Theater/Directing 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/Directing.

About the Program

This program is not accepting applications for the 2026-2027 academic year (Fall 2027 entry).

The focus of the MFA program in Theater/Directing is to develop the directing student as a visionary creative communicator and artistic leader. Directing students are trained to be fully capable of illuminating a text through the exploration of character in collaboration with the writer, actors and design/production team and of delivering a compelling and unified theatrical storytelling event to the audience.

Time Limit for Degree Completion: 3 years

Campus Location: Main

Full-Time/Part-Time Status: Full-time study is required.

Interdisciplinary Study: Students can take coursework in film with graduate students in Film and Media Arts.

Affiliation(s): Temple theater students have the opportunity to intern with many of the numerous professional theaters in Philadelphia, including the Arden Theatre Company, Lantern Theater Company, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Prince Theater, and The Wilma Theater.

Accreditation: The Theater Department is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) and is a founding member of the University/Resident Theatre Association (URTA).

Areas of Specialization: The goal of the program is to develop the director as a master "storyteller." Students focus on learning, through the study of craft-based pedagogy, about the director's primary commitment to the illumination of text for an audience through the work of the actor; through design, staging, thematic and theatrical interpretation; and through artistic/team collaboration and leadership.

Job Prospects: The program is primarily focused on training students for careers in professional theater.

Non-Matriculated Student Policy: Coursework may not be taken on a non-matriculated basis.

Financing Opportunities: Based on the number of assistantships allocated to the program, three-year Teaching Assistantships are awarded to students upon acceptance into the program. The award provides both a stipend and either full or half tuition remission. Fellowships are occasionally awarded to exceptionally qualified, eligible students.

Admission Requirements and Deadlines

Application Deadline:

Fall: March 1

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The MFA Directing program recruits applicants through the National Unified Auditions and Interviews (NUAIs) conducted by University/Resident Theatre Association (URTA) in New York and Chicago. We currently recruit a minimum of two candidates every three years. The next class will be admitted for Fall 2025. Those interested in our program are strongly encouraged to apply at https://urta.com/ when appropriate. Applications are thoroughly screened, and top candidates are invited to interview at one of the URTA audition sites or at Temple University. After all candidates have been interviewed, those accepted are notified by letter by April 15. Candidates unable to interview as part of the NUAIs should adhere to the criteria listed below.

All candidates must also complete the formal Temple University Graduate School application. *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.

Coursework Required for Admission Consideration: Coursework in Theater, typically completed as part of an undergraduate major in Theater, is required.

Bachelor's Degree in Discipline/Related Discipline: The BA in Theater or BFA degree in Acting, Design or Directing is preferred.

Statement of Goals: Introduce yourself in approximately 500 words by relaying your relevant experience, values and areas of interest. Proper essay form should be used, but it may be in a personal style.

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

Resume: Current resume required.

Interview: The applicant meets with appropriate faculty, either through URTA at audition sites in New York and Chicago or on Temple University's Main Campus.

Other: In addition to a baccalaureate degree, applicants must have a body of professional or semi-professional experience in Directing.

Program Requirements

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

Required Courses:

Code	Title	Credit Hours
THTR 5387	Directing Practicum I	2
THTR 5388	Directing Practicum II	3
THTR 5392	The Business of the Business in Theater	2
THTR 5804	Dramaturgy	2
THTR 8001	Seminar in Dramatic Literature	2
THTR 8002	Seminar in Dramatic Literature	2
THTR 8985	Teach in Higher Education	3
THTR 9251	Acting for the Camera	2
THTR 9382	Projects in Directing I (5 terms)	12
THTR 9387	Directing Practicum III	2
THTR 9388	Directing Practicum IV	2
THTR 9995	Thesis	6
Select one Design Area course from the following:		2
THTR 5613	History of Decor	
THTR 5625	History of Fashion	
THTR 5741	Design for TV and Film	
THTR 8511	Lighting Design II	
THTR 8611	Costume Design II	
THTR 8711	Scene Design II	
Select one Theater course from the following:		2
THTR 5212	Speech for the Actor II	
THTR 5232	Vocal Production for the Actor II	
THTR 5242	Dance for the Actor II	
THTR 8231	Vocal Production for the Actor III	
THTR 8232	Vocal Production for the Actor IV	
THTR 8241	Dance for the Actor III	
THTR 8242	Dance for the Actor IV	
Film Course [1]		4

General Electives [2]	12
Total Credit Hours	**60**

1 Consult with the program director to ensure selection of an appropriate film course.
2 Consult with the program director to ensure selection of appropriate electives.

Additional Requirements:
First Year:
Students direct scenes plus a one-act play in the studio theater and serve as assistant to the director of a main stage show.

Second Year:
Scene work continues. Students also direct two unsupported projects in the studio theater.

Third Year:
Students direct a thesis production. This is a fully supported production that is part of the main stage season. During the alternate term, an opportunity may exist for an internship to assist or direct in one of the professional theaters in the Philadelphia area. This choice requires faculty approval. An additional option is an unsupported project to allow the student to explore personal interest or career objectives in theater.

Practical Application (in addition to coursework):
First Year/Fall Term: Practical focus is on the short scene (5-10 minutes). Three scenes are presented to the department with a focus primarily on contemporary realism.

First Year/Spring Term: Continued practical focus is on directing scenes from acknowledged 20th-century classics.

Second Year/Fall Term: Practical focus is on Shakespeare, culminating in the presentation of a Shakespeare scene project.

Second Year/Spring Term: Practical focus is on scene work from a variety of non-realistic genres and styles, including the study of comedy.

Second Year: Potential opportunity exists to direct a minimally supported full-length production during one of the terms.

Third Year/Fall Term: Practical focus is on new work, including self-created ensemble-based work.

Third Year/Spring Term: Practical focus is on the serial television project as well as musical theater.

Culminating Event:
Thesis:
One fully supported thesis project is produced in the main season during the third year. This is accompanied by a detailed, comprehensive written thesis, which includes an account of the research and script analysis that preceded the rehearsal process, a director's rehearsal log, and the student's evaluation of the production. The student meets with appropriate faculty after the production has closed for discussion and evaluation of both the process and the production. Faculty members look systematically at all aspects of the theater production and evaluate the student in terms of what was attempted and what was achieved. Theatrical concept, unity of design and stylistic approach, the visual and aural components of storytelling, and ensemble work of the actors are evaluated from the point of view of directing, acting and design.

Contacts

Program Web Address:

https://www.temple.edu/academics/degree-programs/theater-directing-mfa-ca-thdi-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://connect.temple.edu/portal/gr_applytoday

Department Contacts:

Admissions:

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Chair:
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