**Course Descriptions 2025**

**(with Course Descriptions)**

**THEA 501:** Playwright’s Lab (4) Ristau (Lab) **(Upstairs Studio)**

*Playwriting MW 7-10*

All students, faculty, staff, and guests meet regularly for readings of student work, guest presentations, exercises, and discussion. Students submit an example of their best work for available public reading slots. Students whose work is selected for readings are responsible for arranging, rehearsing, and presenting them. A moderated discussion follows each reading. Grades are primarily based on attendance and energetic participation with clear, perceptive, and informed analysis in discussion. The course must be repeated three consecutive summers. **(Required)**

**THEA 510: Playscript** **Analysis** (4) **Moon (Analytic) (VAC 112)** *Required of All First Year Students*

*T TH 9-Noon*

Intensive critical analysis of the playscript as a blueprint for production covering representative texts from a range of theatre styles, genres, and periods. Plays are considered in both their original historical/cultural context as well as implications for contemporary audiences. Course covers major approaches to dramatic criticism and the tools used in theatre research. (**Required for all first-year students**)

**THEA 514: Theatre in Society: Cultural Competency in Theatre**(4) **Moon (Analytic) (Pleasants 107)**

*Playwriting Elective, Applied Theatre Concentration, Dramaturgy Elective, MA Elective*

*W F 9-Noon*

(formal description coming from the instructor soon) This course is designed to provide a foundation for the theatre artist, no matter their age or experience, to better understand and respect the values, attitudes, and beliefs across cultures so that they might engage in a more empathetic and authentic practice across cultures and demographics. Students will learn practices to inform their theatre making in ways that assist them in considering and responding to these differences in writing, planning, researching, rehearsing, and sharing their creative work with each other and with audiences.

**THEA 517: Design on a Dime** (4) **TBA** (creative) **(Theatre Classroom)**

*Directing Certificate, Playwriting Elective, MA Elective, Production Track Requirement*

*T TH 9-Noon*

An introduction to design principles as applied to the production and presentation of new plays. Design areas covered will include scenic, costume, lighting, and sound design as well as graphic illustration. As part of the course, each student will create two separate design palettes based on the play they are working on in Festival, One envisioned with an $800 budget and one with a $20,000 budget. Students will also learn the fundamentals of how to use QLab, program lighting cues, and run sound and lightboards.

**THEA 520:** Narrative Theory(4) **Ristau (Creative) (VAC 112)**

*Required of All First Year Students*

*W F 2-5*

Introduction to the basics of storytelling and the creation of dramatic texts using both organic and formulaic models with an emphasis on the one act play. Students will learn to observe the world for meaning, build characters, place characters in settings, write monologues, create dialogue between characters, and lay the groundwork for longer, more substantive work. (**Required for all first-year students**)

**THEA 523: Viewpoints and Composition (4)** **Seibel (Creative)** **(Upstairs Studio)**

*Directing Certificate, Performance Certificate; Playwriting Elective, MA Elective*

*T TH 2-5*

Taken by playwrights, directors, and performers to build ensemble and open new avenues of collaboration on found, created, devised, and scripted text. Will include techniques for collaboration, building ensemble, group dynamics, psychophysical acting and improvisation, crafting theatre pieces based on found, devised, and scripted text.

**THEA 534: WRITING PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES (4) Adkins (creative)**

*Playwriting Elective, MA Elective*

*T TH 2-5*

Exploration of the creation of dramas designed to be performed both for and by children and young adults. While adaptation of existing children’s literature will be addressed, the focus is on the creation of original plays for young audiences.

**THEA 550: Special Topics in Theatre: Stage Management** (4) **Love** (Analytic) **(TBA)**

*Playwriting Elective, MA Elective, Production Track Requirement W F 2-5*

This course, an ideal foundation for directors, is an immersion in the principles and practices of stage management. Students will put these skills into practice by stage managing one of the eight festival readings as well as providing production support for events throughout the summer, such as guest speakers, guest workshops, lab readings, and No Shame Theatre.

**THEA 551: GUEST SEMINAR: TEACHING THEATRE (4) W F 2-5 Adkins (analytical)**

*Playwriting Elective, MA Elective*

*WF 2-5*

This course will focus on developing a pedagogy and curriculum for creative dramatics in a classroom setting and provide a foundation for teaching theatre at all levels, from early childhood to graduate level instruction. The course will focus on the use of theatre games, a combination of writing and acting exercises, simple improvisation, and other aspects of theatre education. It will also require research into current best practices and explore the way in which educational theatre programs affiliated with professional and non-profit theatres are structured and executed.

