Why Theater Arts at Brandeis?

The Department of Theater Arts at Brandeis offers students the unique opportunity to adopt or create a track of study in their area of interest while gaining a solid foundation in theater literature, history, and theory. Students can focus on specific areas of study such as acting, directing, design, dance and movement, stage management, and theater education and have the opportunity to put their skills into practice by participating in Brandeis Theater Company productions during the academic year. Working alongside professional actors and directors at the Brandeis Theater Company, BA and MFA students gain valuable, professional-level theater experience to complement their academic education.

Curriculum Overview

The Department of Theater Arts at Brandeis offers a BA degree, which entails a combination of required and elective courses within a student’s chosen area-of-focus track:

- Acting
- Dance and movement
- Directing
- Design
- Stage management
- Educational theater
- Musical theater

Students who wish to earn the BA must complete the following requirements:

- Introduction to Theater Arts (THA 2a)
- Theater Texts and Theory (THA 100a and 100b two semesters)
- Two elective literature courses
- Five courses within the student’s track or area of focus
- Two practical experience courses associated with production
- Senior musical theater thesis project

The curriculum is designed to balance theory and practice, allowing students the greatest degree of flexibility in developing their major while participating in quality theater productions.

There is a wide range of elective courses available in dramatic literature and theory, as well as in the specific track areas that make up the department. Students can often receive theater arts credit for courses taken in other departments. They also have the opportunity to build an interdisciplinary major by incorporating theater arts courses with courses from other disciplines. Overall, the major is designed to provide students with the flexibility to shape their major, from both a literary and practical point of view.
Opportunities beyond the Classroom

Theater arts offers students the opportunity to explore their particular area of interest in the theater by participating in the five to six productions produced annually in the Spingold Theater Center under the auspices of the Brandeis Theater Company. Working alongside professional actors and directors, students acquire valuable professional-level experience in addition to quality academic training. Also, students can follow a preexisting track or they can choose to create their own track by either combining elements within theater arts or by incorporating courses from other departments.

Special Areas of Interest

Students who want to produce, direct, design, and act in productions other than those produced by the Brandeis Theater Company may join one of several Undergraduate Theater Collective clubs and create their own student-run productions using the theater space in the Shapiro Campus Center. They can receive credit from the Department of Theater Arts for their work.

Career and Education Opportunities

By working with professional directors and actors at the Brandeis Theater Company and the faculty within the department, students gain valuable preprofessional experience and establish connections that may lead to opportunities outside of Brandeis. In addition, the department has institutional associations with professional theater companies across the country.

Faculty

Following is a list of department faculty members and their areas of specialization:

- **Eric Hill, chair**
  Acting, directing

- **Nancy Armstrong**
  Singing

- **Jeff Bird**
  Scenic construction, technical direction

- **Debra Booth**
  Scenic design

- **Michael Chybowski**
  Lighting design

- **Jennifer A. Cleary**
  Stage management, theater practicum

- **Susan Dibble**
  Movement for the actor, dance

- **Candice Donnelly**
  Costume design and rendering

- **Karl Eigsti, director of graduate design**
  Scenic design

- **Arthur Holmberg**
  Dramatic literature, theory, and history, performance theory

- **Adrienne Krstansky**
  Acting

- **Denise Loewenguth, director, costume shop**
  Costume technology

- **Marya Lowry**
  Acting, voice production

- **Ryan McKittrick**
  Theater literature, theory and history, playwriting

- **Robert Moody**
  Scene painting

- **Janet Morrison, director, performance studies**
  Acting

- **Elizabeth Terry, undergraduate advising head**
  Speech, dialects, and voice production

- **Jennifer von Mayrhauser**
  Costume design and technology

- **Robert Walsh**
  Stage movement and combat, public speaking

- **Dave Wilson**
  Lighting and sound design