Theater/Design MFA

Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts / SCHOOL OF THEATER, FILM AND MEDIA ARTS

Learn more about the Master of Fine Arts in Theater/Design.

About the Program

The Theater/Design MFA program offers a professional training curriculum wherein MFA designers and technicians collaborate with professional faculty, staff and guest artists to stage exciting contemporary theater for diverse audiences. We are looking for aspiring designers who will pursue the intent of the play wherever it leads them, into any period or style, into any emotion or state of mind, and whose knowledge and skills are so various that they bring a rich theatricality to the worlds they create. The Design program for Theater combines intensive classroom work with full-scale productions to create well-rounded designers and technicians. Our graduates find work in many aspects of theater, including regional theater, educational theater and the entertainment industry.

Time Limit for Degree Completion: 3 years

Campus Location: Main

Full-Time/Part-Time Status: Students complete the degree program through classes offered at convenient times of the day and evening.

Interdisciplinary Study: Design students are encouraged to explore other fields of study, such as art history, cinematography and photography, as their course of study allows.

Affiliation(s): The Theater Department has informal affiliations with The Freedom Theatre, The Lighting Practice, and Philadelphia Theatre Company. With special permission from their advisors, students have the opportunity to intern at these and other professional theaters and production companies in the greater Philadelphia area. The Theater Department is a member of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE), National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST), University/Resident Theatre Association (URTA), and the United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT).

Accreditation: The Theater Department is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST).

Areas of Specialization: Each student, in consultation with the faculty, develop their own program of study based on individual interests and talent. Full-time faculty members are available for mentoring. Students may specialize in one or more of the following areas:

- Costume Design
- Lighting Design
- Scenic Design

Job Prospects: The program is primarily focused on training students for careers in the theater industry. Graduates of the Theater/Design program find employment in regional theater, higher education and the entertainment industries.

Non-Matriculated Student Policy: Along with all university approvals, non-matriculated students are required to obtain written approval from the instructor for each class they want to take.

Financing Opportunities: Assistantships carry a stipend for working 20 hours per week in the shop of a student's respective design discipline and full-tuition remission. Lab, studio and classroom teaching opportunities are available.

Admission Requirements and Deadlines

Application Deadline:

Fall: March 1

Applications are processed on a semi-rolling basis throughout the Spring.

APPLY ONLINE to this graduate program.

Letters of Reference:
Number Required: 3

From Whom: Letters of recommendation should be obtained from college/university professors and professionals in the field who are familiar with the applicant's work.

Bachelor's Degree in Discipline/Related Discipline: All applicants must present credentials that are the equivalent of the appropriate baccalaureate degree at Temple University.

Standardized Test Scores:
Applicants who earned their baccalaureate degree from an institution where the language of instruction was other than English, with the exception of those who subsequently earned a master's degree at a U.S. institution, must report scores for a standardized test of English that meet these minimums:

- TOEFL iBT: 79
- IELTS Academic: 6.5
- PTE Academic: 53

Portfolio: A portfolio is required of all applicants. The portfolio should contain examples of work, ranging from design projects, classroom exercises and fine art to realized designs. The portfolio should include the complete process for at least one show, including script analysis, concept statement, research materials, sketches, renderings, models, appropriate paperwork and production photography, if applicable.

Resume: Current resume required.

Interview: An interview is required of all applicants, and a campus visit is highly recommended. An interview can be held on campus or during the University/Resident Theatre Association (URTA) National Unified Interviews in Chicago at the end of January of the preceding academic year. Candidates are not required to interview through the URTA process, but are strongly encouraged to do so. Please see the URTA website, found at https://www.urta.com/, for more information. The deadline for participation in the URTA interview process is the middle of November of the preceding academic year.

Program Requirements

General Program Requirements:
Number of Credits Required Beyond the Baccalaureate: 60

The Theater/Design MFA curriculum follows a three-year cycle. Specific course order is based on when a student starts their program.

Required Courses:

Code	Title	Credit Hours
	Seminar in Dramatic Literature	
	Scenic Design	
	Costume Design	
	Lighting Design	
	Design for TV and Film	
	History of Decor	
	History of Fashion	
	Drawing and Rendering Techniques	
	Draping and Flat Pattern Drafting	
	Costume Crafts	
	Theatrical Model Making	
	Scene Painting	
	Projection and Media Design	
	The Job Market	

Additional Requirements:
As a component of the three-year MFA degree program, all Theater/Design candidates actively participate in design and production work in the Theater Department's main stage season. This work is an extension of what is presented in the classroom and becomes the experiential component to the degree program. Coursework and production work are equally balanced throughout the academic year, both philosophically and pedagogically.

All Design students must participate in a portfolio review and faculty evaluation at the end of each semester.

Culminating Event:
Thesis:
The master's thesis is typically a realized and produced production executed by the Theater Department as part of its main stage season. The underlying premise is to create and produce a professional design within a professional production. Along with gathering all research and creating all designs, drafts, renderings, models and appropriate paperwork for the design, fulfilling a written thesis component completes the degree process. The thesis production and document are defended before a faculty committee and then digitally published through Temple University.

In some cases, where appropriate, a "paper" thesis may be assigned. In this case, the candidate completes all the same research, designs, drafts, renderings, models and a written document defending the design and the process, but the design will neither be realized nor produced.

Contacts

Program Web Address:

https://www.temple.edu/academics/degree-programs/theater-design-mfa-ca-thds-mfa

Department Information:

Theater Graduate Admissions
Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts/School of Theater, Film and Media Arts
2001 N. 13th Street, 127 Presser Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19122-6016
tfma@temple.edu
215-204-8598
Fax: 215-204-4957

Submission Address for Application Materials:

https://apply.temple.edu/TFMA/

Department Contacts:

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Head of Graduate Design:
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Costume Design Area Head:
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