**THEA 561: Directors and Playwrights in Collaboration** (2) **Ristau** (Collaboration) **(Upstairs Studio)** *Directing Certificate, Playwriting Elective, MA Elective M 9-Noon*

Guided instruction leading up to the reading of a new play in Festival and functioning as a production meeting with participation of the playwright and performers discussing process and progress toward the presentation of the work to the public. All students enrolled in the certificate in New Play Directing will be required to direct a reading in the Hollins Playwright’s Festival, which presents ten new play readings to industry professionals from all over the world. This course is designed to guide directing students through the process of collaboration from the initial read and interview with a playwright, development of concept in consultation with the playwright, and included practical exercises to ensure that when it comes to the test the playwright and director are on the same page. Monday meetings function as a kind of production meeting for the festival readings and will include Festival playwrights. Wednesday sessions are open only to the directing students to discuss their process and problems under the supervision and guidance of the instructor. Repeated each summer.

**THEA 570: Master Class: First Drafts** (4) **Ristau** (Master Class)  **(Pleasants 209)**

*Playwriting, MA T TH 2-5*

In this intensive workshop students come to each class with a completely new play resulting in six new first drafts over the six-week course, each in a different style or genre and incorporating a set list of prompts. While it is possible that these first drafts might eventually be developed and revised into final drafts, the emphasis is on mastering the discipline necessary to produce substantive work on a deadline as well as reinforcing the student’s understanding of the fundamentals of play structure.

**THEA 575: Master Class: Advanced Tutorial** (4) **Seibel** (Master Class) **(Pleasants 209)**

*Playwriting, MA T TH 9-Noon*

Writers are given guided instruction in creating a full-length play, which is polished, complete, ready for production, and suitable for submission. This course is similar in structure to THEA 571, but where that course functions as an advanced version of Lab, this course functions as an advanced version of Narrative Theory and Structure with an emphasis on targeted exercises and exploratory writing rather than workshopping the actual text. As with Advanced Workshop, the play must not have been submitted in any previous course for credit without the prior approval of the program director as well as the current instructor as well as the instructor of the course for which it was originally submitted.

**THEA 576: Company Creation and Management** (4) **Moon** (analytical) **(Pleasants 203)**

*Directing Certificate, Playwriting Elective, MA Elective*

*W-F 2-5*

An introduction to the structure of the non-profit theatre and how-to guide for creating a new company dedicated to the production and presentation of new plays. Concepts covered include arts administration, crafting a mission statement, forming a board of trustees, filing for non-profit status, legal issues and potential liabilities, fund raising, publicity, contracts, rental agreements, and other aspects of producing new work as part of a season or just a single showcase.

**THEA 580: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PRACTICUM (1-4) Department**

When students have an off campus reading, internship, or production opportunity in a legitimate theatre, they may register for this course and receive academic credit for the experience. They will be required to maintain a journal and document every aspect of the production and, if possible, provide a DVD of the event. The quality of the production is not the focus of the grade, but rather the objective analysis of the process, which must be detailed and chronicled in a scholarly portfolio with a written dramaturgical analysis of the experience. May be repeated. **Prior approval required**.

**THEA 590: INDEPENDENT STUDY IN PLAYWRITING (4) Department**

This guided-distance instruction in an approved course area may be either creative or analytical.

**THEA 599: THESIS (4, 4) Department**

The thesis must be a properly formatted, production-ready final draft of a full-length play script (at least two acts of 45-60 pages each), two thematically linked one-act plays, or a substantial collection of thematically lined ten-minute plays. The thesis must include a scholarly narrative essay with objective dramaturgical analysis of the student’s own work as preface or afterward. This essay will place the work in the context of the student’s arc of progress toward their degree explaining how the work is a capstone project. It will be developed in consultation with the student’s thesis advisor and must have been begun, revised, completed within two years of taking their final class. Substantial revisions of earlier works may be considered, but rarely approved, as thesis plays. After the thesis committee has reviewed the work, the student will take a comprehensive final exam. **This course is required**.

**Independent Studies:**

**First Year Students with areas of focus**

**Resident Dramaturg: Addae Moon**

Festival Dramaturgs

1. **TBA**
2. **TBA**
3. **TBA**
4. **TBA**
5. **TBA**
6. **TBA**
7. **TBA**
8. **TBA**

Festival Directors

1. **TBA**
2. **TBA**
3. **TBA**
4. **TBA**
5. **TBA**
6. **TBA**
7. **TBA**
8. **TBA**

Festival Stage Managers