of Epic Fame in Literature and Drama, 800 BCE-1650 CE. 3.0 Credits.
From Homer's Odyssey to Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra, powerful women who achieve their ends by working from within the system are often overlooked or not fully explored. Our readings and discussions will foreground these women of fiction, while we also consider the social conditions of their living contemporaries. Readings will include: Homer's Odyssey (Penelope); Virgil's Aenead (Dido); Dante's Inferno (Beatrice); Milton's Paradise Lost (Eve), and several accounts of Cleopatra in plays by Shakespeare and his contemporary women writers. Cross listed with Theater Arts, Writing Seminars, and WGS.
Instructor(s): T. Tower
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.300.353. Present Mirth: Stages of Comedy. 3.0 Credits.
A comparative survey of presentational comedies from Aristophanes to Beckett on stage and screen, with some attention to to the vexed question of theories of comedy [no laughing matter].
Instructor(s): O. Mehrgan; R. Macksey
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.

AS.300.363. Reading Judith Shakespeare: poetry and drama by women writers in Elizabethan England (ca 1558-1650). 3.0 Credits.
Virginia Woolf's account of the thwarted career of Shakespeare's hypothetical sister, Judith (in A Room of One's Own) frames our reading of plays and poetry by Shakespeare and contemporary women writers, including Isabella Whitney, Elizabeth Cary, Mary Sidney, Aemelia Lanyer, Mary Wroth, and others. Students will create fictional biographies of "Judith Shakespeare" and her literary accomplishments. Cross listed with English, Theater Arts, Writing Seminars, and WGS.
Instructor(s): E. Patton
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive.